

Sons of Abraham - Middle East in Prophecy Series #1

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Introduction:

With the Hamas attack killing 1400 Israelis three weeks ago, (October 7, 2023) the eyes of the world have been refocused on the Middle East. This event has led to a powerful response by the nation of Israel - declaring war on Hamas and vowing to eliminate them for attack on innocent civilians. For them this attack was the equivalent of the September 11, 2001 attack by radical Islamists on the United States.

This (Israeli) counter attack is being decried by many nations and organizations around the world, and Israel is being accused of genocide of the Palestinian people. Today in Turkey their president Erdogan says they are preparing to declare Israel (as a nation) a war criminal. Meanwhile those that support the Palestinians refer to Hamas as “freedom fighters” and refuse to condemn them for their brutal attacks on civilians on October 7. So we see the world “taking sides” in this war, and further dividing... and peace being tossed aside. One immediate casualty was the peace accord being negotiated between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Specific Purpose of Today's Message:

Today we're going to be looking at the biblical history of the turmoil in the Middle East and see the connections that are rooted in family tensions of the biblical patriarch Abraham and his children and grandchildren.

EBER, Father of the Hebrews

Genesis 11:14 KJV - And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:

Genesis 11:15 KJV - And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

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Genesis 11:26 KJV - And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

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Genesis 11:27 KJV - Now these [are] the generations of Terah: Terah begat **Abram**, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

Genesis 11:29 KJV - And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife [was] Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

See Genealogy Charts of Noah and Shem

Romans 4:11 KJV - And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the **father of all them that believe**, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Acts 7:2 KJV - And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

Acts 7:3 KJV - And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

Acts 7:4 KJV - Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

Acts 7:5 KJV - And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not [so much as] to set his foot on: **yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when [as yet] he had no child.**

Acts 7:6 KJV - And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat [them] evil four hundred years.

Acts 7:7 KJV - And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

Acts 7:8 KJV - And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so [Abraham] begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac [begat] Jacob; and Jacob [begat] the twelve patriarchs.

The story in the OT:

Genesis 12:1 KJV - Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

Genesis 12:2 KJV - **And I will make of thee a great nation**, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Genesis 12:3 KJV - And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 12:4 KJV - So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram [was] seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 12:5 KJV - And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

He didn't know where he was going:

Hebrews 11:8 NKJV - By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Like us not always knowing where God is leading us...

Why the area we call the "middle east"?

It was the center of the world and they were to be an example of God's way.

Deuteronomy 4:5 NKJV - "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according [to them] in the land which you go to possess.

Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV - "Therefore be careful to observe [them]; for this [is] your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation [is] a wise and understanding people.'

Deuteronomy 4:7 NKJV - "For what great nation [is there] that has God [so] near to it, as the LORD our God [is] to us, for whatever [reason] we may call upon Him?

Deuteronomy 4:8 NKJV - "And what great nation [is there] that has [such] statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

God promised the land to Abram's descendents:

Genesis 12:6 NKJV - Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites [were] then in the land.

Genesis 12:7 NKJV - Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Genesis 13:14 NKJV - And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

Genesis 13:15 NKJV - "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

Genesis 13:16 NKJV - "And I will make **your descendants** as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, [then] your descendants also could be numbered.

But which descendants?

Abram's name changed:

Genesis 17:5 NKJV - "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

Genesis 17:6 NKJV - "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Problems begin:

Genesis 16:1 NKJV - Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no [children]. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar.

Genesis 16:2 NKJV - So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing [children]. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

Genesis 16:3 NKJV - Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 16:4 NKJV - So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

Genesis 16:5 NKJV - Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong [be] upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me."

Genesis 16:6 NKJV - So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid [is] in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

Genesis 16:7 NKJV - Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

Genesis 16:8 NKJV - And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

Genesis 16:9 NKJV - The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."

Genesis 16:10 NKJV - Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "**I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.**"

Genesis 16:11 NKJV - 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.

Genesis 16:12 NKJV - He 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."

Isaac: Seeds of trouble and animosity

Genesis 21:2 NKJV - For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

Genesis 21:3 NKJV - And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac.

Genesis 21:8 NKJV - So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Genesis 21:9 NKJV - And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.

Genesis 21:10 NKJV - Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, [namely] with Isaac."

Genesis 21:11 NKJV - And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.

NLT: This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son.

Genesis 21:12 NKJV - But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.

Genesis 21:13 NKJV - "Yet I **will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman**, because he [is] your seed."

Genesis 21:18 NKJV - "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

Genesis 21:20 NKJV - So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

Imagine the feelings the child grew up with, and the **animosity** he held toward his half brother.

More sons of Abraham:

Genesis 25:1 NKJV - Abraham again took a wife, and her name [was] Keturah.

Genesis 25:2 NKJV - And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

Genesis 25:5 NKJV - And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

Genesis 25:6 NKJV - But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

Genesis 25:12 NKJV - Now this [is] the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham.

Genesis 25:13 NKJV - And these [were] the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

Genesis 25:14 NKJV - Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

Genesis 25:15 NKJV - Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

Genesis 25:16 NKJV - These [were] the sons of Ishmael and these [were] their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations.

The next generation: Isaac's two sons and more animosity

Genesis 25:22 NKJV - But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If [all is] well, why [am I like] this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

Genesis 25:23 NKJV - And the LORD said to her: "Two nations [are] in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; [One] people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

Genesis 25:29 NKJV - Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he [was] weary.

Genesis 25:30 NKJV - And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red [stew], for I [am] weary." Therefore his name was called Edom.

Genesis 25:31 NKJV - But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

Genesis 25:32 NKJV - And Esau said, "Look, I [am] about to die; so what [is] this birthright to me?"

Genesis 25:33 NKJV - Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

Genesis 25:34 NKJV - And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised [his] birthright.

Jacob steals the birthright, too:

Genesis 27:34 NKJV - When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me--me also, O my father!"

Genesis 27:35 NKJV - But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."

Genesis 27:36 NKJV - And [Esau] said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

Genesis 27:37 NKJV - Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"

Genesis 27:38 NKJV - And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me--me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

Genesis 27:39 NKJV - Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, And of the dew of heaven from above.

Genesis 27:40 NKJV - By your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck."

Genesis 27:41 NKJV - **So Esau hated Jacob** because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

Genesis 27:42 NKJV - And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you [by intending] to kill you.

See chart of Abraham's Genealogy

Conclusion:

So in this message today we have seen how the seeds were sown in Abraham's family for animosity and discord in the years ahead. This was passed down from generation to generation in the offspring of Ishmael and Esau, who grew to become large tribes and eventually nations in their own right. This animosity has continued to this very day and is a root cause to the conflict we see in the middle east today between the nation of Israel and their neighbors.

Additional Resources:

UCG Booklet The Middle East in Bible Prophecy

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-middle-east-in-bible-prophecy>

NOTE: The links below are for the charts only. This is not an endorsement for the content on the websites where the genealogy charts are hosted.

Genealogy of Noah

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e8/Genealogy_noah.jpg/1280px-Genealogy_noah.jpg

Genealogy of Shem (Noah's son)

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Genealogy_shem.gif

Genealogical Chart of Abraham

https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/genealogy_of_abraham_1.jpg