

STRAIGHTWAY

And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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The Arab-Israeli Conflict

by Dr. H. T. Spence

One of the great conflicts we are witnessing in the end time is the Arab-Israeli conflict. According to biblical prophecy, such a conflict will escalate through at least the first half of the Tribulation Period, when the Antichrist will take control of the United Arab Republic. In our present time, much is being stated through the media to bring confusion to the public concerning this conflict. In addition, the word *Palestinian* is a term that has brought much confusion and drawn much sympathy from the corners of the earth. The media implies that the Palestinians are the rightful heirs of the land they inhabit and that the nation of Israel has become the big bully of the Middle East. Amidst such misinformation, the Christian must view this present conflict from both the Scriptures and

history to see the reality of the problem. Some proven historical aspects must be acknowledged concerning the nation of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, the Arabs, and the rise of Islam.

Israel became a nation around 1491 BC, approximately two thousands years before the rise of Islam. Not until 1967 did the Arab refugees in Israel begin identifying themselves as part of a *Palestinian* people. Since the Jewish conquest of the land in the thirteenth century BC, the Jews have had dominion over the land for one thousand years and a continuous presence in the land for the past 3,300 years.

Jerusalem has never been the capital of any Arab or Muslim entity. Even when the Jordanians occupied Jerusalem, Arab leaders neither visited nor

sought to make it their capital. Jerusalem is mentioned over 700 times in *Tanach*, the Jewish Holy Scriptures. Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the *Koran*. It must also be noted that although Salem and Jebus were in existence, it was King David who founded the city of Jerusalem. Mohammed never went to Jerusalem. Even today, Jews pray facing Jerusalem, but Muslims pray with their backs toward Jerusalem.

Arab and Israeli Refugees:

A fallout of the conflict over the land is a conflict regarding the refugees left in the land. In 1948, when Israel became a nation, the Arab leaders encouraged the Arab refugees to leave Israel, promising to eventually purge the land of the Jews. Sixty-eight percent left without ever seeing an Israeli soldier. But at the same time, the Jewish refugees were forced to flee from Arab lands due to Arab brutality, persecution, and constant attacks on the Jewish settlements. The number of Arab

refugees who left Israel in 1948 was estimated to be 630,000; the number of Jewish refugees fleeing Arab lands was about the same. However, history clearly shows that Arab refugees were *intentionally* not absorbed or integrated into the Arab lands to which they fled, despite the vast Arab territory. Since World War II, the one million Arab refugees still in Israel comprise the only refugee group that has never been absorbed or integrated into their own peoples' lands. Jewish refugees were completely absorbed into Israel, a land area no larger than the state of New Jersey. But this integration has never been true of the Arabs in Palestine, now called Palestinians. Their own people do not want them; they are forced to live in Jewish-owned geography.

Although there is only one Jewish nation, eight separate nations represent the modern Arab with exception of the Palestinians. The Arab nations initiated all five wars against Israel and lost all five; Israel defended itself each time and won. The charter of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) continues to call for the destruction of the State of Israel. Israel has made many concessions, including giving back to the Palestinians most of the West Bank land won in the 1967 war. Israel has also acknowledged the autonomy of the Palestinian authority. When Palestine was under Jordanian rule, Jewish holy sites were desecrated, and the Jews were denied access to places of worship. But under Israeli rule, all Muslim and Christian sites have

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been preserved and made accessible to people of faiths. These things are not told to us by our media that is becoming more slanted toward an Islamic viewpoint.

The United Nations' View:

It also must be acknowledged for the record that the United Nations is an unbiblical, antichrist organization that does not have Israel in sympathy. This is clearly evident in their resolutions and programs. Of the 175 Security Council resolutions passed before 1990, 97 were directed against Israel. Of the 690 General Assembly resolutions voted on before 1990, 429 were directed against Israel. The United Nations was silent while the Jordanians destroyed 58 Jerusalem synagogues. The United Nations was silent while the Jordanians systematically desecrated the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives. The United Nations was silent while the Jordanians enforced an apartheid-like policy of preventing Jews from visiting the Temple Mount and the Western Wall. Though Israel as a nation is still in apostasy (and will be so until the last half of Daniel's last week of the Tribulation Period), it also is still the most hated nation of the earth.

