

Lesson Five

The Departure of Ishmael

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 21:8-21; 25:5-10; 12-18

Lesson Aim for the Unsaved: That they would hear and respond to the Gospel in saving faith. This time the Gospel truths are not explained in detail in the lesson itself. The facts of sin, the death and resurrection, and the need to believe are mentioned in the invitation at the end of the lesson. You may need to expand the explanations in the invitation or give more thorough teaching on these truths earlier in your class period if you have children in your class that are not familiar with them. The following symbols do appear in the invitation to remind you of the truths you should explain.

- Heart  Sin—you and I are sinners that deserve to be punished
- Cross  The person and work of Jesus Christ; He died for your sins
- Heart  Invitation for the children to believe on the Lord Jesus

Lesson Aim for the Saved Children: That they will understand the importance of being a good influence on others. To emphasize this truth, a *main truth* statement has been included at appropriate places in the text for you to repeat, explain, and show how to apply. This statement is, “**God wants you to influence others for good.**” You are encouraged to say this exact phrase each time you teach it to help students remember it.

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:24

Review Game Questions:

1. Why did Abraham have a special feast for Isaac? (*To celebrate his weaning—when he could eat with the others*)
2. Why did Sarah become angry when Ishmael was laughing with Isaac at the feast? (*She was afraid someday Ishmael might get the inheritance instead of Isaac*)
3. How did Abraham feel when Sarah demanded that he drive them away? (*He was upset/angry because it was too harsh*)
4. Why did God tell Abraham to listen to Sarah’s request, even though Ishmael had done nothing wrong? (*Because Ishmael could not experience all of his blessings while living with Abraham and Isaac. It would also save future problems*)
5. How did Abraham show his love for Hagar and Ishmael when sending them away? (*He got up early, gave them water and supplies, and personally sent them away in the cool of the day*)
6. Where did Hagar and Ishmael travel? (*Desert of Beersheba*)
7. What happened after their water and supplies ran out? (*Hagar put Ishmael under a bush to die. She didn’t want to see it*)
8. How do we know Ishmael prayed? (*God said He heard the lad’s voice where he was lying*)
9. How do we know Ishmael had faith in Abraham’s God? (*God was with him*)
10. Can you name three sons of Ishmael? (*Mishma, Dunah, Massa, Haddad, Tema, Jetur, Napish, Kedemah, Nebaioth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mibsam*)
11. Who can say our verse from memory? (*Hebrews 10:24*)
12. Name two ways you can be a good example to others this week.

The Departure of Ishmael—Lesson Five

Introduction: John couldn't wait to grow up!

Scene 1: Abraham Celebrates the Weaning of Isaac (Genesis 21:8-9)

- ➡ A. Ishmael and Isaac grew under the influence of Abraham
- B. Abraham celebrates Isaac's weaning
- C. Sarah saw Ishmael laughing and playing with Isaac

Scene 2: Sarah Demands Hagar and Ishmael be Driven Out (Genesis 21:10-11)

- A. Sarah told Abraham to drive Hagar and Ishmael out
- B. Abraham was very upset over Sarah's request

Scene 3: God Advises Abraham (Genesis 21:12-13)

- A. Abraham was to listen to what Sarah had requested
- B. God again promised to bless Ishmael

Scene 4: Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away (Genesis 21:13-14)

- ➡ A. Abraham rose early to send them away
- B. They wandered in the deserts of Beersheba

Scene 5: Hagar and Ishmael Hear from God in the Desert (Genesis 21:15-19)

- A. Hagar places Ishmael under a bush to die
- B. Hagar and Ishmael wept and prayed
- C. God hears and rescues them

Scene 6: God Was with Ishmael (Genesis 21:20-21)

- A. God was with Ishmael
- B. He lived in the desert and became an archer
- C. Ishmael got married

Climax: Ishmael had twelve sons as God said.

Conclusion: These sons ruled throughout the Arabian deserts from Egypt to Assyria. These tribes were: Nebaioth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mibsan, Mishma, Dimah, Massa, Haddad, Tema, Jetur, Napish, and Kedemah (show areas on map). Ishmael raised these princes to worship the God of Abraham, his father. But each new generation must choose.



