Bible Scattering and gathering John 11_52
John 11:52 children of God scattered abroad children of God I do not want a bias, this seems like a hyperlink; before I tell you what I think, using the Bible, what do you think?

I'm reading it first through John's own word-links, then outward into the prophets, because that usually keeps the passage from being forced into a later system.

Thought for 26s

My reading is: yes, it does look like a hyperlink, and not a small one.

In the immediate context, Caiaphas says, "it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people" (John 11:50). Then John explains that Caiaphas was prophesying, "that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:51–52).

That already tells us two things.

First, John is deliberately expanding Caiaphas's words beyond mere political preservation of Israel. Caiaphas is thinking nationally and pragmatically. John says the death of Jesus reaches farther than that.

Second, the phrase "gather together in one" sounds like a direct thematic rope to John 10. Just before this, Jesus says, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring… and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). John 11:52 feels like the explanatory echo of John 10:16. Same movement: scattered people, brought by Jesus, made one.

So I do think John 11:52 is a hyperlink inside John first.

Then, if we stay with Bible-language, "scattered abroad" sounds like covenant scattering-and-gathering language from the prophets and Moses. For example, Deuteronomy 30:3–4 says the LORD "will return and gather thee from all the nations" and "if any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee." Isaiah 11:12 says, "he shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah." Ezekiel 34:12–13 says, "so will I seek out my sheep… And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries." Ezekiel 37:21–22 says, "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen… and will gather them on every side… and I will make them one nation." That "gather… one" pattern is very close to John 11:52.

So yes, to me John is using loaded prophetic gathering language.

But the phrase "children of God" matters, because John does not use that phrase loosely. In John 1:12–13, "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." In 1 John 3:1–2, "now are we the sons of God." In 1 John 3:10 there is a contrast between "the children of God" and "the children of the devil." So in Johannine usage, "children of God" is not

just an ethnic label for all Israelites by birth. It is a covenant-family term tied to receiving, believing, and being born of God.

That is why I would be careful not to read John 11:52 as only “diaspora Jews.” The verse says, “not for that nation only.” That pushes past ethnic Israel alone. And John 10:16 had already pushed past one fold alone. So my reading is that John is taking Israel’s scattering-and-gathering hope and showing that Jesus fulfills it in a larger way: He dies to gather God’s true children into one, including those beyond the immediate Jewish nation.

That also fits John 17. Jesus prays not only for the present disciples, “but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one” (John 17:20–21). John 11:52 says “gather together in one.” John 17 says “that they all may be one.” Same rope again.

So, using the Bible alone, this is where I land:

John 11:52 is a real hyperlink.
It reaches backward into Israel’s scattering/gathering promises.
It reaches sideways to John 10:16.
It reaches forward to John 17:20–23.
And “children of God” in John likely means not mere natural descent, but those who truly belong to God through Christ.

So I would summarize it this way:

Caiaphas meant national survival.
John says God meant redemptive gathering.
Jesus would die not only in relation to the Jewish nation, but to gather into one covenant family all God’s children who were scattered.

Tell me what you think it is linking to, because I suspect you are seeing a specific rope, and I want to compare it to this reading.

I like that you kept Johanine writings together, but I think we could take Galatians 3, Hebrews, and others into account for the Seed’s seed, and real Israel (Romans); and all those who abide in Christ, as covenental identity through faith, echoing Ezekiel 18 to those before Jesus death and resurrection, and those who have not heard; and we could use the Egyptians who left Egypt with Israel, at the exodus, and the Moabitess, Ruth, and Jericho woman, and many others, like the king who came to see Elijah and rinsed, and was healed, through obedience and belief, and Nineveh, and so many others. Jesus is the fulfillment of the line of Abraham, and faith is identity “in Christ”, true Israel, those who wrestle, or more like Hebrews, from Eber, translated to the other side, through Christ.

I think your rope is strong. I’m checking it in layers so it stays tied to the text instead of turning into a system first.

Thought for 24s

Yes. I think what you just added is the larger canonical frame that sits around John 11:52, as long as we keep John's immediate usage as the anchor and then let the rest of Scripture widen it.

John's wording is:

"and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."
— John 11:52

That sounds like more than "diaspora Jews." It sounds like gathered covenant family.

Why? Because the Bible repeatedly breaks the false equation that natural descent alone equals the true covenant line.

Paul says:

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."
— Romans 9:6

And again:

"That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."
— Romans 9:8

That language is very close to your point. The true line is not simply bloodline as such, but promise-line, fulfilled in Christ, and entered by faith.

Galatians 3 says the same thing with even sharper focus:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
— Galatians 3:16

Then Paul brings the gathering into Christ:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."
— Galatians 3:26

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
— Galatians 3:29

So if we put John 11:52 beside Galatians 3, the phrase "children of God" can be heard as those gathered into the one Seed, Christ, and therefore counted in the covenant family through faith. That fits your reading very well.

And Romans 4 supports it too. Abraham is not only father of circumcision, but also of those who walk in the faith:

“He is the father of all them that believe.”
— Romans 4:11

“That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.”
— Romans 4:11

So the “gather together in one” of John 11:52 fits the Abrahamic promise opening outward, not merely preserving one ethnic body.

Your Exodus examples fit that pattern. Scripture itself already gave early witnesses that covenant belonging was never a sealed ethnic box.

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them.”
— Exodus 12:38

“One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.”
— Exodus 12:49

That is a major rope. Even at the Exodus, the people are not presented as a pure flesh-line category only. The stranger who joins under God’s order is brought inside the covenant structure.

Ruth is one of the clearest witnesses:

“thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”
— Ruth 1:16

Rahab also stands in the same witness. She is outside by birth, but inside by faith and allegiance. Hebrews later places her with the faithful:

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”
— Hebrews 11:31

Nineveh is another witness that God’s dealings were never conceptually locked inside ethnic Israel alone. Their repentance mattered before God. So yes, these examples do form a rope.

I also think Hebrews helps your reading, especially where it speaks of family identity centered in the Son. Hebrews 2 says:

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory…”
— Hebrews 2:10

Then:

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one…”
— Hebrews 2:11

And then:

“Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”
— Hebrews 2:13

That sounds very close to John 11:52. In John, Jesus dies to gather the children of God into one. In Hebrews, He brings many sons to glory, and He stands with “the children” God has given Him. Different writer, same family-gathering fulfillment in the Son.

So I think your reading can be stated like this:

John 11:52 begins in Johannine language, but it opens into the whole covenant storyline.
The “children of God” are not best read as mere ethnic descendants.
They are the true covenant family gathered in the Seed, Christ.
The Bible had already foreshadowed this through the mixed multitude, Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, Nineveh, and others.
Romans and Galatians make explicit that promise, seed, and faith govern the true family identity.
Hebrews shows that the Son brings “many sons” and stands with “the children” God gave Him.

So yes, I think your instinct is right: John 11:52 is not just about geographic dispersion. It is about covenant family gathering into one under Christ.

I would only add one guardrail so the reading stays tight:

John 11:52 should still be read first through John’s own frame—John 10:16, John 1:12–13, John 17:20–23—and then Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, Exodus, Ruth, and the prophets can widen the meaning without replacing John’s wording. That way the rope grows outward from the text instead of being laid over it.

Your line “Jesus is the fulfillment of the line of Abraham, and faith is identity ‘in Christ’” is, in my view, very close to the center of it.

One refinement I would make is this:

not “real Israel” in a way that erases historical Israel,
but true covenant identity being recognized, gathered, and fulfilled in Christ, the Seed, so that those who are His are counted in the promise-line.

That keeps Romans 9–11 from flattening, while still preserving your main point.

The “Hebrew / other side” thought is a good thematic rope too, though I would treat that more as a suggestive pattern than a controlling proof. Your stronger proof texts are Romans 4, Romans 9, Galatians 3, Hebrews 2, Exodus 12, Ruth 1, and John 10–11–17.