The Biblical View of Isaac and Ishmael:

To more clearly understand this conflict, we must first consider the historical relationship between Isaac and Ishmael. Not even Abraham was able to fully know the granting of his request: "Oh, that Ishmael

might live before Thee!" (Genesis 17:18). Today Ishmael lives, but not before God! There are now 130 million Arabs in the Middle East; the angel's promise to Hagar has been fulfilled, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude" (Genesis 16:10). God promised that He would make Abraham's descendants as numberless as the sands of the seashore through a son born to Sarah. But Abraham tried to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise by having a son by Sarah's handmaid Hagar. We read in Genesis 21:9,10 the following:

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

The consequences of Abraham's acting according to the flesh are obvious today as we see the animosity between the children of Isaac and the children of Ishmael. God will not prevent His children from acting in their own will; Christians cannot hold the Lord responsible for the consequences of their actions. Ishmael became an "anti-Isaac," a son of the *flesh* rather than of the *promise*. Twelve tribes proceeded from Ishmael as well as from Isaac. Satan exploited this blessing, and 2,500 years later Islam was born. Today Ishmael's line is claiming the Promised Land, the promised blessing that belongs to

Isaac's children. The character of Ishmael has not changed to this day. We read the following of him in Genesis 16:12:

And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

Israel: God's Touchstone

We should be aware that Israel is God's touchstone for the world; Israel is used to test the purity and genuineness of other nations' love for God. God chose Israel not for any quality it possessed, but for His own name's sake. The real issue at hand is not Israel, but God's plans. God is using Israel to work out His own plan for the world. Nations will be judged by their attitude toward Israel. One by one, they will give up on Israel because of the importance of oil for their economies. Make no mistake about it: when the prophecies concerning Israel are fulfilled, the prophecies concerning the rest of the world will also be fulfilled. The affairs of Israel directly affect the affairs of all other nations of the world. Deuteronomy 30:7 states, "And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee." And Zechariah 2:8 states, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."

We are not witnessing merely a battle between two national groups, but a battle between the God of heaven and the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). The whole world is being drawn into the Middle Eastern conflict. We are now either instruments for the perfecting of the saints through the inspired Word of God, or instruments of coming chaos through unbelief. God has prophesied a battle in which He will destroy His enemies. Ezekiel 39:7,8 states:

So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.

This battle will lead to the destruction of the nations allied against Israel. They will be deceived into thinking their security lies with Ishmael. When the Israelites fled Egypt in great danger (the time marking their birth as a nation in the earth), they were saved by the Red Sea miracle. Today, Israelites are again finding themselves in great danger, and they will again be saved by a miracle of God. We are witnessing the prelude to Satan's last attempt to destroy God's chosen people here on earth.

Jesus knew that the times of the Gentiles would come to an end when

Jerusalem belonged to Israel again: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). At that time an army whose goal is the annihilation of Jerusalem will besiege the city. This army will be pitted in a holy war, a *jihad*, against Israel. Jesus said, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20). This happened one time in AD 70, under Titus; it will happen again, according to Zechariah, in the end time. Jerusalem will be an offense to the whole world; the nations will forsake her to support the army surrounding her.

Israel's Sufferings in History:

Throughout history Israel has suffered at the hands of other nations such as the Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Romans. Within only forty years of Jesus' ascension, Titus led his vengeful legions into Jerusalem. Hunger, pestilence, and the sword claimed their victims. One million Jews died during the siege of the city in AD 70. The following centuries brought more troubles to the children of Israel. They were despised, rejected, and placed at the mercy of persecutors as the Lord had said. Deuteronomy 28:65 states,

And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind.

