

Ishmael

A Prophecy for Today

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We are approaching the anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center. It is just a little over a week away. I thought it would be appropriate as we approached this time to look at one of the main actors in this nearly 4,000-year dispute between the descendants of Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael.

The news media and our generally non-judgmental culture have avoided placing the blame for these attacks on young men of Islamic Fundamentalism, you might call it, ideas, and beliefs. But 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals, and at least a few of the others were Egyptians. They were not Palestinians. They were not Iranians. They were not Turks, but Arabs—what we would call biblically Ishmaelites.

Most were probably adherents of Wahhabism. I do not know if any of you know what Wahhabism is, but it is a militant Saudi version of Islam. We went on the Internet to try to find a very succinct definition of what Wahhabism is, and I found one at the *Encyclopedia of the Orient*. It says this:

Wahhabism is a movement in Islam from the mid 18th century calling for a renewal of the Muslim spirit [That is very interesting.] with cleansing of the moral, and removing of all innovations to Islam [meaning anything that is non-Islamic has to be gotten rid of]. The movement [it goes on] has played an important role in the funding of Saudi Arabia. Much of the money that Saudi Arabia uses comes from Wahhabis because they own the wells.

They own the means of making money for the nation of Saudi Arabia, which is pretty much all oil.

Wahhabism is known for its conservative regulations which have impact on all aspects of life. [This next sentence we do not

understand at all]: It has been recognized as being in accordance with Ibn Hambali doctrine. [I have no idea what Ibn Hambali doctrine is. Going on] The term ‘Wahhabism’ is not used by Wahhabis. The term they use is ‘muwahhidan.’ Wahhabism is a term given to them by their opponents and is now used by both European scholars and most Arabs. The name Wahhidans comes from their founder Abu I Wahhab, and this term in Arabic means Unitarians [which is kind of interesting].

Prohibitions of Wahhabism:

No other object for worship than Allah. Holy men or women must not be used to win favors from God. No other name than the names of Allah may enter a prayer. No smoking of tobacco, no shaving of beard, no abuse of language, no rosaries. [That is kind of funny.] And mosques must be built without minarets, and all forms of ornamentation.

And the commandments of Wahhabism (there are three of them in particular here):

All men must attend public prayer. Alms must be paid from all income [a type of tithing], and slaughters [killing animals] according to halal must be controlled for their lifestyle, not only for doing the basic rituals correctly.

I am not exactly sure what that means, but I think it means that they are not supposed to be doing it just because it is a ritualistic practice that is commanded, but they are supposed to do it because their lifestyles demand that they make sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins.

I think is kind of interesting that they call themselves, or others call them, ‘Unitarians’ because they are basically trying to get all Islam into one unified force, one unified religion, and they are so conservative that they are beyond fundamentalists. They go all the way back to the strict aspects of Islam under Muhammad.

That is just the background, because what I would really like to talk about today is Ishmael. And once we get through talking about Ishmael, you will see why Wahhabism is part of all of this.

Let us start in Genesis 16, verse 10. The whole of Genesis 16 is the preconception, conception, and the birth of Ishmael. Remember Sarah was barren, so she asked Abraham if she could use Hagar as a surrogate. Abraham says, "Go ahead, whatever you want to do." So a child was conceived and Hagar used this to lord it over Sarah. And so Sarah treated her roughly and then Hagar decided to leave, so she went out in the desert. And God met her there.

Let us pick this up in verse 10,

Genesis 16:10-12 Then the Angel of the LORD said to her [after telling her that she was supposed to go back to Sarah and Abraham, and submit herself], "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction. [That is what his name means, 'God has heard']. He [this is very important] shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Now this prophecy in verse 12 is what concerns us most, because God is not just speaking here of Ishmael himself, but traits of his descendants—his progeny.

So I would like to take each one of these phrases and take a look at what they mean.

The first one is that *he shall be a wild man*. Now this sounds kind of funny, because it literally means, *he shall be a wild ass-man*. Now if I put a little bit different emphasis there, you might think that it meant what it would mean today, but it actually does not. What it really means is that he will live much like the wild asses of the desert do.

