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ABRAHAM PART 29
ISHMAEL'S SEED

Ishmael had assumed that he would be Abraham's heir, as Abraham himself had also thought this. When Isaac was born, and it was known that God had determined that Isaac was to be the heir of God's covenant with Abraham, it clearly was disturbing to Ishmael. He began mocking Sarah and Isaac. (genesis 21:9-21)

Sarah demanded of Abraham that he must exile Hagar and Ishmael. The very thought of that tormented Abraham because he loved this teenage son so dearly. However, God confirmed that the two must go. Since Ishmael was Abraham's seed, and because he loved his son so much, God promised that He would also make a great nation of Ishmael.

As Hagar and Ishmael were cast out, they wandered in the wilderness of Beer-Sheba, the very southernmost part of what was to later become Israel. As Hagar wept and Ishmael cried out, God called to Hagar and affirmed He would make the lad to become a great nation.

Ishmael became as a wilderness wild man. He became an excellent archer. Hagar got him a wife from her homeland of Egypt. He bore twelve sons who became powerful princes in their own right. Ishmael's seed covers today's Middle East.

As a consequence of Abraham's "flesh decision" to have a son by Hagar rather than waiting on God to provide a son through Sarah, Ishmael's descendants became a "thorn in the flesh" to Israel. Yes, Abraham's name meant "Father of Multitudes" and "Father of many nations." Islam sees Israel as an enemy and denies their right to exist. All Muslims have high regard for their "Father Abraham" as they claim to be the direct descendants of Ishmael. They claim that God's promise to Abraham was for Ishmael, not for Isaac. They claim that any scripture that says otherwise is corrupted. They see Isaac as a usurper who falsely claims the "blessing of Abraham."

When we take matters into our own hands rather than seeking God's word and plan, the negative repercussions may be seen not only by us, but also by generations beyond us. If we have done anything or "taken any life direction" not given through God's confirming word, we must repent of it sincerely and earnestly lest it comes back upon us in some way.

God is merciful. Repentance brings His mercy. His mercy is unending and everlasting. Repentance is the key that unlocks it. Mercy is the extension of His grace (favor) to us. His grace is great, and His mercy is never ending.