In the Middle Ages the Crusaders assaulted every Jew they met on their way to Palestine. "Let them be slaughtered and the name of Israel banished forever from the earth!" they cried. The blood of Abraham's sons flowed in streams throughout the world. In Mainz, Germany, fanatics stormed the palace of the Archbishop Rothardus. Seven hundred Jews thought they had found refuge there, but they were wrong: men, women, and children were slain by the sword. Those who escaped to their homes killed themselves to avoid the Crusaders' swords. Mothers even killed their unweaned children. Everywhere prisons were filled with Jews. They were sold, plundered, and disenfranchised. They were accused of practicing magic and sacrificing children, and were banished from many countries. Their throats were cut, or they were hanged between two dogs.

In the fourteenth century a terrible pestilence called the Black Death broke out in Europe, quickly killing one-third of the people. Those that remained cried, "The Jews have poisoned the wells!" "Kill the sons of Israel!" More than one million Jews died. Truly their history is one of blood and tears.

As a young man Martin Luther was friendly to Jews. In the hour of his greatest need he was visited by two Jews at the Diet of Worms. In 1523, he even fought against those who hated Jews. He wrote:

Popes, bishops, sophists, monks, and other fools treated

Jews like dogs. They were called names and had their belongings stolen. Yet they are blood-brothers and cousins of the Savior. No other people have been singled out by God as they have; they have been entrusted with His holy Word.

Since Luther was convinced he was living in the end times, he concluded that the Jews had to be converted. But when that did not happen as he thought it should, Luther changed his attitude toward them and stated:

The Jews deserve the most severe penalties. Their synagogues should be leveled, their homes destroyed, they should be exiled into tents like the gypsies. [It is noteworthy that the gypsies were included in the Nazis' 'final solution.'] Their religious writings should be taken from them. The rabbis should be forbidden to continue teaching the Law. All professions should be closed to them. Only the hardest, coarsest work should be permitted them. Rich Jews should have their fortunes confiscated, and the money used to support Jews who are willing to be converted. If all these measures are unsuccessful, the Christian princes have the duty of driving the Jews from their lands as they would rabid dogs.

Luther praised King Ferdinand, even though he was a Catholic, for driving Jews from Spain. Luther

even called them devils: "It is as difficult to convert a Jew as it is to convert the devil. He has a heart of iron like the devil. They are children of the devil, condemned to the flames of hell." Four days before his death, February 18, 1546, Luther preached his last sermon. The subject matter was the Jews. He demanded that they be driven from all German lands.

It is sad to realize that this same kind of thinking has appeared in the church throughout history. Too often the Jew is treated with hatred rather than sympathy. Although Pope John Paul II confessed to a degree the church's wrongdoing against the Jew over the centuries, to this day Rome has not recognized Israel to be a true state-nation. If it should, Rome would have to admit that saints, bishops, and popes have erred in their evaluations of and attitudes towards the Jews.

The Spiritual State of Israel:

The more the church denies the significance of the Jews and their unique place in the plan of God, the more its witness becomes unfruitful and questionable. It is wrong, for instance, to assume that the church has taken Israel's place. God is faithful, and He does not regret His bond with Israel. God has made only two covenants: one with Israel on Sinai and the other with the saints by the sacrifice of His Son on the Cross. God's faithfulness will see that the covenants are honored.

It is true that Israel's cup of apostasy is not full. Daniel's Last

Week will bring its completion in the finality of the Tribulation Period. We read in Daniel 9:24 the following:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

As a nation the Jews will not begin turning to Jesus as their Messiah until the Tribulation Period.

To this day the blood of Christ hangs over the Jews like a curse. Let us pray that this precious blood will soon become a blessing to them, for they are, after all, brothers of Jesus after the flesh. It is not our task to avenge the injustice done to Jesus. We should remember that in spite of all their sins and sufferings, the Jews are God's people.

Although Israel is politically stronger today than it has been in more than two thousand years, she has not changed in religious and spiritual terms. A most lamentable ignorance has her people in its grip.

The *tallith* is the cloth with which they cover their heads during the reading of the Law; it is an unwitting symbol of a "veil" that seems to be before their eyes when the books of Moses are read. Israel today has practically nothing: The kingly rule has been given over to the Gentiles; even the priesthood, prophecy, and

the knowledge of Scriptures belongs to the Gentiles. False worldly wisdom is seducing some Jews; superstition is taking its toll on others. They are without Jesus Christ, without God, and without hope. The Jew is as Isaiah described him: a restless fugitive on the earth.