Invitation: John 1:12 (see also Isa. 59:2 and Isa. 53:6b)

Challenge: Hebrews 10:24

The Departure of Ishmael

Introduction: John was like most children. He wanted to grow up in a hurry. He looked forward to the day when he could be his own boss. Then he could decide what to wear . . . where to go . . . who to be friends with . . . and what to play. It seemed to John that growing up took too long.

At last the time came when John moved out of his parents' house and went off to college. But when the day actually came to leave, he found that he was sad, not happy. He loved his parents. They had done a lot to influence and prepare him for the day that he would move out of their house and start his own family. They had helped him know about God . . . about taking care of himself . . . about how to plan for his future . . . about how to do what was right when he was away from home. His parents had known and done their job well to prepare John for this time in his life.

This is the job all parents have—to influence their children in a good way so that when it is time for them to move away from home, they'll know, worship, and trust the God of heaven to take care of and guide them. Abraham did this.

Scene 1: Abraham Celebrates the Weaning of Isaac (Genesis 21:8-9)

A. Ishmael and Isaac were being influenced by Abraham as they grew up

In fact, the Bible says that one of the reasons God chose and called Abraham to be the father of so many nations is because: "*I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice*" (Genesis 18:19).

This verse helps us to know that Abraham made it a priority to make sure that he influenced his children in a godly way. This means Ishmael and Isaac would have seen their father praying to God . . . praising God . . . offering sacrifices to God . . . and telling others around him about the one true God. He would have taught them what God had told him over the years. He would have told them some of the different names for God that show what He is like (Jehovah . . . El Roi . . . El Shaddai . . . etc.). They would have seen him build altars and offer sacrifices. They would have learned about the importance of believing in God and of being circumcised.

Ishmael had already learned much from Abraham. Even though Isaac was only a few years old, he too would have seen how important God was to his father, Abraham. Both were being prepared to live godly lives when they would have their own families, or when Abraham would go to heaven to be with God.

→ If you have believed in the God of Abraham, **God wants you to influence others for good.** This means that the thinking and actions of others should be affected in a good way by how you act and speak. Others should be learning how important it is to believe in and obey God from your example. They need to see how helpful prayer is by how they see you pray. They need to see how important church and Sunday school are by how regularly you go. God wants you to influence others for good, as Abraham was influencing his sons.

B. Abraham celebrates the weaning of Isaac

When Isaac was around two to three years old, he was weaned,¹ which means he was old enough now to start eating with Abraham and the other adults. Abraham decided to have a big feast. In that time, because there weren't very many doctors and not much medicine, many young children died before they got as old as Isaac was. So if he made it to this weaning age, everyone was happy and felt the child was

now old enough and strong enough to live a long time. I'm sure that Abraham invited others to come join him in this special celebration for the son that was to be his heir.

This would also be a time for which Abraham would be thankful to God. He knew it was God that had been watching over and protecting Isaac during these first few years of Isaac's life. On such an occasion, Abraham would have offered a sacrifice to God, to publicly show that he was grateful to God for this time of blessing.² In this way, **Abraham was being a good influence** on his sons, servants, and all the other guests that were there for the big feast. They would have seen his faith and gratefulness to Jehovah, the ever-living One.

C. Sarah noticed Ishmael laughing with Isaac

Everyone was enjoying the feast. Abraham was a wealthy man. There would have been plenty to eat. People were talking and laughing. Children were playing and laughing. Everyone seemed happy at this great celebration . . . until Sarah saw Ishmael laughing and playing with Isaac.³ All of a sudden, she became angry and afraid. She went to speak with Abraham about what she saw and how she felt about it.

Scene 2: Sarah Demands Abraham Cast Out Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:10-11)

A. Sarah demands that Hagar and Ishmael be expelled

Sarah told Abraham to, "Cast out this slave woman and her son" (21:10). These were strong harsh words. She wanted them to go right this minute. She wanted to break all relationship with Hagar and Ishmael. Why? Her next sentence explains why she felt this way. She said, "The son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac" (see 21:10b). She was now thinking about the future of Isaac. Seeing them play and laugh together made her worry that if Ishmael kept living there with Abraham, he might get part of the inheritance that was supposed to go to Isaac. She didn't want this to happen so she wanted to kick them out of their camp immediately. She began thinking of them as a threat to Isaac.

