

Isaac

vs.

Ishmael



Child of
Promise



Child of
Flesh



Faith



Works

Jacob

vs.

Esau



Child of
Grace



Child of
Right

It's not by works or by position of birth that we have any standing with God. It is God's Grace, effective through faith, that puts us in the Family of God.

Prior to Jesus it was thought that simple membership in the Jewish nation made one a preferred child of God. Paul equates this thinking to being equivalent to Ishmael being the child of promise (salvation by works) or Esau getting the promises (salvation by right of birth). Jacob didn't deserve God's mercy, but he got it. Likewise, we don't deserve God's mercy, but thanks to Jesus Christ we receive it by Faith.