The Arab Hatred:

But we also must see the apostasy of the Arab world in their belief of Allah. They are very strong in their belief in the *Koran* that "Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian; but he was sound in the faith, a Muslim; and not of those who add gods to God."

One speaker at a meeting of the National Association of Arab Americans (an organization with a membership into the millions) said, "We wish the members in the Congress would stop believing fairy tales about the Middle East, such as the biblical right of the Jewish people to Palestine." This statement points up one of the basic differences between Arabs and Christians. To the Muslim the Bible is not authoritative. In fact, all religious writings, except the *Koran* and some related writings, are fairy tales. To the Muslim the Bible is not true. Make no mistake: Islam will not stop at the destruction of Israel. Anyone not submitting to it will be attacked and annihilated. Today this attitude shows through with regularity and will more so as the Islamic world becomes increasingly conscious of its power.

Over 55 years has passed since Hitler took power in Germany.

Once again, however, Israel is faced with destruction. Nearly the same methods are being put to use, yet the world is silent. As the Young Muslim People's Front recently stated, "Every generation needs its Hitler to weed out the Jewish vegetation. Leave our land or be slaughtered whether you are young or old."

Such hatred will certainly not stop with Israel but will draw the whole earth into a conflict. Since this growing rage is directed mainly against Jews and Christians, it is ultimately against God and His Word. Several years ago the Ayatollah Khomeini in his book, *The Islamic Republic*, preached resistance to the "conspiracy of Christians and Jews against Islam." Since the *Koran* calls the Muslims the chosen people,

any other people making this claim are blaspheming Allah.

Israel is becoming the catalyst for the unification of the Arab world. Peace between Israel and any Arab nation such as Egypt could last only for a short time.

Jerusalem:

The heart and spirit of Israel is Jerusalem. Throughout history battles have been fought and wars waged over what Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike call the Holy City. When the United Nations drew up guidelines for the partition of Palestine in 1947, Jerusalem was to have become an international city administered by a UN official. Instead, Jerusalem became the scene of bloody fighting between Israeli and Arab forces, which resulted in

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the Arabic country of Jordan possessing the Old City and the Israelis holding the New City. Jerusalem became a divided city. However, in the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel captured the Jordanian half and has administered it since then. In May 1979 an Arabic-Islamic conference in Morocco was held to discuss the liberation of Jerusalem. Reportedly, a secret plan was set up whereby oil was to be used as a weapon and a means of pressure. "Jerusalem, must no longer remain in the hands of the unbelievers," it was said; "it must be taken back at any cost!" No sacrifice was too great. When the conference was dismissed, the delegates called to one another, "Until next year in Jerusalem!" But in July 1980, the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, declared all of Jerusalem to be the undivided and "eternal" capital of

Israel. At least twelve Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia and Iraq, immediately began putting pressure on those countries that had embassies in Jerusalem instead of Tel Aviv, the UN appointed capital of Israel. Holland was told that if it did not move its embassy out of Jerusalem within thirty days, all oil from Kuwait and Libya would be cut off. At the end of August, the UN Security Council voted to call on UN members to move their embassies out of Jerusalem. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Fahd asked all Arab countries to unite in a *jihad* to liberate all of the Israeli-occupied territories claimed by the Arabs, especially the Old City of Jerusalem. This truly was a time that Zechariah 12:2 pictures: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about." Many

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people have tried to solve the conflicts surrounding Jerusalem. Many will find that their involvement with Jerusalem will be the cause of their own downfall, as Zechariah 12:3 prophesies: “in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”

Most of us in the West know the importance of Jerusalem to both Jews and Christians. Yet Moslems also lay claim to Jerusalem with the spiritual authority of Islam, which they believe is “the last and highest revelation of Allah.” Muslims have strong feelings about Jerusalem because of their history. The site of the temple is Mount Moriah, which has been for ages a memorial to Abraham, father of Arabs and Jews alike. Moriah is supposed to be the place where Abraham went to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Even more importantly, it was from here, according to sura 17 of the *Koran*, that Mohammed was taken directly to heaven at night.