Let us go to Job 11, verse 12. We will see here in Job what this term *a wild ass of a man, or a wild-ass man* actually means.

Now this is a very interesting scripture. It is very hard to interpret what it actually means, but I think Adam Clarke gives a good understanding of it. It says here in the *New King James*:

Job 11:12 For an empty-headed man will be wise when a wild donkey's colt is born a man.

This is what Adam Clarke says that it means. It is kind of a paraphrase: “A vain man is puffed up with pride, and he supposes himself to be born free like the wild ass's colt.” Now his comment on this: “Man is full of self-conceit, and imagines himself born to act as he pleases, to roam at large, to be under no control, and to be accountable to no one for his actions.” So in a very succinct way we have a nutshell version of Ishmael's personality. Here we have it in just a few words: proud, nomadic, independent, uncontrollable; he thinks himself unaccountable.

Let us go back to Genesis 16:12 and take the next phrase. “His hand shall be against every man.” Now this is very similar to what Isaac prophesized about Esau. We can just put there quickly Genesis 27:40 where you will remember, Jacob has at this point, gotten the birthright and the blessing, and Esau comes to Isaac and says, “What do you have for me? You must have something for me.” And so this is the prophecy that Isaac gives verse 39,

Genesis 27:39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:
"Behold, your dwelling shall be of [from] the fatness of the earth
[he will not have much of what is good], and of the dew of heaven
from above.

And then, verse 40 in particular:

Genesis 27:40 “By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve
your brother. . .”

But “his hand against every man” is very similar to “by your sword you shall live.” Raising one's hand against another is a Hebraism—a Hebraic illustration—of strife.

What God is saying to Hagar here is that Ishmael and his descendants will always be in conflict. We can see this in other places.

This is the northern king, the king of the north, coming against the king of the south.

Daniel 11:40 At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him, and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

Notice here a series of battles.

Daniel 11:41-42 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

So here is the king of the north stretching out his hand, or raising his hand against another, and he is doing military action, having some sort of strife against all these other people.

We will go also to Zechariah 14.

Zechariah 14:13 It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the Lord will be among them. [This is the time when Christ comes back, and there is this great army standing up ready to fight Him as He returns.] Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand.

What we see here is that this phrase, “raising his hand against” whoever is used throughout the Old Testament. It is often used of God raising His hand against those who are His enemies. And here we have Ishmael being shown to be raising his hand against everybody. He cannot seem to stay out of a fight. It is like he has a chip on his shoulder, and he is always looking for someone to blame, and to hit.

Then it goes on here in Genesis 16:12, “every man's hand against him,” showing that his aggressive warlike manner, his personality that is just full of strife, causes his neighbors to fight back. They cannot help it. If they are always posturing for war, the neighbors are always going to have to stay in a war posture too, and either fight them when they attack, or attack them first.

And so there is never any peace with Ishmael around, it seems, because they are always kind of aching for a fight. So he draws other peoples into war against him. And there is no solving of conflict in his eyes without fighting for it.

And then finally says here in Genesis 16:12, “He shall dwell in the presence of his brethren.”

Who is Ishmael's brother? Isaac, for the most part. Ishmael, it says, will hover around the habitation of Isaac. He will be somewhere close. Literally this means he will be in front of his brethren.

This is another Hebraism. When the Hebrews try to tell you directions, they said, “Go to the ‘in front of you’” which meant, “Go to the east,” because it was like they were standing in the middle of the land, with their back to the sea and their face toward the rising sun. So, “in front of you” meant “to the east”; “in back of you” meant “to the west”; “to the right” meant “to the south” and “to the left” meant “to the north.”

What we get from this is that if the descendants of Ishmael are going to be anywhere, they are going to remain to the east of Isaac generally. Ishmael will dwell in front of Isaac to the east. Where is Arabia in relation to Israel? To the east, and slightly to the south.

It is interesting that the modern nations of Israel are among the foremost nations of the West, the Western world, while the Arab nations are termed the peoples of the Middle East, or the Near East; they are the closest to the Orient—the east. So we have a kind of fulfillment there.