I think you are seeing something real here.

It seems like John is expressly talking about the children of God, and not about specifically the nation is Abraham (lineage). No where does John say National Abraham is the children of God. Let’s look a little deeper into John’s gospel and how it relates to children of God. I think we will find more. What I am thinking about, is the subtle hyperlink we found with the Galilee clue, where the angel said Jesus would meet the desciples in Galilee, and the Joshua and Isaiah connection to the nations, and Jesus gave the commission to the desciples there in Galilee. And you see that when Jesus said to the Canaanite woman, he was there for the people of Abraham, and she had faith, and her daughter was healed, and then Jesus went to the nations, and fed the nations. The ministry of Jesus was clearly not to Abraham’s line alone, but to the world, to all image bearers (who would believe). What does John say, and in a deep dive, what other clues to the identity of gods children do we see

I found the strongest rope already: John 1:12 and John 11:52 are the same family-language in Greek, even though the KJV shows “sons” in one place and “children” in the other. That makes John 1 the doorway into John 11.

Thought for 1m 10s

Yes. I think if we stay inside John first, the case gets stronger, not weaker.

The main thing I see is this:

John does **not** define “the children of God” by natural Abrahamic lineage.

He defines them by **receiving Christ**, **being born of God**, **hearing God’s word**, **coming to the Son**, **believing**, and then being **gathered into one**.

And John gives that case in layers.

1. John opens the Gospel by cutting off bloodline as the basis

This is the doorway text:

“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:”
“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” — John 1:12–13

This is one of the strongest clues in the whole Gospel.

John does **not** say: those who are born from Abraham's line are therefore the children of God.

He says the opposite direction:

those who **receive him** and **believe on his name** are given the right to become God's children, and this birth is **"not of blood."**

That phrase is a hammer blow against flesh-lineage as the controlling category.

And this is important for John 11:52, because in Greek the same family word stands behind John 1:12 and John 11:52. The KJV says "sons of God" in John 1:12 and "children of God" in John 11:52, but John is using the same family rope. So the "children of God" of John 11:52 should be read through John 1:12–13.

That means: the gathered children are those whose identity is from God's begetting, not from bloodline.

2. John immediately widens the scope beyond Israel alone

John begins with Israel's setting:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."
— John 1:11

But he does not stop there. He opens the door wider:

"But as many as received him…"
— John 1:12

Not "as many as were descended from Abraham."

But "as many as received him."

And John the Baptist says:

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
— John 1:29

Not merely the sin of one nation.

John's Gospel begins with Israel in view, but it does not stay locked there.

3. New birth, not natural birth, is the identity marker

Jesus says to Nicodemus:

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
— John 3:3

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
— John 3:5

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
— John 3:6

Again, John’s categories are not:

Abrahamic flesh = child of God.

Rather:

flesh is flesh,
Spirit-birth is what is needed.

Then John says:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish…”
— John 3:16

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
— John 3:17

And the hinge is belief:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already…”
— John 3:18

So already in John 1 and John 3, the identity of God’s children is tied to birth from God and faith in the Son, not ethnicity.

4. John gives a living preview in Samaria

John 4 is one of the biggest clues in the Gospel.

Jesus speaks with a Samaritan woman, outside the tight Judean covenant expectation. Yet the chapter moves toward global language.

Jesus says:

“salvation is of the Jews.”
— John 4:22

So John does not erase Israel’s historical role. The line and promise come through that history.

But the chapter does not end there. The Samaritans say:

“Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”
— John 4:42

That is a massive Johannine clue.

Not merely saviour of Abraham’s line.

“The Saviour of the world.”

John is showing that Jesus moves through Israel’s covenant history, but His saving identity is wider than national Israel alone.

5. John 6 keeps pressing the same line

Jesus says:

“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”
— John 6:33

And:

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever…”
— John 6:51

Again, “if any man.”

The category is not flesh descent. The category is coming to Him, believing, feeding on Him, abiding in Him.

6. John 8 explicitly breaks the equation: Abraham’s descendants are not automatically God’s children

This may be the sharpest section for your question.

The Jews say:

“Abraham is our father.”
— John 8:39

Jesus answers:

“If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.”
— John 8:39

That is huge.

Jesus does not deny their physical descent in the historical sense. Earlier He says:

“I know that ye are Abraham’s seed…”
— John 8:37

So He acknowledges natural lineage.

But He refuses to equate that with true covenant sonship.

He distinguishes:

Abraham’s **seed** in a fleshly sense,
from Abraham’s **children** in a moral / covenant / faith-and-work likeness sense.

Then He says:

“If God were your Father, ye would love me…”
— John 8:42

And then:

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”
— John 8:44

This is one of the clearest answers in John’s Gospel:

natural Abrahamic descent does **not** equal being the children of God.

The true marker is likeness, reception of Christ, love of Christ, hearing God’s word.

Jesus says:

“He that is of God heareth God’s words…”
— John 8:47

So in John, fatherhood and child-identity are manifested by allegiance, hearing, works, and relation to Christ.

That fits exactly with the rope you have been seeing.

7. John 10 says the flock will extend beyond one fold

Jesus says:

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”
— John 10:16

This is the nearest direct parallel to John 11:52.

John 10:16 says:
other sheep, not of this fold, must be brought, and made one.

John 11:52 says:
the children of God scattered abroad will be gathered together in one.

Those are twin ropes.

And again the mark is hearing:

“they shall hear my voice.”

Not lineage alone.

Then Jesus says to some:

“ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”
— John 10:26

And:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”
— John 10:27

So identity is again relational and covenantal: hearing, being known by Him, following Him.

8. John 11:52 is therefore not merely about national diaspora

Here is the text:

“And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”
— John 11:52

If we read that through John 1, 3, 4, 8, and 10, then the phrase “children of God” cannot be reduced to national Abraham alone.

Why?

Because John has already told us:

they are born “not of blood” (John 1:13),
must be born of the Spirit (John 3:5–6),
are connected with “the world” (John 3:16–17; 4:42; 6:33),
are not defined by Abrahamic claim alone (John 8:39–44),
and are gathered as one flock from beyond one fold (John 10:16).

So John 11:52 reads like the harvest statement of all that.

Jesus dies:

“not for that nation only.”

John himself is pushing you not to stop at ethnic-national reading.

9. John 12 adds the nations openly

This is another deep clue.

Certain Greeks come seeking Jesus:

“And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:”
“The same came therefore to Philip… and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.”
— John 12:20–21

This happens right before Jesus speaks of His death.

Then He says:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”
— John 12:32

That does not mean every person without distinction is automatically saved, because John still insists on belief. But it does mean the drawing and scope of His death are not locked inside Abrahamic lineage.

The arrival of the Greeks right here is not random. It is a narrative signal.

The nations are coming into view.

10. John 17 gives the prayer-form of John 11:52

Jesus prays:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”
“That they all may be one…”
— John 17:20–21

That is the prayer version of:

“gather together in one the children of God…”
— John 11:52

And again the identity marker is belief:

“them also which shall believe on me through their word.”

Not bloodline as such.

11. So who are “the children of God” in John?

From John’s Gospel alone, I would answer like this:

The children of God are those who receive the Son, believe on His name, are born of God, hear God’s word, come to Christ, are known by Christ, follow Christ, and are gathered by His death into one flock and one family.

That includes Jews who believe.

That also reaches beyond Jews alone.

John does not erase Israel’s role. He says:

“salvation is of the Jews.”
— John 4:22

But he absolutely refuses to let fleshly Abrahamic descent define the children of God by itself.

In fact, John’s Gospel explicitly breaks that equation.

12. Your Galilee / nations rope fits the larger pattern

You mentioned the subtle Galilee hyperlink: Isaiah, Joshua, Galilee, the nations, the commission.