B. Abraham was upset with Sarah's demands

Abraham had been at the celebration too. He saw Ishmael and Isaac playing and laughing together. He knew that Ishmael had certainly done nothing that justified him to kick them out of his household. So when Sarah made this request, he became very sad⁴ and upset. Sarah was reading too much into this. She was jealous and over-reacting against his son, Ishmael. This was creating a lot of hard feelings in his family. He had always wanted to listen to Sarah's requests and did try to please her. But this request seemed too unreasonable. He'd have to think and pray about this before he took any action. This was a very heavy decision to make. What would happen to Hagar and Ishmael if he sent them away?

Scene 3: God Advised Abraham (Genesis 21:12-13)

A. God told Abraham to do what Sarah requested

After the celebration was over, God talked with Abraham about this situation. He told Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or . . . your slave woman" (21:12a). In other words, God had seen how worried Abraham was for Hagar and Ishmael and what might happen to them. God knew that Abraham still wanted to be a good influence on them, but God told Abraham to stop worrying about them and do what Sarah asked him to do.

God was not saying that Sarah's jealousy was right, nor was he agreeing to be harsh and unkind to them. God was just agreeing that it was now time for Ishmael to start fulfilling the plan God had for his life—away from Abraham and Isaac. Do you remember what God had said about Ishmael before he was born? [See if any can remember the Angel of the Lord's prophecies in Genesis 16:11-12; 17:20].

- *He would be free, independent, powerful—untamable by others (i.e. like a wild donkey—stallion).
- *He would have a challenging life. Though some would try to conquer him, they would not.
- *He would live in the face of (next to) his brothers.
- *He would have twelve sons (princes) and be a great nation.

Now it was time for him to leave Abraham and go live in the land that God would give him and begin his nation. Both Ishmael and Isaac had God-given plans for their lives that could not be lived out in the same area.

B. God again promised to bless Ishmael

The reason God told Abraham to stop worrying about Hagar and Ishmael is that He would take care of them—and He could do a far better job than Abraham could. God reminded Abraham that He would make a nation of Ishmael because he too was the son of Abraham (21:13). This means God would take care of them when they left Abraham's camp, and He would see that Ishmael got a wife and had the twelve sons that He had promised. This word from the Lord comforted Abraham and allowed him to quit worrying. He knew God would faithfully take care of them, even though he couldn't.

Scene 4: Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away

A. Abraham rose early to send them away

Abraham knew this would be the last chance he would have to influence Hagar and Ishmael for good. He could have had one of his hundreds of servants (see Genesis 14:14) do this job, but no, he wanted to do it himself. He wanted to influence them by letting them see his personal love and concern for them. He wanted them to be influenced by the peace he had in his heart now for their safety and future blessings from God. They needed to know that they were not leaving because Sarah demanded it. They were leaving because this was God's plan and will for them now. Abraham wanted to assure them of God's presence and help along the way since they were doing His will for their lives.

Abraham also gathered together some supplies for them to take on their trip. He got a large animal skin filled with water for them to drink (like a huge canteen). He also gave them some bread to eat. Perhaps he gave them some kind of money to buy more supplies along the way, or to buy a tent or flocks for their future provision.⁵ He may have even offered one last sacrifice for them, showing Ishmael how to do it himself now and the family that God would give him in the future. Abraham knew that this last time together would be special in their minds, and they would never forget it. So he must have done all he could to influence his family one more time for good.

→ This is a great example for you today who are part of God's family. **God wants you to influence others for good.** Our memory verse told us how we could do this. Let's say Hebrews 10:24 together [*repeat together*]. What you do and what you say influences others either for the good or for the bad. Our verse tells us to keep thinking of ways that our words and actions can stir up others to do what is right. When you do things to help others, it encourages them to do the same. When you say nice words to others—telling them you like what they are wearing or that you like how they sing or play basketball; or how they

always do their homework—you motivate them to keep doing what is right. When you turn off your bad music, you encourage others to be careful in what they listen to. When you show love to others who have been mean to you, you can stir up their heart to seek forgiveness and start treating others nicely. **God wants you to think of how to influence others for good every day** just as Abraham had been thinking of how he could influence Hagar and Ishmael for good this last time.