It is also interesting, and this is what I got into in my *CGG Weekly* essay yesterday, is that one of the primary problems in the nations of western Europe right now is that they are being overwhelmed with immigrants from the Middle East. Not just the Arabs, but Turks and people like Pakistanis as well.

In recent years (and in the past), the socialist and multi-culturalist governments of western Europe welcomed them because their own natural populations were dropping, and they needed people to fill the jobs that were not being filled anymore, the more menial ones, so they welcomed the Turks and the Arabs and the Pakistanis, and others into their nations, and gave them residency status, and sometimes they gave them citizenship after a few years.

But now they are finding that they are a real cultural and political problem within their countries. This is occurring in Germany, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, and several other countries as well. They are all having this problem with Arab—Muslim particularly—immigration.

And as in the *CGG Weekly* yesterday [August 30, 2002], I mentioned Denmark in particular. In Denmark, Arabs make up less than 4% of the population, but account for more than 40% of the welfare spending of that nation. They are responsible for three-fourths of the rapes that occur in Denmark. And they are also responsible for a high percentage of other crimes. They isolate themselves in ghettos. In the cities, they do not integrate with the local population. They bring in unacceptable cultural practices, particularly things like forced marriages and threatening to kill fellow Muslims if they convert to anything other than Islam. So their hand is not only against others, their hand is against themselves if they just happen to become disloyal.

Another thing they do is they persecute Jews and publicly call for their deaths. They foment rebellion against the government, because they want to eventually establish Islamic law and a caliphate in those particular nations. So they are really causing a great deal of problems.

Let us just see one example of how this came out in the life of Ishmael.

Genesis 21:8-9 So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.

Now another place it was translated mocking. Some say that he was laughing at Isaac in a derogatory way making fun of his name, which means "laughter." And what this did was create a conflict, and Hagar and Ishmael got sent away. This is the sort of thing that has been happening ever since between Isaac's children and Ishmael's children.

If we would go on to Genesis 25:12-18, we find that Ishmael had 12 sons, which became 12 tribes, which is very interesting. It is almost a mirror of what happened with Jacob, that Jacob had 12 sons which became 12 tribes. So it is kind of interesting to see that God paralleled it there.

And then if you go into Galatians, you will see that Hagar and Ishmael were a sign of this covenant that was not good, as opposed to Sarah and Isaac, which were a sign of the proper godly covenant.

And so this thing about the 12 tribes of Ishmael and the 12 tribes of Israel seemed to have some sort of a correlation there. It is interesting nonetheless.

Go to Psalm 83 just to show you that these sorts of things occur at the end time as well. Psalm 83 is a prophecy of a conspiracy against the people of Israel. The psalmist Asaph beseeches God to wipe them out.

Psalm 83:4 They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

Now if that is not inflammatory and warlike, I do not know what is. That is very much like what is being said over there in Palestine. They want to certainly cut off the nation of Israel from being a nation, and wipe them all the way off into the sea, and take the land.

Psalm 83:5-6 For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You [God]: The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites; . . .

It is interesting that they are broken up into two different groups here. There are the Ishmaelites and then there is the Hagrites. They are the same people just split into two different elements here. Hagrites is thought to be a derogatory term for certain ones of these, because they name Hagar as the founder of the dynasty, and not Ishmael, which is interesting. They call them by the mother's name and not the son's name.

It may also be an Israelite way to emphasize the Egyptian side of the Arabs, because Hagar was an Egyptian, and then she took an Egyptian wife for Ishmael. And so they are three-fourths Egyptian and only one-fourth Semitic, if you want to look at it that way. I wanted to show you that this goes all the way from the birth of Ishmael down to the time of the end when there is a confederacy against the peoples of Israel.

Finally, this was where Wahhabism comes back. We should mention that the Arabs are now “united” by Islam, a violent and intolerant religion. Islam seems to codify and institutionalize the national character of Ishmael. It is put into the Quran that they go by, and that is the way they are. They like this religion, and are able to believe this religion, because that is inherently how they tend to be.

So do not expect any changes in the way the Arab nations behave themselves as time goes on, because that is just the way they are. It is in the genes. We have God's Word here to show that it is going to happen all the way down through the time of the end—this way that they are.