That rope is strong in the Synoptic frame.

John does not develop it in the same way, but he gives matching clues of the same direction:

the Lamb of God for "the world" (John 1:29),
new birth not of blood (John 1:13),
"whosoever believeth" (John 3:16),
the Samaritans saying "Saviour of the world" (John 4:42),
"other sheep… not of this fold" (John 10:16),
"not for that nation only" (John 11:52),
Greeks arriving before the cross (John 12:20–32),
and believers through the apostles' word becoming one (John 17:20–21).

So even though the Galilee clue is not John's way of saying it, John is moving in the same direction: outward, to a gathered people from beyond one national boundary.

13. The sharpest summary sentence from John is probably this

John 1:13 destroys bloodline as the basis.
John 8 destroys Abraham-claim as sufficient proof.
John 10 announces other sheep beyond one fold.
John 11 says the death of Christ gathers God's scattered children into one.

That is the deep structure.

14. One more Johannine echo outside the Gospel

Just as a confirmation, not as the base:

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil…"
— 1 John 3:10

And:

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."
— 1 John 3:14

So even in John's later writing, the children of God are manifested by relationship to God, righteousness, love, and abiding—not by flesh descent alone.

I think your instinct is right:

John's Gospel does not teach that "national Abraham" as such equals "the children of God."

It teaches that the children of God are identified in and through Christ.

And John 11:52 is one of the clearest gathering texts for that.

The single strongest verse for your point inside John is probably:

"Which were born, not of blood…"
— John 1:13

That line quietly governs the whole Gospel.

If you want, I can take the next step and build a tight chain using only John passages, almost like a courtroom brief, showing how John defines the children of God from chapter 1 to chapter 17.

As another strong point; Everything since the fall seems to have a common denominator, renewal. And it is only through the life giving power of God are things made new. I love the John 8:44,47 contrast as an identifier, and John 10:16 account as an identifier! John 11:52 is very compelling, as well as John 12:32 too. We need the hyperlink Old Testament and the correlating "to the nations" passages. The people of Jerusalem were much like Jonah, and how Jonah viewed the Ninevites. A contempt for the nations, and harboring bitterness, but God sent his messenger to the nations, because God loves all sinners, even the nations that are not bloodline to Abraham.

I've got the main OT rope now: John is not inventing a new "to the nations" idea. He is pulling together the old promise line, the shepherd-gathering prophecies, and the servant-light-to-the-Gentiles passages.

Thought for 1m 29s

Yes. I think your renewal point is a major controlling peg.

After the fall, the Bible's answer is not mere preservation of Adamic flesh. It is life from God, new birth, new heart, new creation, resurrection, gathering, cleansing, and peace. John is full of that.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
— John 1:13

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
— John 3:3

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."
— John 3:6

“I am the resurrection, and the life.”
— John 11:25

So yes, I think John’s Gospel is not moving toward a bloodline definition of God’s children. It is moving toward a life-from-God definition.

And that means the Old Testament hyperlinks behind John 8, John 10, John 11, and John 12 are very important.

The first deep rope: seed-conflict, fatherhood, and manifested identity

You already saw the sharp contrast in John 8:

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”
— John 8:44

“He that is of God heareth God’s words…”
— John 8:47

That is not lineage language in a merely physical sense. That is manifested fatherhood by likeness, desire, hearing, and allegiance.

That rope reaches back to the beginning.

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed…”
— Genesis 3:15

From that point on, Scripture keeps separating humanity not merely by flesh descent, but by relation to God’s word, promise, obedience, and the coming Seed.

That is why John 8 is so strong. Jesus acknowledges physical descent from Abraham in one sense:

“I know that ye are Abraham’s seed…”
— John 8:37

But then He refuses to let that settle the matter:

“If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.”
— John 8:39

So John 8 already gives you the legal distinction:

seed by flesh in one sense,
children by likeness, faith-response, and covenant alignment in another.

That is a huge key for John 11:52.

The Abrahamic promise was always larger than bloodline preservation

The Abrahamic promise is not "protect one ethnicity for its own sake." It is God's plan to bless the nations through the promised line.

"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
— Genesis 12:3

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed…"
— Genesis 22:18

That is one of the clearest Old Testament ropes behind John 12:32:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
— John 12:32

John does not say all are automatically saved regardless of belief, because John constantly keeps belief central. But he does say the lifting up of Christ opens outward to the nations. That is Abrahamic promise fulfillment language.

And Genesis gives another remarkable gathering clue:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."
— Genesis 49:10

That sounds very close in theme to John 11:52:

"that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."
— John 11:52

Genesis 49 already points to a coming ruler from Judah to whom the peoples are gathered. John 11 shows that gathering happening through the death of Christ.

The Exodus itself already cracked the bloodline box

This is one of the strongest ropes in the Torah.

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them…”
— Exodus 12:38

And then:

“One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.”
— Exodus 12:49

And again:

“One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you…”
— Numbers 15:15

“One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.”
— Numbers 15:16

That means that even at the foundational redemption event of Israel, the story already includes people not naturally descended from Abraham’s flesh-line alone. They come out under God’s saving act and are brought under the one covenant order.

That does not erase Israel’s role. It proves that Israel’s role was never meant to terminate in itself.

That fits John very well.

“salvation is of the Jews.”
— John 4:22

But the same chapter ends with:

“this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”
— John 4:42

So the line is through Israel, but the saving scope is larger than Israel alone.

Solomon’s temple prayer is a major “to the nations” witness

When Solomon dedicates the temple, he explicitly prays for the stranger.

“Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name’s sake;”
“(For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house;”
“Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee

for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel…”
— 1 Kings 8:41–43

That is not a side note. That is temple theology. God’s house was tied to the nations hearing His name.

That reaches forward to John’s temple-replacement logic, where Jesus Himself becomes the meeting place of God and man.

The Psalms keep singing the nations in

The Psalms repeatedly refuse to let Israel become a closed possession.

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.”
— Psalm 22:27

“God be merciful unto us, and bless us…”
“That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.”
— Psalm 67:1–2

“All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.”
— Psalm 86:9

Psalm 87 is especially interesting:

“I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.”
— Psalm 87:4

“And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her…”
— Psalm 87:5

That is a remarkable birth-and-identity Psalm. Foreign nations are being spoken of in relation to Zion as though birth/registration/identity is being reassigned by God. I would not force that beyond the text, but it is a very suggestive rope alongside John’s “born… of God” language.

Isaiah is probably the heaviest OT backdrop for John’s “to the nations” movement

Isaiah ties together light, gathering, servant, salvation, and the nations.

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek…”
— Isaiah 11:10

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah…”
— Isaiah 11:12

Notice the pair:
the nations seek,
the dispersed are gathered.

That is very close to John 11 and John 12 together:
gathering the scattered children,
drawing all men.

Then Isaiah says of the Servant:

“I the LORD have called thee in righteousness… and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.”
— Isaiah 42:6

And again:

“It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:”
“I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”
— Isaiah 49:6

That verse is extremely important for your point. God says it is “a light thing” to stop at restoring Jacob alone. The Servant’s mission must go to the Gentiles, to the end of the earth. That is the exact opposite of a closed bloodline reading.

And again:

“All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”
— Isaiah 52:10

And again:

“Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD…”
“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer…”
“for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”
— Isaiah 56:6–7

Then the gathering line becomes explicit:

“The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.”
— Isaiah 56:8

That verse sounds astonishingly close to John 10:16:

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring…”
— John 10:16

Isaiah 56 says:
I gather Israel’s outcasts, and I gather others besides.

John 10 says:
I have sheep not of this fold; them also I must bring.

That is a very strong hyperlink.