B. Hagar and Ishmael travel through the wilderness of Beersheba

Hagar and Ishmael left Abraham's tent with the provisions that he had given them. Perhaps they were not quite sure where they would end up, but they started traveling from Hebron to the desert areas of Beersheba. This was about thirty miles toward the south (toward Egypt).

[Let older child find these areas on the map]

Scene 5: Hagar and Ishmael Hear from God in the Desert (Genesis 21:15-19)

A. Hagar and Ishmael are near death

Hagar and Ishmael wandered around in the desert areas of Beersheba. Somehow they got lost. The sun made them hot and thirsty. Soon the water in the skin ran out. Now they had no water and no idea where they were. After a few days it looked like they were doomed to die. Hagar laid Ishmael under a bush to die.

B. Hagar and Ishmael wept and prayed

Ishmael must have had just enough awareness to realize he was close to dying. He started crying out to God. The Bible says Hagar began weeping and crying out too. But who would hear them in the desert?

C. God hears and rescues them

Do you know who heard them? *[Pause]* Yes, God heard them, and the Angel of God called out to Hagar from heaven. Wow! What a special person she was to God. This was the second time He spoke to her. He asked what she was crying about. Then He told her not to fear because God had heard the voice of the boy lying right where he was. He then reminded her that He was going to make Ishmael a great nation. This meant that He was not going to let them die. He was ready to help. He wanted them to learn to cry out to Him any time. Ishmael's name would be a reminder that "God hears" them when they pray—wherever they were and whatever their situation was.

The angel then helped her to see a well that was close to them where they could get a drink. In all her tiredness and crying, they had not seen the well. It had been there all along, but only now did they see it. She filled up their water bag and let Ishmael drink all that he could.

Scene 6: God Was with Ishmael (Genesis 21:20-21; 25:12-18)

A. God was with Ishmael

God now guided them to a place where they could live. The Bible says something special about God's relationship with Ishmael. It says, "God was with the lad" (21:20a). This means, first of all, that Ishmael was a Believer and follower of the true God. God cannot have a continual close relationship with an unbeliever because He is holy. It also meant that God would personally protect and provide all that Ishmael needed to fulfill God's plan for his life.

B. Ishmael lived in the desert of Paran as an archer

It also says that Ishmael grew up. He became a man and lived in the desert of Paran—the northeast part of the Sinai Peninsula to the western part of Arabia.⁷

[*Point out this area on the map*]

He became an archer, able to hunt his food with a bow and arrow. He was also able to protect himself this way.

C. Ishmael gets married and has twelve sons

Hagar found a wife for Ishmael from nearby Egypt. He began his own family. Guess how many children he had?

Climax: Ishmael had twelve sons, just as God predicted!

Conclusion: The Bible even gives the names of these twelve sons. They became princes of great Arab tribes⁸ who lived in different areas of the desert east of where Isaac lived. As I read their names, see how many of these tribes you can find on the map I have [*Use tribal area map*].

*Nebayoth	*Mishma	*Tema (Tayma)
*Qedar	*Dumah	*Jetur
*Abdeel	*Massa	*Napish
*Mibsam	*Haddad	*Kedemah

Indeed, God made Ishmael the father of a great nation. As you trace his descendants through history, you see that they were the nomadic Arab peoples that settled throughout Northern Arabia and the desert areas above it (from near Egypt to Syria).

Not only did Ishmael pass on his strengths and abilities to live a nomadic/Bedouin lifestyle in the desert, but he passed on his spiritual heritage too. He passed on his faith. This was the same faith that he was taught from his father Abraham (Genesis 18:19). This was the best thing that he could ever get from his father—knowledge of the true God. I believe this is the faith that he taught and passed on to his twelve sons who became great Arab princes. The legacy of Abraham to all Arabs is his faith and obedience to God. This is the way he blessed Ishmael's descendants, as well as Isaac's.

