

And Then Came Ismael
(Genesis 16)

Ismael will be as a wild ass among men; his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him (Ge. 16:12a).

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am your Shield, your abundant compensation, and your reward shall be exceedingly great; and Abram said, Lord God, what can You give me, since I am going on childless and he who shall be the owner and heir of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And behold the word of the Lord came to him saying, this man shall not be your heir, **but he who shall come from your own body shall be your heir**(Genesis 15: 1-2,40).

"After these things" much had happened since the time when YAHWEH had called Abram out of his country. The frame of times between all the events is not recorded, but "after all these things" YAHWEH'S promise came to Abram. He promised him a son, in whom His plans would be fulfilled. Abram was 75 years old when he left his country to follow YAHWEH'S new direction and plan for his life. But the fulfillment of this promise did not come until 25 years later. After many years not being able to have a baby, Sarah had a plan of her own, so it seemed: to have a child through her husband and her servant, Hagar, hoping she could obtain children from her maid and call them her own. Although a child was born from her maid, she was not able to call that child hers. YAHWEH'S plan to bless the nations was not to be through the bondservant, Hagar, but through Abraham's wife, Sarah. Her son was to be "born in virtue of the promise" given Abraham. Paul confirms it in his letter to the Galatians. He said, For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondmaid and one by the free woman; but whereas the child of the **slave woman was born according to the flesh** and had an ordinary birth, **the son of the free woman was born in fulfillment of the promise.** Now all this is an allegory; these women represent two covenants. One covenant originated from Mount Sinai [where the Law was given] and bears for slavery; this is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and she corresponds to and belongs in the same category with the present Jerusalem, for she is in bondage together with her children; but Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother (Gal. 4: 22-26). Here do we have Abraham's two sons: one of flesh and the other of the spirit, ordained by God to open the way for His Son to come many years later to save the world, reason why He told Abraham, In your Seed (Christ) all the nations of the world will be blessed; The Messiah was to come from the seed of the son of the promise, Isaac. Although God blessed Ismael's descendants into nations of Arabs, due to him be Abraham's offspring, he was not to be the ancestor of the coming Messiah, YAHSHUA.

When Hagar, who was pregnant at the time she fled from Sarah's afflicting ways against her, YAHWEH did not condemn her for what happened; neither did He forsake her. Instead He promised to **multiply her descendants exceedingly.** YAHWEH heard her prayer in her affliction and He gave her son the name Ishmael, meaning, God hears. The angel told her that her son would be as a wild ass among men; his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him, and he will live to the east and on the borders of all his kinsmen (Gen. 16). Hagar went back to her mistress, as she was commanded. Several years later however, when Ismael

was a teenager, she and her son were sent away, because of his attitude toward Isaac, Sarah's son. Once again Hagar had to face the uncertainties of her life and this time with her grown up son. They wandered through the wilderness of Beersheba, thirsty and hopeless, not knowing where to go, waiting for death as she sat down opposite Ishmael, her son; he then lifted up his voice and wept and she raised her voice and wept; the Lord appeared to her through an angel and said to her, Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the youth where he is; arise, raise up the youth and support him with your hand, **for I intend to make him a great nation.** And God was with the youth, and he developed and he dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer; his mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt (Gen. 21:14-18, 20, 21). Today we are witness of YAHWEH'S fulfillment of His promise to Ishmael and his descendants. At the beginning they settled in the southern portions of the Arabian Peninsula, according to Scriptures, to the east and on the borders of all his kinsmen (Gen. 16:12). Sarah's idea brought roots of deep bitterness between brothers from the beginning, as she tried to live a normal life. The results of her decision have lived and will continue till the end of times, as they are very much part of it.

Isaac, Sarah's son, was sixty years old when his wife bore him two sons: Esau and Jacob. Even in their mother's womb they struggled, causing her to inquire of the Lord the reason why. The Lord answered her saying, Two nations are in your womb; and the separation of two people has begun in your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the elder (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob). Esau was a cunning and skilled hunter, a man of outdoors; but Jacob was a plain and quiet man, dwelling in tents (Gen. 25:22-27). Esau became an enemy of his brother, Jacob, and rebellious toward his parents when his brother, Jacob, stole his birth right. The Bible says that when he saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father, he went to Ishmael and took to be his wife, to the wives he already had, Mahalath daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28:8,9). He caused his parents great distress, for they made life bitter and a grief of mind and spirit for Isaac and Rebekah (Gen.26:34-35). He was 40 years old when he took Canaanite women as wife. The animosity between Esau and Jacob has cost countless lives throughout the centuries. We see in Exodus 17:8 that Esau's descendants - the Amalekites were Jacob's descendants first enemies after they left Egypt, by obstructing against their flight from Egypt, and the Edomite refused Jacob's descendants from passing through their territory, instead, they came out against Israel with many people and a strong hand (Num.20:17-20). Esau's root of bitterness never died from his heart. It passed from generation to generation to this day. We only have to go as far as the Middle East to see the fruit of it.

We see it in the life of Herod the Great, who ruled Judea in the time of the birth of our Savior, YAHSHUA. He was of Idumean (Edom or Edomite descent). He not only killed 45 members of the Sanhedrin, which was a council of 71 Jewish sages who constituted the Supreme Court and the legislative body in Judea during the Roman period (Wikipedia), but also ordered the death of all infants in Judea from ages 0 to 2 years old in an attempt to kill the Messiah (Matt. 2:16) (see note 1); It was the next Herod -Herod Antipas Tetrarch of Galilee, (governor of the fourth part of a country), who had John the Baptist beheaded; Herod Agrippa I, king of Judea, killed the apostle James and imprisoned Peter intending to kill him also. Those descendants of Esau were men of power and influence in the world of yesterday. They expressed precisely the

bitterness rooted in the heart of their ancestors toward their brothers, Israel. Ishmael's violence and Esau's hatred and lack of forgiveness constitute the nations around Israel. They are Israel's brothers and half-brothers. This feud among brothers will continue to the end of times, when all will come to an end, at YAHSHUA'S coming to defend Israel. YAHWEH has judgment coming to Edom in the future He said in Ezekiel 25: 12-14 the following: Because Edom has dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance and has greatly offended and has become doubly guilty by taking revenge upon them, therefore thus says the Lord: I will also stretch out My hand against Edom and will cut off and root out man and beast from it, and I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword; and I will lay My vengeance upon Edom by the hand of My people Israel, and they shall do upon Edom according to My anger and according to My wrath, and they shall know My vengeance, says the Lord God (Ezekiel 25:12-14). See also Amos 1:11-12.

The terrorism of today is destroying the world like cancer is eating the body of its victims. Peace, the most important thing in life for survival, has been taken away from many who are suffering under terrorists' rules. But it will come a time when the Prince of Peace will return and render His peace to this chaotic world, with judgment to the wicked who are set for destruction. Meanwhile, lift up your eyes to the coming King; salvation comes only from Israel through YAHSHUA, their Messiah, our Savior and Lord. To Him be glory and honor forever and ever, Amen!

- (1) According to historian Josephus, the man who had the male infants of Bethlehem killed, in order to kill the child Christ namely Herod, was from Esau's descendants.