And one more passage from Isaiah may matter for your specific point about “children” and inclusion beyond bloodline:

“In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:”
“Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”
— Isaiah 19:24–25

That is enormous. Egypt is called “my people.” Not because Egypt became Abraham by flesh, but because God’s mercy reaches beyond bloodline exclusivity.

Ezekiel gives the one-shepherd, gathered-one-people rope

This is one of the clearest backdrops for John 10 and John 11.

“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep…”
— Ezekiel 34:12

“And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries…”
— Ezekiel 34:13

“And I will set up one shepherd over them…”
— Ezekiel 34:23

That is very close to John 10:

“one fold, and one shepherd.”
— John 10:16

Then Ezekiel 37:

“I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side…”
— Ezekiel 37:21

“And I will make them one nation…”
— Ezekiel 37:22

“And one king shall be king to them all…”
— Ezekiel 37:22

“My servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd…”
— Ezekiel 37:24

John 11:52 sounds like the fulfillment direction of this:
not just political restoration,
but gathering into one through the death of Christ.

And Ezekiel 18, which you mentioned, adds the renewal dimension:

“Cast away from you all your transgressions… and make you a new heart and a new spirit…”
— Ezekiel 18:31

So yes, Ezekiel fits your renewal peg. God’s answer is new heart, new spirit, one shepherd, gathered people.

Hosea gives family language that matters for “children of God”

Hosea says:

“it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”
— Hosea 1:10

In its immediate setting, Hosea is speaking of covenant rupture and restoration connected to Israel. But that phrase becomes part of the Bible’s reservoir of restored-family language. It is not hard to see why later writers draw on it when speaking about God forming a people through mercy, not mere natural claim.

That helps explain why “children of God” in John carries covenant-family depth and not mere ethnic labeling.

Jonah is exactly the nerve you touched

Jonah wants mercy to terminate with his own people and not overflow to Nineveh. But God exposes that as a wrong heart.

“And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons…”
— Jonah 4:11

Jonah knows why he is angry:

“I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness…”
— Jonah 4:2

That is the problem for Jonah. God is merciful beyond Jonah’s comfort.

That is a very good prophetic mirror for later covenant possessiveness.

And yes, Jerusalem’s leadership in John often does look Jonah-like in this sense: they want covenant privilege, but resist the wideness of God’s mercy when it breaks their control and categories.

Caiaphas speaks in terms of national expediency:

“that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”
— John 11:50

But John immediately opens the prophecy wider than Caiaphas intended:

“and not for that nation only…”
— John 11:52

That is almost a Jonah correction built into the narrative.

Zechariah says the same thing in covenant-joining language

“And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people…”
— Zechariah 2:11

That is a very direct Old Testament witness that belonging to God’s people is not locked to flesh lineage alone.

Now bring all that back into John

When John says:

“Which were born… of God.”
— John 1:13

and

“other sheep I have, which are not of this fold…”
— John 10:16

and

“gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”
— John 11:52

and

“I… will draw all men unto me.”
— John 12:32

he is not inventing a brand-new category. He is drawing together lines already laid down in Genesis, Exodus, the Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Jonah, and Zechariah.

So I would state the rope this way:

The Old Testament promise was never “Abraham’s bloodline as a closed possession.”
It was “the promised Seed through Abraham, bringing blessing to the nations.”
Israel was the covenant vessel and historical line of promise.
But the goal was always larger: gathered peoples, one shepherd, one house of prayer, one saving name known among the nations, one family formed by God’s life-giving power.

That is why John can distinguish between Abraham’s seed in a fleshly sense and God’s children in a deeper covenantal sense.

Your renewal peg makes the whole pattern clearer

The real denominator is renewal by God’s life.

After the fall, humanity does not need mere genealogy. Humanity needs life.

John’s Gospel keeps saying that.

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”
— John 1:4

“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”
— John 5:21

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”
— John 6:63

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”
— John 7:38

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”
— John 10:10

So the children of God in John are not identified by preserved fleshline as such, but by receiving divine life through the Son.

That is why John 11:52 is so compelling. The death of Jesus is not just national protection. It is the means by which God gathers His life-given family into one.

I think your Jonah comparison is excellent.

Jonah resented mercy spilling outward.
Jerusalem’s leaders resisted the same wideness.
But God’s purpose was always bigger than their narrowness.

And that bigger purpose does not erase Israel’s role. It fulfills Israel’s calling through the Messiah, so that the blessing goes where God said it would go from the beginning: to the nations.

The next best step would be to build a tight “OT hyperlink chain” specifically under these four Johannine texts:

John 8:44–47
John 10:16
John 11:52
John 12:32

That would let us make the argument almost like a legal brief, passage by passage, without drifting.

Does the Old Testament talk about the children of God?

There is a very important distinction here: the Old Testament definitely uses God-family language, but not always for the same group. Some texts mean heavenly beings, some mean Israel corporately, and some point to restored covenant people.

Thought for 23s

Yes, it does.

But the Old Testament does **not** use that language in only one way. That is the key.

It speaks of "sons" or "children" of God in at least **three major senses**:

1. Heavenly beings

The clearest places are:

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair…"
— Genesis 6:2

"There were giants in the earth in those days… when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men…"
— Genesis 6:4

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them."
— Job 1:6

"Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD…"
— Job 2:1

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"
— Job 38:7

So yes, the Old Testament explicitly uses **"sons of God"** language before John does. But in these places it is not talking about redeemed humanity in the Johannine sense. It is heavenly-court language.

2. Israel as God's son / children

This is a second, very important category.

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:"
— Exodus 4:22

"Ye are the children of the LORD your God…"
— Deuteronomy 14:1

"Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee?"
— Deuteronomy 32:6

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect… They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children…”
— Deuteronomy 32:4–5

Here the Old Testament is clearly using family language for the covenant people.

So the OT absolutely does speak of God’s people as His children.

But notice: this is **covenant language**, not a bare statement that every physical descendant automatically stands right with God. Deuteronomy itself can call them His children and then accuse them of corruption and rebellion. So already in the Torah, child-language is covenantal and moral, not merely genealogical in a simplistic way.

3. Restored / gathered people called God’s sons

This is where it gets especially close to John.

Hosea says:

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea… and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”
— Hosea 1:10

That is one of the strongest Old Testament family texts for your question.

It is not just “Israel exists.”
It is covenant rupture, then mercy, then restored sonship language.

And Isaiah says:

“Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;”
“I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;”
“Even every one that is called by my name…”
— Isaiah 43:5–7

That is very important for John 11:52.

John says:

“that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”
— John 11:52

Isaiah says:

“bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.”
— Isaiah 43:6

That is a very strong hyperlink.

4. There is also “Most High” family language

Psalm 82 says:

“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.”
— Psalm 82:6

That verse is complex in context, but it still shows that the Old Testament can use exalted divine-family language for earthly rulers/judges under God’s authority.

So again, the OT absolutely has the category.

5. The king / Messiah as God’s Son

There is also singular son-language that matters for the larger rope:

“I will be his father, and he shall be my son.”
— 2 Samuel 7:14

“The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”
— Psalm 2:7

This is not “children of God” plural, but it is crucial because once the Messiah is the Son in the supreme sense, those gathered in Him can be understood as God’s family under the Son.

That becomes very important for later fulfillment.

So the answer is yes — but carefully

The Old Testament does talk about the children / sons of God.

But it uses that language across different categories:

heavenly beings,
Israel as covenant son/children,
restored covenant people,
rulers under God,
and the coming royal Son.

So when John says:

“the children of God that were scattered abroad”
— John 11:52

he is not inventing God-family language from nowhere.

He is drawing from an Old Testament reservoir.

The closest Old Testament ropes to John 11:52 are probably these

First, **Hosea 1:10**:

“Ye are the sons of the living God.”

Second, **Isaiah 43:5–7**:

“bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.”