But the important thing to remember is that each new generation of Arabs, Christians, or Jews must choose for themselves who they will put their faith and trust in. History seems to show that the descendants of Ishmael were often influenced by the example given by the descendants of Isaac. Isaac's descendants were to be spiritual light to the nations—even the Arab nations (Isaiah 49:6). When they provided that light through their example, it influenced their neighbors and relatives, the Arabs. But when they turned away from God to worship idols, many Arabs did too. Today many descendants from both Ishmael and Isaac are far from God. They do not have the faith of Abraham. That is sad.

Invitation: Maybe you are in that same situation—far from God. After hearing these lessons on Ishmael, I hope that you will make your choice to believe in this great God who wants to bless you. To believe in Him, you must realize that you have sinned and that your sin is separating you from this God [*read Isaiah 59:2*]. God loves you, but He hates your sin and must punish it. Secondly, you must believe that Jesus Christ, the descendant of Abraham through Isaac is the only one who can save you from your sin. He can save you because He took your punishment for your sins. The Bible says that the Lord God “laid on Him

 (Jesus) the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6b). Do you believe this? The Bible also says that if you believe this, you have the right to become a child of God [*read John 1:12*]. Would you like to become His child today?

Let's all close our eyes and bow our heads. If you want to be in God's family today, would you raise your hand? Raising your hand will not put you in God's family but it will show me that you want to do this. Is there anyone? [*Wait for any hands*]. Those of you who raised your hands, I want to talk with you right after class. [*Pray*]

→ **Challenge:** If you are already a child of God, then **God wants you to influence others for good.**

Abraham was a good influence on his sons and the people around him until the day he died. He helped others know about and put their faith in Jehovah . . . El Shaddai . . . El Roi. His life was a good example of what our memory verse tells us to do. Let's say the verse together (Hebrews 10:24). What can you do this week to stir up love and good works?

- *You can start praying for a friend or family member who is not in God's family. Pray he will hear and believe.
- *You can be faithful in going to church and Sunday School.
- *You can encourage and pray with those who are sick, have tests, or are having a hard time.
Prayer is a good influence.
- *You can encourage your mom and dad by thanking them for all that they do for you.
Thankfulness is a good influence
- *You can turn off bad TV programs or music when they come on. It shows others that God cares what we listen to.

Will you be a good influence to others this week? Each day will you think about ways to stir others to love and good deeds? I pray so.

¹ Unger states that "The weaning of the child did not occur . . . till it was two or three years of age." See Merrill Unger, "Child, Children," in The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, edited by R.K. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), p. 222. Malouf notes that "The high death rate among children in their early years of life made the survival of any child a matter of major concern. . . . When the child reached the weaning period, he was considered to have overcome a major hurdle, and the future became surer for him. Malouf, p. 89.

² "The weaning of a child at two or three years of age was the occasion for both feast and sacrifice," (emphasis added). See Vernon Grounds, "Children," in Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, edited by Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos and John Rea (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), p. 329.

³ There are differences of opinion as to what Ishmael was doing with Isaac during this feast. This can be seen even in the different ways the word "laughing" is translated:

- *NKJV translates it that Ishmael was "scoffing" Isaac
- *NASB translates it that Ishmael was "mocking" Isaac (also NIV; KJV)
- *RSV translates it that Ishmael was "playing" with Isaac

Various commentators have also wrestled with the meaning of the word because of the different contexts in which it is used elsewhere. It is used by Potiphar's wife when she falsely accused Joseph of wanting to "make sport" of her (Genesis 39:17); of those who worshipped Aaron's golden calf as raising up to "play" (sensually; Exodus 32:6); of the request for blind Samson to "entertain" the partying Philistines in Gaza (Judges 16:25); of David and all Israel "celebrating" before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:5); or of holding a "contest" (2 Samuel 2:14). So all of these actions have been attributed to Ishmael over the years. But there are two important details to remember when deciding its use here. One is the word itself. It is a form of the same word "Isaac" (laughter). Thus, it does not need to mean anything more than Ishmael was laughing and playing. What seems to influence some to take a more negative idea of mocking is Sarah's strong reaction to what she saw or perhaps even negative concepts from an earlier written prediction of Ishmael's character (discussed in lesson 3, endnote #11). But one must balance this out with Abraham's strong displeasure at Sarah's viewpoint. This strongly implies that as VonRad says, "What Ishmael did need not be anything evil at all. The picture of the two boys playing with each other on an equal footing is quite sufficient

to bring the jealous mother to a firm conclusion: Ishmael must go.” See Gerhard VonRad, Genesis: A Commentary, revised edition, translated by John Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), p. 232. Also see Malouf’s dissertation for other grammatical arguments for the idea of Ishmael’s mere laughter and playing (pp. 82-90).

