MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam

DOCUMENT 359

Because He Is Your Seed

A Covenant Deep Dive into *Yishma'el (El hears)* — Ishmael in the Tanakh, His Twelve Princes, the Peoples Who Came from Them, and the Way Back to Unity Between the Sons of Isaac and the Sons of Ishmael

Who Was Ishmael, What Did Yahweh Promise Him, What Was Given to Isaac and Not to Ishmael, Where Are Ishmael's Sons Today, and How Will Yahweh Bring the Descendants of Abraham Back into Unity? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Rabbinic tradition remembers Ishmael two ways. Genesis Rabbah 53:11 reads ***metzachek (laughing / playing)*** in **Genesis 21:9** as grave sin, while the Talmud (Bava Batra 16b), followed by Rashi on **Genesis 25:9**, teaches that Ishmael repented and let Isaac walk before him at their father's burial. The written text is read first, before either tradition.	Paul reads Hagar and Sarah as an allegory of two covenants and quotes ***"cast out the bondwoman"*** (Galatians 4:21–31). Centuries of preaching made Ishmael a figure of the flesh and of rejection. Yet the Tanakh says **Elohim** heard him, blessed him, and was with him (**Genesis 17:20; 21:17, 20**).	The Qur'an honors Isma'il as ***"true to his promise"***, a messenger and a prophet (Q. 19:54–55), who raised the foundations of the House with Ibrahim (Q. 2:127). Majority tradition names him the son of the sacrifice and traces Muhammad's line to him. The Qur'an itself says the covenant does not reach the wrongdoers among Ibrahim's offspring (Q. 2:124).

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh**'s own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh**'s covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to five questions about Ishmael, the son of Abraham: who he was, what **Yahweh** promised him, what was given to Isaac and not to him, where his sons are found today, and how **Yahweh** will bring the descendants of Abraham back into unity. It also tests, point by point, the research sheet ***"Ishmael's and the Blessing"*** gathered from the internet for this study. **Yahweh** (**יהוה**) and **Elohim** (**אֱלֹהִים**) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations and their English meanings appear together in ***bold italic***. Scripture references are bold. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. **Verse numbers follow the English version. In a few chapters the Hebrew Bible divides the chapter at a different point, so the same verse carries a different number in the Hebrew text. Where that happens, the Hebrew number is given in brackets on first citation, for example Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14].** Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Claims about ancient peoples are graded against the Tanakh first and then against the inscriptions of the ancient world. Rabbinic literature, the New Testament, the Qur'an

and hadith, and modern scholarship are cited as historical and comparative reference only. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Hagar and Ishmael; the covenant of circumcision; the two sons on the edge of death; the burial of Abraham; the twelve princes; the lands **Yahweh** gave to Abraham's other sons; one law for the native and the stranger
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Judges, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Zephaniah, Malachi	Ishmaelites in Israel's story; the oracles on Kedar, Dumah, and Tema; the flocks of Kedar at **Yahweh**'s altar; the highway from Egypt to Assyria; the stranger's inheritance; one father
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles	The Ishmaelite in David's family and court; the tents of Kedar; the confederacy against Israel; Geshem the Arab; brothers dwelling together

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 2:124–129; 3:84; 14:37; 19:54–55; 37:100–113; Sahih al-Bukhari 3364	Isma'il as prophet; the House; the barren valley; the sacrifice; the Zamzam account
Rabbinic literature	Genesis Rabbah 53:11; 61:4; Talmud Bava Batra 16b; Rashi on Genesis 21:9; 25:1; 25:9	How Judaism reads metzachek, Keturah, and Ishmael's repentance
New Testament	Galatians 4:21–31; Romans 9:6–9; Hebrews 11:17–18	Hagar and Sarah as allegory; the son of promise
Classical commentators	Josephus, Antiquities 1.12.4 (always corroborated); al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir on Q. 37; Ibn al-Kalbi's genealogies	Ishmael and the Arabs; the debate over the son of the sacrifice; the Adnanite line

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Ancient inscriptions	Tiglath-pileser III summary inscriptions (Mas'a, Tema, Idiba'ilu); Sennacherib (Adummatu); Ashurbanipal (Qedar, Nabayati); the Tell el-Maskhuta silver bowl	Outside witnesses to Ishmael's sons as named peoples
Modern reference	League of Arab States (22 members); Arab genealogy of Adnan and Qahtan; the Abrahamic Family House, Abu Dhabi (2023)	Who the Arab peoples are today; what modern "Abrahamic" unity attempts