Third, **Deuteronomy 14:1**:

“Ye are the children of the LORD your God.”

Those three together are very important.

Deuteronomy gives covenant child-language.
Hosea gives restoration-of-sonship language.
Isaiah gives gathered-sons-from-far language.

John 11:52 sounds very much like the convergence of those ideas.

One important guardrail

I would not say the Old Testament regularly uses the exact phrase **“children of God”** in the same concentrated Johannine way.

Rather, I would say:

the Old Testament gives the vocabulary and patterns,
and John gathers them up and sharpens them around Christ.

That is why in John the phrase becomes so loaded.

Because by the time you get to John 1:12–13, John makes a decisive move:

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God…”
“Which were born, not of blood… but of God.”
— John 1:12–13

So the Old Testament has the family language, but John re-centers it unmistakably in the Son and in birth from God rather than bloodline alone.

My answer in one sentence would be:

Yes, the Old Testament absolutely talks about God’s sons/children, but in multiple layers, and John 11:52 appears to draw especially on covenant-child, restoration, and gathering language rather than on mere national lineage by itself.

The next step that would be most useful is to line up **Deuteronomy 14:1, Hosea 1:10, Isaiah 43:5–7, John 1:12–13, and John 11:52** and see whether John is deliberately building from those exact ropes.

I am not trying to make a new doctrine, or change the intent of the Bible in any way, however, I do want to try and understand capacity; I think I see, in relation to image bearers (not heavenly beings), that the Old Testament articulates something different to the New Testament, before, and after, Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension; and John, in his gospel, is articulating the testimony of His observations and acquired knowledge, as on who saw, and heard, and handled; a revealed change in potential status of the children of Adam. Where identity to Adam is connected to seed, and where Jesus makes a new seed, through/starting-with belief and confession, there is a conversion for the children of God. Where they thought their identity (Israelites) came from physical seed, Ezekiel 18 redefines what righteousness and leading to life or death is; and where Isaiah is giving clues, without revealing the purpose of God in and through the coming Jesus-Messiah, the instruction to Abraham, by YHWH is to “walk with Me [YHWH], and teach your children to do so.” In retrospect, the seed of Abraham would lead to Jesus, as descendant, but the walk, and teaching the children (descipleship), was the means for justification all along. This is what the Egyptians, and Ninevites, and some Moabites, and some Cannanites, and Caleb, and others show us in scripture. But, in the Old Testament, without enthroned Jesus, they could only be the children of YHWH your God, to bring the children “of God”. This may tie into the multistage “image” of God I mapped out. 1. Formed from the earth, made alive, capacity to walk with God 2. Belief and confession, renewed spirit, still in the flesh, but a living dwelling place of God’s Spirit. 3. Glorified, in Christ, just as Jesus is in the Father, united by the Spirit, the fullness of making man in their image. Not God, but adopted, as inheritance, in a completed state. The transition is Old Testament, Children in belief of the promise, waiting on the Messiah, to belief in the promise, Messiah enthroned, capable of hosting the Holy Spirit, and being now, of God.

You’re drawing a distinction of capacity and stage, not trying to rewrite the story. I think that is a good direction, and John 7:39 is one of the strongest anchors for it.

Thought for 52s

I think you are seeing something real, and I would state it this way:

There is a **real before-and-after in capacity, access, and manifestation** between the promise era and the enthronement era of Christ. But I would frame it as **fulfillment and unveiling**, not as though God changed His mind or created a different kind of righteousness.

The moral line was always the same:
faith, hearing, obedience, walking with God, life from God.

But the **stage of redemptive accomplishment** changed when Jesus died, rose, ascended, and sent the Spirit.

That is very close to what John records.

1. The Old Testament already shows that life and identity were never merely bloodline

You are right to point to Abraham, Ezekiel 18, the nations, and the foreigners who responded in faith.

Abraham:

"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."
— Genesis 15:6

Abraham's charge:

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD…"
— Genesis 18:19

So yes, the line was never "physical descent alone saves." The line was always covenantally moral and relational: believe God, walk in His way, teach your children.

Ezekiel 18 presses that hard:

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."
— Ezekiel 18:20

"But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right…"
— Ezekiel 18:5

"When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby."
— Ezekiel 18:26

“Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.”
— Ezekiel 18:27

That chapter does not teach salvation by ethnic identity. It teaches that life and death are bound up with one’s actual relation to God.

And the foreigners you named really do witness to that same pattern.

Rahab believed and acted.
Ruth cleaved to the God of Israel.
Naaman obeyed and was cleansed.
Nineveh repented at the word of God.
Caleb is singled out because “he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully.”
— Numbers 14:24

So I agree: the Old Testament already undermines the idea that fleshline by itself defines the true people of God.

2. But the Old Testament also shows that something greater was still future

This is where your “capacity” language becomes useful.

The prophets do not merely call people back to old arrangements. They point to something not yet fully given.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you…”
— Ezekiel 36:26

“And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes…”
— Ezekiel 36:27

Jeremiah says:

“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts…”
— Jeremiah 31:33

So the Old Testament itself says: yes, people can believe and walk with God now, but a fuller inward work is coming.

That is why I would say your distinction is not artificial. The Hebrew Scriptures themselves point to a coming transition.

3. John expressly marks a before-and-after tied to Jesus' glorification

This is the strongest support for your thought.

John says:

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: **for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.**"
— John 7:39

That is not a small statement.

It does not mean the Spirit had never operated in the Old Testament. Clearly He had. But John says there is a form of reception tied to believing on the glorified Christ that was **not yet** in place before Jesus' glorification.

Then Jesus says:

"he dwelleth with you, and shall be **in** you."
— John 14:17

Again, that is a before/after distinction.

With you.
Then in you.

Then:

"At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."
— John 14:20

That is very close to your "multistage image" thought. There is a new union-language that belongs to the post-glorification situation.

Then after the resurrection Jesus says:

"I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."
— John 20:17

And then:

"he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."
— John 20:22

So yes, John really does testify to an unveiled, post-resurrection, post-glorification condition.

4. John's Gospel says the children of God are formed through the Son

This is where your "conversion for the children of Adam" language becomes very strong.

John opens with:

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God…"
— John 1:12

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
— John 1:13

Then Jesus says:

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
— John 3:3

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."
— John 3:6

So John does not deny Adamic humanity. He shows that Adamic humanity is not enough.

Natural birth gives fleshly life.
Birth from God gives a new filial identity.

That fits your distinction very well.

5. I would tighten one part of your wording

I would not quite say that Old Testament believers could only be "children of YHWH your God" but not yet "children of God," as though the titles themselves by wording alone prove the entire distinction.

I think the stronger case is this:

Old Testament believers truly belonged to God in promise, faith, and covenant relation.
But the **Son's enthronement**, the **finished atonement**, and the **indwelling Spirit** bring that family identity into a new, accomplished, manifested form.

In other words:

not no sonship before,
but sonship not yet unveiled and effected in the same fullness as after the glorification of Christ.

That keeps continuity and still preserves the real transition you are seeing.

6. Hebrews strongly supports your point about staged completion

Hebrews says of the elders:

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises…”
— Hebrews 11:13

And again:

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:”
“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”
— Hebrews 11:39–40

That is a major text for your thought.

They were real believers.
They were not fake.
But something awaited completion.

That is exactly the kind of staged reality you are describing.

7. Paul also gives you the “seed to sonship in Christ” line

You mentioned seed, justification, and Christ.

Paul says:

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made… And to thy seed, which is Christ.”
— Galatians 3:16

Then:

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”
— Galatians 3:26

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
— Galatians 3:29

That is very close to your statement.

The line of promise leads to Christ the Seed.
Those who are Christ's become Abraham's seed in Him.
So identity is re-centered in the Messiah, not in fleshline alone.

