

Question

Was Hagar a Jewess who converted? It's hard to imagine that someone could live in Avraham's house for so long and not be inspired to convert. Nor does it make sense either that Avraham would live together with non-Jew who didn't convert. But if yes, why would Yishmael not be considered a Jew?

In general: When exactly does Avraham become the first Jew? Is it when he finds G-d? when he goes to Eretz Yisrael? when he has the Bris?

Why are Shem, or Mesushelach or Chanoch not considered Jews?

Early Tzaddikim

Many righteous individuals can be identified that lived prior to Avraham Avinu. The Torah relates that Chanoch "*walked with G-d,*" and similarly, Noah is described as "*a righteous man, he was perfect in his generations; Noah walked with G-d.*" The Medrash records Mesushelach, Shem and Ever as having been righteous, learned men as well. In what, then, lies the uniqueness and specialty of Avraham Avinu?

Notwithstanding the righteousness of these personalities, [REDACTED]

Furthermore, not all of them were successful in [REDACTED]

The achievements of these great men was limited to what [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Indeed, this is a hallmark of the Seven Noahide Laws, whose sole purpose is to preserve the smooth order of the world, i.e., to elevate the person and world as far as they can be raised [REDACTED]

Hence, these people were unsuccessful [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] No nation resulted from these outstanding yet private individuals.³

¹ לקו"ש (טו, 83 ואילך)

² לקו"ש (טו, 48 ואילך)

³ כלי יקר (בראשית כד, ג)