Two of the oldest and most venerable Islamic edifices were constructed on Mount Moriah: the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. To this day they dominate the skyline of Jerusalem. Muslim pilgrims have come here for centuries. Next to Mecca and Medina, Jerusalem is the holiest place in Islam.

Jerusalem became part of the Islamic world quite early. In AD 638, only six years after the death of

Mohammed, Caliph Omar took the city of Jerusalem without bloodshed or destruction. With the exception of the time of the Crusades, it belonged to the Islamic world until the modern restoration of Israel. Islamic mystics and theologians have left their influence there. Before the restoration of Israel, business and daily life in Jerusalem were typically Arabic; the majority of the population was Arabic. Because the city is now controlled by the Jews and is “Israelized,” the Arabic hatred today continues to escalate.

Arabic Prophecy:

According to Islamic teachings, Jerusalem will play a key role in the end times. A great seducer (quite similar to the Antichrist mentioned in the Bible) will appear, and Jesus will come down from heaven to destroy him. All remaining people will then be assimilated into the Muslim community. Then two trumpet blasts will be heard: the first will announce the end of this age to those still living, and the second will awaken the dead. The final judgment will then take place in which Allah will review the deeds of each person. Every word and action will be weighed, and only those who can repeat the Islamic confession of faith will be able to stand before God. Unbelievers will suffer forever in hell’s fires while believers will go to heaven where they will enjoy paradise for all eternity.

Today one of the wonders of the world stands on Mount Moriah: the Dome of the Rock. It is on this site that according to Scripture the

Antichrist will enter the Holy of Holies and set himself up as God. On the frieze under the Dome one can read the Islamic confession of faith written in beautiful Arabic writing: "La illah illa Allah" (There is no God but Allah).

Islamic doctrine states that Jesus predicted the coming of Mohammed, when He said in John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." The Greek word translated *comforter* is *parakletos* and refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit. However, Muslims claim that the word was originally *periklytos*, meaning "the praised one," which is similar to the Arabic name Ahmed, or Mohammed. Jesus is quoted in the *Koran* as saying: "O children of Israel! of a truth I am God's apostle to you to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle that shall come after whose name shall be Ahmad" (sura 61:6).

Jesus' words are made to refer to Mohammed. The Holy Spirit is excluded. Muslims even say that the words *Holy Spirit* were added to John's Gospel at a later time and that they distort Jesus' message. Rather, they teach that Jesus spoke of a leader whom people would follow after Jesus left the visible world. He could not have meant a spirit, they say, because a spirit can neither hear nor speak. The *periklytos* is a human being, a prophet sent from God, who would hear God's voice and proclaim it to mankind. If one claims, as Muslims do, that a spirit can neither hear nor speak, he is not

only misinterpreting John 14:16 but also calling God Himself into question, for "God is Spirit."

Islam not only denies the existence of the Holy Spirit but also the divinity of Jesus. There is no anti-Christian power in the world that denies the Sonship of Christ and His death on the cross so distinctly and consistently as Islam. For the Muslim it is an abomination to confess and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The sura 5:19 states the following:

Infidels now are they who say, "Verily God is the Messiah Ibn Maryam (son of Mary)," SAY: And who could aught obtain from God, if he chose to destroy the Messiah IBn Maryam, and his mother, and all who are on the earth together?

Islam teaches that Jesus was a prophet, as was Isaiah and Mohammed. But the Bible says that Jesus is God's Son, whom God "has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2). The Bible teaches that by Jesus Christ all things were created and that He existed eternally before He became a man. Islam also denounces Jesus as the One who through His blood cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7).