What seemed to prompt Sarah’s anger and harsh demand was jealousy and fear over a future possibility. As Malouf believes, “Ishmael is much older and so she may have thought . . . having been the object of fourteen years of paternal love and affection without a rival, he will inevitably grow stronger and later divide the inheritance with her son Isaac” (Malouf, pp. 87-88). This she could not let happen so she wants to send Ishmael away now, to protect the future inheritance for her son Isaac. It should also be noted that God’s instruction to Abraham to “listen” to what Sarah said does not endorse her harsh and jealous attitude. It was just the “means” he allowed to bring a separation that must take place in order for both sons to fulfill their God ordained destiny.

⁴ The word used of Abraham’s feelings is “kabed,” which means to “be heavy, weighty, burdensome.” See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 457. One can sense the intensity of the feelings of affection denoted by this word when seeing it used for the serious famine Abram experienced earlier (12:10), and of the plagues the Egyptians suffered at the time of the exodus (Exodus 8:24; 9:3, 18, 24; 10:14).

⁵ Genesis 25:6 says that before he died, “Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had.” Since there is no other indication of Abraham seeing Ishmael before his death, this may have been when Abraham gave Ishmael his gift. It may have been in the form of gold or silver. Abraham later bought a burial place for Sarah with silver shekels—which was a certain weight of silver, not coins.

⁷ Paran seems to be in the region of Northwest Sinai. This was the area that the twelve spies were sent from during the exodus (Numbers 13:3) and they returned to the “wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh” (Numbers 13:26). God said He come from Paran to help His people (Deut. 33:2 and Hab. 3:3). In Judges 5:4 God says He is coming from Edom and Seir, and “Therefore all these must have been names for the same general region.” See Dewey Beegle, “Paran,” in Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, vol. I, edited by Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, and John Rea (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), p. 213.

⁸ Although there are still some unanswered questions about the ethnic origins of Arabs, there is an undeniable connection between the Ishmaelites (descendants of Ishmael) and Arabs of today. Dr. Malouf devotes extensive discussion to this matter. The Assyrian historical records from Tiglath Pileser III through Ashurbampal mention Arabians in reference to “the nomadic tribes that dwelt in north and central Arabia. The Ishmaelites were a prominent section of these nomads.” He also notes that the Bible used the word “Arab” (Isa. 13:20; 21:13; Jer. 25:24) to indicate nomadic individuals of the Syrian-Arabian desert—perhaps North Arabian tribal leaders (sheikhs). See Malouf, pp. 11-19.

Ishmael had a wonderful spiritual legacy from direct appearances and promises from God:

- *God personally spoke with his mother twice (a rare experience).
- *God is the One who gave him his name.
- *God told his mother to raise him under Abraham’s influence.
- *He was probably the first person to take the sign of God’s covenant with Abraham (circumcision).
- *God prophesied he would have twelve sons, who would be princes.
- *God promised that though he would have to struggle to live in the desert areas, no man would enslave him or his people.
- *God promised him a land to live in east of his brother, Isaac.
- *God saved his life in the desert of Beersheba.
- *God was personally with him as he was growing into a man away from his godly father, Abraham.
- *God fulfilled all of these promises to him.

Very few people in the Bible have had the kind of great spiritual heritage that the Arabs have. I hope this helps you see that Ishmael was raised to be a great man for God. He left a great spiritual heritage to his descendants, the Ishmaelites, who today we know as Arabs. Arabs should gladly recognize and embrace this kind of spiritual inheritance from the father of their nation. And they should also seek to believe in and obey the God of Ishmael—because this is also the God of Abraham and Isaac. Ishmael would have wanted all of his descendants to accept and pass on this heritage to their children and grandchildren.