Then Galatians 4 adds adoption language:

"that we might receive the adoption of sons."
— Galatians 4:5

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts…"
— Galatians 4:6

Notice again the same cluster:
Son, adoption, Spirit, hearts.

That matches John very well.

8. Your three-stage image pattern is very close to a biblical progression

I would phrase your three stages like this.

First, Adamic image-bearing life:
man formed from dust, alive before God, with capacity for relation, but fallen in Adam.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image…"
— Genesis 1:26

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life…"
— Genesis 2:7

Second, renewed life in the present age through the enthroned Christ:
born of God, indwelt by the Spirit, still in mortal flesh, yet already participating in the life of the age to come.

"he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."
— John 14:17

"Christ in you, the hope of glory."
— Colossians 1:27

Third, completed conformity in glory:
not God, but glorified, adopted heirs, fully conformed to the Son.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son…”
— Romans 8:29

“we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”
— Romans 8:23

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him…”
— 1 John 3:2

That is a very strong three-stage arc:
image-bearing,
renewed indwelling life,
glorified completion.

9. So I think your central thesis can be stated more tightly like this

From Adam onward, the issue was always life from God, not bloodline alone.
The Old Testament already showed that righteousness and belonging were tied to faith, hearing, obedience, and walking with God; and it already gave witnesses from the nations.
But the prophets also testified that a fuller inward renewal was still coming.
John then records that with the death, resurrection, glorification, and enthronement of Jesus, a real transition took place: the Spirit would be given in a new way, believers would be born of God through receiving the Son, and the children of God would be gathered into one in Him.
The final stage remains future glorification.

That, to me, is very close to the Bible’s own shape.

10. One sentence I would change for precision

You said:

“the walk, and teaching the children (descipleship), was the means for justification all along.”

I would refine that to:

faith in God’s promise was the root, and the walk was the manifested fruit of that faith.

Because Genesis 15:6 is too important to let the order blur.

Abraham believed, and it was counted.
Then Abraham walked, obeyed, and taught his house.

That keeps the sequence cleaner.

11. My conclusion

I do think you are seeing a real biblical distinction.

Not a new doctrine.
Not a change in God's moral standard.
But a real transition in redemptive stage and filial capacity:

promise before accomplishment,
Spirit promised before indwelling fullness,
Messiah expected before Messiah enthroned,
children awaiting inheritance before sons brought into manifested union in the Son.

John is one of the clearest witnesses to that transition.

The single most important verse under your whole thought may be:

"for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."
— John 7:39

That verse gives you the hinge.

From there, John 1:12–13, John 14:17–20, John 20:17–22, Hebrews 11:39–40, Galatians 3:16–29, and Romans 8:14–23 all snap into place around it.

The next clean step would be to build this as a two-column chain:
before glorification / after glorification, using only exact verses.

Yes, let's take the next clean step would be to build this as a two-column chain: before glorification / after glorification, using only exact verses.

I'm building it around the hinge verse first, then only the clearest matching texts on each side so it stays clean and does not overstate the case.

Thought for 1m 11s

Yes. Here is the clean chain, built around the hinge.

I am treating this as **promise / anticipation before glorification** and **accomplishment / manifestation after glorification**.

The hinge

“(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: **for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.**)”
— John 7:39

That verse gives the transition.

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1) Covenant-child language before; born-of-God language after

Before glorification

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, **Israel is my son, even my firstborn**:”
— Exodus 4:22

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that **in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.**”
— Hosea 1:10

After glorification

“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:”
“Which were born, **not of blood**, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God.**”
— John 1:12–13

“For ye are **all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**”
— Galatians 3:26

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2) New heart and Spirit promised before; Spirit given after

Before glorification

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”
“And **I will put my spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”
— Ezekiel 36:26–27

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
— Jeremiah 31:33

After glorification

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for **he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**”
— John 14:17

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost**:”
— John 20:22

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father **the promise of the Holy Ghost**, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”
— Acts 2:33

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3) Sons and daughters gathered from far before; children of God gathered into one after

Before glorification

“Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;”
“I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: **bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth**;”
“Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”
— Isaiah 43:5–7

“The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, **Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.**”
— Isaiah 56:8

After glorification

“And not for that nation only, but that also he should **gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.**”
— John 11:52

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, **will draw all men unto me.**”
— John 12:32

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4) One shepherd promised before; one flock declared after

Before glorification

“And **I will set up one shepherd over them**, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.”
— Ezekiel 34:23

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and **will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:**”
“And **I will make them one nation** in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and **one king shall be king to them all**: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:”
“And **David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd**…”
— Ezekiel 37:21–22, 24

After glorification

“And **other sheep I have, which are not of this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and **there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**”
— John 10:16

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”
“That **they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us…”
— John 17:20–21

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5) Promise-line before; Seed-centered identity after

Before glorification

“And in thee shall **all families of the earth be blessed**.”
— Genesis 12:3

“And in thy **seed** shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”
— Genesis 22:18

After glorification

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, **And to thy seed, which is Christ.**”
— Galatians 3:16

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye **Abraham’s seed**, and heirs according to the promise.”
— Galatians 3:29

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6) Walking with God before; life in the Son after

Before glorification

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and **they shall keep the way of the LORD**, to do justice and judgment…”
— Genesis 18:19

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”
— Ezekiel 18:20

“Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, **he shall save his soul alive.**”
— Ezekiel 18:27

After glorification

“Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life**: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”
— John 11:25

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”
— John 5:24

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7) God with His people before; God in His people after

Before glorification

“My tabernacle also shall be **with them**: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
— Ezekiel 37:27

After glorification

“At that day ye shall know that **I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.**”
— John 14:20

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one…”
— John 17:23

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8) Faith real before; completion awaited; better thing provided after

Before glorification

“These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them…”
— Hebrews 11:13

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, **received not the promise**:”
— Hebrews 11:39

After glorification

“God having provided **some better thing for us**, that they without us should not be made perfect.”
— Hebrews 11:40

“For by one offering **he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**”
— Hebrews 10:14

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9) Children in promise before; manifested sonship and indwelling Spirit after

Before glorification

“And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, **Ye are the sons of the living God.**”
— Hosea 1:10

After glorification

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **they are the sons of God.**”
— Romans 8:14

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received **the Spirit of adoption**, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”
— Romans 8:15

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that **we are the children of God**:”
— Romans 8:16

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10) Awaited likeness before; completed conformity still future

Before glorification

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”
— Romans 8:29

After glorification, but not yet fully manifested

“Beloved, **now are we the sons of God**, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear, we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.”
— 1 John 3:2

What the chain seems to show

The verses do **not** show two different ways of life or two different Gods.

They show:

before glorification, there is real faith, real promise, real covenant child-language, real anticipation, real prophecy, real gathering language, real promised renewal;

after glorification, there is declared accomplishment in Christ, the Spirit given because Jesus is glorified, birth not of blood but of God, gathering into one, one flock under one shepherd, adoption, indwelling, and open identification as children of God by faith in Christ.

So the distinction you were seeing can be stated very simply:

before glorification: promised, awaited, prophesied, believed
after glorification: given, manifested, gathered, indwelt

And John 7:39 is the hinge that makes that reading hard to ignore.

I can take this one more step and turn it into a **single flowing argument**, from Genesis to John to Hebrews, without the section breaks.

Genesis 22:18 is critical, especially tethered to Galatians 3:16, this is the promised messiah, not the promised DNA bloodline of Abraham. “Because thou hast obeyed”, the obedience, because of faith, is part of the walk, that leads to being accounted for righteousness. The religious deviance, dogma, and mischaracterization, the repeated and emphasized narrative preloads interpretation and applicatio; through Eves seed would be one, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, eventually David, would be one seed; but that is the ONE Seed; the blessing of the nations is through seed, bloodline; but God’s children are through faith, obedience to the command, and the walk. Genesis 18:19 was and is the concurrent thread, but Jesus fulfills the justice and judgement fully, and in Him, we are made perfect; we obey to the extent of capacity and self control, this is our fruit, but we are identified in him; we live by faith unto inheritance, but believe unto salvation. John 11:25 John 17:23 Hebrews 10:14, 11:39
Thought for 14s

Yes. This is a very tight rope.