The *Koran* mentions Abraham and the Old Testament patriarchs, Jesus, Mary, and others from the New Testament and asserts that all these people were servants of Allah. The *Koran* (sura 3:31) says that Mary,

the mother of Jesus, was the daughter of Imran and an unnamed woman. Mohammed confused Imran with Amram in the Old Testament and Mary with Miriam, for he says that Mary was Aaron's sister (sura 19:29). Mohammed says Mary was dedicated to Allah while still in her mother's womb and was brought up not at home but in the temple, nourished miraculously by Allah. In a "place toward the East" where Mary went into seclusion, an angel proclaimed Allah's plan to her: He would bless her with a "holy son" (sura 19:19). She protested that she was an unmarried virgin, but she could not escape the situation for it was "a thing decreed" (sura 19:21). Thus she conceived Jesus through a divine act of creation. To escape slanderous tongues, she "retired with him to a far off place." She gave birth to Jesus under a palm tree and was consoled during the birth pangs by a voice from beneath her, saying, "Grieve not thou, thy Lord hath provided a streamlet at thy feet; and shake the trunk of the palm-tree toward thee; it will drop fresh ripe dates upon thee" (sura 19:25). When she returned home she was greeted by reproaches from her relatives. But she pointed to the Christ Child and did not try to defend herself. The child immediately began to talk and proclaimed himself a slave and a prophet of Allah. Mohammed taught that Jesus was sent to the Jews to give them the same gospel as Mohammed was to give.

It is interesting to note that the great empires of Bible history

(Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia) are in the majority Islamic today, and much of Italy is becoming Islamic. It is one of the major religions of our times and is ever increasing with greater certainty than even Roman Catholicism. It is truly a world religion. Now one-fifth of the world's population is estimated to be Islamic. More and more, the Roman Catholic leaders are minimizing the differences between themselves and Muslims. The dialogues between the two are increasing. The world has welcomed the renaissance of Islam with open arms. Antichrist will destroy all religions in the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation Period and place himself as the god of the world; he will bring a new religion that will have some fabric of the old religions.

Conclusion: A Spiritual View

But I close with another view of the Arab-Israeli conflict, one of a spiritual nature. It is found in Galatians 4 concerning the two sons born of Abraham. Ishmael was born of the flesh; Isaac was the child of promise. Ishmael is a type of the Old Man, who is part of our life when we come into the world. He is the sin principle that hates God, God's Word, and a life for God. Ishmael is the wild man, the natural man who does not discern the things of God, even though God has blessed this man through natural means of food, air, resources, happiness, and life. The Arab makes his own god and serves that god fervently.

But Isaac is the child of promise, the New Man, the man of heaven who comes into the home where Ishmael lives. Perhaps at the beginning there is mostly curiosity concerning the coming of the New Man. But after a while there arises Ishmael's "mocking" of Isaac. The two will not get along with one another, because the promise resides with the New Man and not the Old Man. The Old Man must be controlled by the Law, but the New Man will be governed by grace. He is the one to whom God has given the heavenly promise. As in the case of Ishmael through the centuries, the Old Man will try to live within the believer, even twisting and distorting truth in order to stay alive within the heart. But it is evident he hates Isaac, the New Man; he seeks his destruction. He does not believe in living the will and word of God; in fact, he will create every excuse and logical reasoning to not do the will of God. He will persuade the believer to allow the world and sin to be a part of the Christian life. He is called the flesh; he wants the flesh; he craves the flesh and believes it too can be a part of the Christian life.

"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). And there is no inward peace to the carnal. The power of Ishmael seeks to destroy the heart of spirituality towards God; it pleads for time and distance concerning the will of God. It complains with regularity about the commandments of God as being grievous. When I would do good, evil is present. I delight in the law of

God after the inward man, but I find then another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Oh, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (cf. Romans 7:21-24.) As in the days of old, there is the need to expel Ishmael from the home, to cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman (Galatians 4). The attacks will continue only until the Old Man, Ishmael is crucified (Romans 6:6).

Just as Christ in the Millennium will deliver the Jews from the Arabic mocking and intimidation, so Christ is now able to deliver the Christian from the power of sin, the flesh and the world. Once such victory is accomplished through the Cross, there is the need of daily yielding to that work of the Cross. Only when Ishmael is gone can Isaac, the Christ Himself, become the sole heir of the heart of the believer. This can be known by the Christian late in human history. May it be so in our lives!

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