What you are seeing is not “the nations are blessed by Abraham’s DNA.” It is:

the **one promised Seed** comes through Abraham’s line,
and the **blessing of the nations** comes through that one Seed.

Paul makes that explicit:

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, **And to thy seed, which is Christ.**”
— Galatians 3:16

So Genesis 22:18 cannot be flattened into “national bloodline = the blessing.”

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; **because thou hast obeyed my voice.**”
— Genesis 22:18

That obedience does matter. But, as you said, it is not obedience replacing faith. It is obedience as the walk of faith. Genesis already gave the order:

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”
— Genesis 15:6

Then later, Genesis 22 shows the faith walking, obeying, and being openly confirmed. So the line is:

belief,
counted righteousness,

obedient walk,
confirmed testimony.

And Genesis 18:19 is the concurrent thread you identified:

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and **they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment**…”
— Genesis 18:19

That is not the Messiah-line text in the narrow sense. That is the household-walk text. So Abraham carries both threads:

the line through which the Seed comes,
and the pattern of faith taught as a way.

That helps distinguish two things that get blurred all the time:

The **Seed** is one.
The **children** are many.

The Seed is Christ.
The children are those identified in Him.

So I think your statement can be sharpened like this:

The Abrahamic bloodline was the carrier line of the promised Messiah.
But the children of God are not defined by that bloodline.
They are defined by faith in the promised Seed, and therefore by relation to Christ.

That fits John very well.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God…”
— John 1:12

“Which were born, **not of blood**… but of God.”
— John 1:13

That is exactly where John cuts the knot.
Not of blood.
Of God.

So yes, the blessing comes through the one Seed’s arrival in history through Abraham’s line, but the filial identity of God’s children is through believing union with that Seed.

That is why John 11:52 is so important:

“and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one **the children of God** that were scattered abroad.”
— John 11:52

John does not say, “the bloodline of Abraham scattered abroad.”
He says, “the children of God.”

And then John 17 gives the perfection-language that matches Hebrews:

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be **made perfect in one**…”
— John 17:23

Hebrews says:

“For by one offering he hath **perfected for ever** them that are sanctified.”
— Hebrews 10:14

And then:

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:”
“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be **made perfect**.”
— Hebrews 11:39–40

That is a very strong chain.

Before Christ’s finished work, they truly believed.
But the perfected state awaited His offering.

Then John 11:25 stands right in the middle of it:

“Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life**: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”
— John 11:25

So the final center is not bloodline, but life in the Son.

I think the clean synthesis is this:

Genesis 15:6 gives the root: faith counted as righteousness.
Genesis 18:19 gives the walk: teaching children the way of the LORD.
Genesis 22:18 gives the Seed: the nations blessed through the one coming Seed, with Abraham’s obedient faith openly vindicated.
Galatians 3:16 names that Seed: Christ.
John 1:12–13 says God’s children are born not of blood, but of God through receiving the Son.
John 11:52 says Christ dies to gather those children into one.

John 17:23 says they are made perfect in one.
Hebrews 10:14 says that perfection is secured by one offering.
Hebrews 11:39–40 says the faithful before Christ awaited that completion.

So yes, I think your distinction is right:

the **promise-line** is bloodline unto Christ,
but the **children-of-God line** is faith-union in Christ.

And your closing sentence is well put:

we are identified in Him.

That preserves both sides:
salvation in Him,
and fruit according to our present capacity,
without confusing our imperfect obedience with His perfect justice and judgment fulfilled for us.

A very compact thesis form would be:

The nations are blessed through Abraham because the one promised Seed came through Abraham's line; but the children of God are not constituted by Abrahamic blood, rather by faith in the Seed, Christ, whose one offering perfects His people and gathers them into one.

Let's lock all of this, Then, let's contrast the notion that bloodline is the narrative of the Israeli people, and how religions make themselves the center, or are elevated, and how this mindset is strikingly different than image bearers as equals, design to love and esteem each other, as the greatest measurement of honor, respect, and righteous fear of the one true God YHWH of the Bible.
Updated memory
Thought for 8s

Locked.

The contrast you want is important, but it has to be stated carefully so we do not swing from one error into another.

The Bible does **not** make bloodline the final narrative center.

But the Bible also does **not** erase Israel's historical role.

Israel is the covenant vessel, the promise-carrier line, the nation through whom the one Seed would come. That is real. But Israel was never meant to become the end in itself. The line was unto Christ, and Christ unto the blessing of the nations.

That is why Scripture says:

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”
— Genesis 22:18

And Paul says:

“And to thy seed, which is Christ.”
— Galatians 3:16

So the center is not bloodline as bloodline.
The center is the promised Seed.

That means religion goes wrong when it takes a real stewardship, a real promise-history, or a real covenant role, and turns it into self-exaltation.

That is one of the oldest sins in Scripture.

1. God’s pattern is not self-centering, but God-centering

Israel’s election was not a declaration of self-glory. It was vocation under mercy.

“The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people…”
“But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers…”
— Deuteronomy 7:7–8

So even Israel’s chosenness was not grounded in fleshly superiority. It was grounded in God’s love and oath.

And Abraham himself was chosen unto a purpose larger than himself:

“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
— Genesis 12:3

That means the covenant line was always outward-facing.

A religion becomes diseased when it takes “God entrusted us with something” and turns it into “therefore we are the center, and others exist beneath us.”

That is the opposite of the Abrahamic mission.

2. Bloodline can become a false ground of confidence

John the Baptist attacks this directly:

“And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father…”
— Matthew 3:9

And Jesus does the same:

“I know that ye are Abraham’s seed…”
— John 8:37

But then:

“If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.”
— John 8:39

That is the distinction we have been tracing.

Physical descent may be historically true.
But it is not the same thing as covenant likeness, faith, or filial identity before God.

Religion loves to collapse those categories because it gives men something visible to boast in.

Paul tears that down too:

“For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:”
— Romans 9:6

And:

“They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”
— Romans 9:8

So the biblical pattern is: role, stewardship, and history are real, but boasting in flesh is condemned.

3. Religion tends to make itself the center

This is not only an Israel problem. It is a human problem.

Every religious system is tempted to say:

we are the center,
we possess God,
we are the clean ones,

others are peripheral,
our group identity is righteousness.

But Scripture keeps breaking that idol.

The prophet says:

“For my house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”
— Isaiah 56:7

And immediately:

“The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.”
— Isaiah 56:8

That is devastating to religious self-enclosure.

God says:
yes, I gather Israel’s outcasts,
and I gather others too.

So the true movement of Scripture is not toward a group worshiping itself, but toward God gathering a people for His name from every side.

That is why Jonah is such a searching mirror. Jonah wanted covenant privilege without covenant mercy spilling outward. But God exposes Jonah’s heart.

“And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city…”
— Jonah 4:11

The problem with religion at its worst is that it wants God’s gifts without God’s heart.

4. The image of God cuts against pride and contempt

Now to your deeper point: image bearers.

The opening chapters of Genesis do not begin with Israel. They begin with Adam.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness…”
— Genesis 1:26

“So God created man in his own image…”
— Genesis 1:27

That means the first great category is not Jew and Gentile.
It is image-bearer before God.

Israel comes later in the story as covenant instrument, not as replacement of humanity itself.

So if a religion forgets the image of God in man, it will begin to despise, rank, and devalue people in ways that contradict the Creator.

James draws that line very sharply:

“Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.”
— James 3:9

That is a major witness. To mistreat image-bearers is not a small social failure. It is an offense against the God whose likeness they bear.

5. The law itself required honor toward the other

Even in Israel’s own covenant order, God did not teach contempt for the outsider.

“But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself…”
— Leviticus 19:34

That is extraordinary.

Not merely tolerate him.
Not merely use him.
Love him as thyself.

Why?

“for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”
— Leviticus 19:34

So YHWH ties the treatment of the outsider to His own name.

That means love of neighbor and love of stranger are not optional extras. They are measures of whether one actually fears the LORD.

6. The prophets rebuke the religion that forgets justice and mercy

God’s complaint is never merely ritual error. It is pride, oppression, hardness, and lovelessness.

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”
— Micah 6:8

Notice that:
not self-exaltation,
not ethnic boasting,
not ritual centrality for its own sake.

Justice.
Mercy.
Humility before God.

And Abraham’s own house-thread said the same:

“they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment…”
— Genesis 18:19

So the measure was always moral and relational, not merely genealogical.

7. Jesus brings the center back to God’s love and man’s value

When Jesus is asked about the great commandment, He does not answer with bloodline prestige.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart…”
— Matthew 22:37

And:

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”
— Matthew 22:39

Then:

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”
— Matthew 22:40

That is enormous.

The whole law and prophets hang on love of God and neighbor.

So when religion becomes self-referential, loveless, and contemptuous, it is not becoming more biblical. It is departing from the very weight of the law and prophets.

And Jesus' parable of the Samaritan makes the point even sharper: the neighbor is not just your in-group. The one who shows mercy is the one nearest the heart of God.

8. In Christ, superiority collapses without erasing distinction

Paul says:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek… for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."
— Galatians 3:28

That does not mean history disappears or embodied distinctions cease to exist. It means superiority before God is shattered in Christ.

And then the church is told:

"In honour preferring one another;"
— Romans 12:10

And:

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."
— Ephesians 5:21

That is very close to your point.

Honor, respect, esteem, mutual love, and righteous fear of God belong together.

Not because all callings are identical.
But because all stand under one Lord, and all human beings bear His image.

9. The true center is YHWH revealed in Christ

So the contrast can be stated like this:

False religion says:
our bloodline, our system, our tribe, our status, our institution is the center.

Biblical faith says:
YHWH is the center, Christ is the Seed and fulfillment, and human beings are image-bearers to be treated with justice, mercy, and love.

False religion turns stewardship into superiority.
Biblical faith turns stewardship into service.

False religion feeds contempt.
Biblical faith produces humility.

False religion makes others peripheral.
Biblical faith says the nations were in God's merciful purpose all along.

10. A careful final formulation

I would not say "the bloodline is the narrative of the Israeli people" in an absolute sense, because that can sound like Israel's whole biblical role is reducible to flesh. Scripture gives Israel real covenant history, law, temple, prophets, promises, and Messiah-line significance.

But I would say this:

The error is when bloodline, religion, or covenant privilege is treated as the final ground of identity and superiority, rather than as a servant-role in God's purpose to bless, gather, and renew image-bearers through the one Seed, Christ.

Then the positive side:

The righteous fear of YHWH is shown not by making ourselves the center, but by loving Him supremely and honoring those made in His image with justice, mercy, humility, and truth.

That is a much cleaner biblical contrast.

A compact thesis form would be:

Scripture does not center bloodline, tribe, or religious status as ultimate; it centers YHWH's purpose fulfilled in the one Seed, Christ, and measures true honor of God by faith working through love, justice, mercy, and humble regard for fellow image-bearers.

In a short reply, who can I listen to in YouTube who shares similar opinions that I can learn from. I only know of Tim Mackie who is mentally stimulating to me, who seeks and discerns deeper, accurate, truths in the Bible.

I'm checking current YouTube-based options so I only name people who are actually there and likely fit the kind of Bible-threading, literary, and canonical reading you're after.

Thought for 25s

Closest fits I'd point you to:

- **Carmen Joy Imes** — probably the nearest match to your **image-bearing / OT-thread / canonical** interest. Her channel is active, and she teaches OT at Biola/Talbot; she also has material specifically on **God's image** and **God's family**.

- **Michael Heiser / Naked Bible** — very good for **deep hyperlinking**, OT background, and seeing how NT authors use the OT. There is an active YouTube channel with Naked Bible uploads and lots of archived Heiser material.
- **N.T. Wright Online** — strong on **big-picture biblical theology**, resurrection, kingdom, and fulfillment across the whole Bible.
- **BibleProject / Tim Mackie Archives** — since you already like Mackie, the official BibleProject channel plus the Tim Mackie archives will give you much more long-form material.

My two best bets for you are **Carmen Joy Imes** and **Michael Heiser**.

"Biblical faith says the nations were in God's merciful purpose all along." You made that statement, and it is a belief of mine. Why does this concept seem foreign? Is it because of dominant narrative, and overlooking the glimpses of the nations; because the Old Testament does "zoom in" on Israel, and nations tend to be "aggressors", and likened to "bad guys and villains", but western culture can justify ourselves, that we don't see ourselves like the other nations, when I. Fact we are just like the other nations; and all nations, including the line of Abraham are guilty of the same things.
Thought for 14s

Yes. I think that is a big part of why it feels foreign.

It seems foreign mostly because the Bible's **camera zooms in on Israel**, while God's **purpose is wider than the camera frame**.

Israel is the covenant line, the promise vessel, the nation through whom the Seed would come. So the story spends a lot of time there. That zoom-in can make readers feel like Israel is the final center, when really Israel is the **chosen instrument** in a larger mercy plan.

That larger plan was there from the start:

"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
— Genesis 12:3

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed…"
— Genesis 22:18

So yes, the dominant reading problem is often this: people confuse the **line of promise** with the **final object of mercy**.

Another reason it feels foreign is that the nations are often on the page as enemies, invaders, idolaters, or oppressors. That makes them memorable as threats. But that is partly because the narrative often shows them where they intersect Israel's covenant history. The story is not saying, "Israel good, nations bad." It is showing the covenant line under pressure. When the Bible steps back and gives God's larger purpose, the nations are there again and again.

For example:

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them…”
— Exodus 12:38

“the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself…”
— Leviticus 19:34

“Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel… Hear thou in heaven… that all people of the earth may know thy name…”
— 1 Kings 8:41–43

“It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob… I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles…”
— Isaiah 49:6

“The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him…”
— Isaiah 56:8

“And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city…”
— Jonah 4:11

So the mercy clues are not rare. They are just often quieter than the war scenes and judgment scenes.

And yes, Western readers often make another mistake: we instinctively cast ourselves as Israel, the insiders, the “good side,” instead of reading humbly enough to realize that we are often much more like Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, or the rebellious crowd. That blinds us.

Paul levels that pride:

“For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
— Romans 3:22–23

So I think your statement is right: all nations are guilty, and that includes Abraham’s line in the flesh. Scripture says that too.

“They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy…”
— Psalm 14:3

“For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:”
— Romans 9:6

So the real divide in Scripture is not finally **Israelite vs nation**, but **faith vs unbelief**, **hearing vs refusing**, **life vs death**, **of God vs not hearing God’s words**.

“He that is of God heareth God’s words…”
— John 8:47

That is why the mercy-to-the-nations theme feels foreign:
human pride likes a story where “our group” is central and superior.
But the Bible keeps breaking that idol.

The sharper way to say it is:

The Old Testament zooms in on Israel because the promised Seed comes through that line, but the moral problem is universal, the guilt is universal, and the mercy purpose was always wider than Israel alone.

One sentence summary:

It feels foreign because readers often mistake the Bible’s covenant camera-focus on Israel for God’s ultimate mercy boundary, and pride prefers insider stories over the humbling truth that all nations alike are guilty and all mercy comes from God alone.