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — ONE FATHER, TWO SONS, ONE GRAVE

I-A. The Questions as They Are Asked

The research sheet behind this study gathered what is commonly said about Ishmael on the internet: the promise of a great nation, the twelve princes, a map of the twelve tribes onto the modern Middle East, a table setting Isaac's ***"spiritual covenant"*** against Ishmael's ***"material blessing,"*** and a summary of how Islam tells the story. It closed with the question that matters most: how can Miqdash Bethel show the sons of Ishmael that they can have peace with the sons of Isaac? The questions are these:

First: who was Ishmael, and what does the Tanakh itself record of his life?

Second: what did **Yahweh** promise him, and what was given to Isaac that was not given to him?

Third: who are his twelve sons, and what can be shown — by the Tanakh and by the inscriptions of the ancient world — about where their people are today?

Fourth: where do the accounts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam stand against the written text?

Fifth: how will **Yahweh** bring the descendants of Abraham back into unity, and what can Miqdash Bethel do toward it now?

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. The June 2026 study ***Avraham: Father of Many Nations*** examined the three covenants of Abraham. **Doc 178** (*Bridging Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*) set out the common ground of the three traditions. **Doc 267** and **Doc 268** examined the birthright and the firstborn's right, including Isaac and Ishmael. **Doc 307** asked ***"Have we not all one Father?"*** and **Doc 308** asked why the children of Abraham kill one

another in his name. **Docs 259**, **260**, and **262** examined the land, the twelve tribes, and the peoples living in it today, and **Doc 329** the one statute for the native and the stranger. The present document gives Ishmael himself a full treatment and corrects three points in earlier material (Section XI).

I-B. The Question in the Tanakh's Own Terms

The Tanakh never calls Ishmael rejected, cursed, or forgotten. It calls him by a name that is a confession: ***Yishma'el (El hears)***, **יִשְׁמָעֵאל**. The name is explained the first time it is given — ***"because Yahweh has heard your affliction"*** (**Genesis 16:11**) — and the verb ***shama (to hear)*** returns at every turning point of his life (**Genesis 17:20; 21:17**).

The five questions therefore become:

1. What did **Elohim** hear,
2. What did **Elohim** answer?
3. What did He establish with Isaac, and why?
4. What became of the twelve princes He promised?
5. And what does the **Elohim** who heard both sons intend for their children?

Every finding below is graded. A finding is **Corroborated** when two or more independent witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**). It is **Single witness** when only one text carries it. It is **Not in the text** when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

II. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The vocabulary of Ishmael's story is small and exact. The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
Yishma'el (El hears), **יִשְׁמָעֵאל**	H3458	The name given by the angel before birth; ***shama*** + ***El***	**Genesis 16:11; 25:12**
shama (to hear), **שָׁמַע**	H8085	To hear and respond; **Elohim** hears Hagar, Abraham, and the lad	**Genesis 16:11; 17:20; 21:17**
nasi (prince / chief), **נָשִׂיא**	H5387	One lifted up; a tribal chief. The same word names the chiefs of Israel's tribes	**Genesis 17:20; 25:16**; **Numbers 1:16**
goy gadol (great nation), **גּוֹי גָּדוֹל**	H1471 + H1419	The very words first promised to Abraham	**Genesis 12:2; 17:20; 21:18**

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
ummah (tribe / people), **אֻמָּה**	H523	A clan or people; the princes are ***"according to their peoples"***	**Genesis 25:16**
pere (wild donkey), **פֶּרֶא**	H6501	The untamed desert donkey; an image of freedom and of stubbornness	**Genesis 16:12**; **Job 39:5–8**; **Jeremiah 2:24**
al-penei (before / facing / east of), **עַל־פְּנֵי**	H5921 + H6440	A word of position: before, facing, east of, alongside, or against	**Genesis 16:12; 25:9, 18**
metzachek (laughing / playing), **מְצַחֵק**	H6711	From the root of Isaac's own name ***Yitzchak (he laughs)***	**Genesis 21:9**; compare **17:17; 18:12; 21:6**
berit (covenant), **בְּרִית**	H1285	A binding arrangement; here ***"established"*** with Isaac, ***"in the flesh"*** of Ishmael	**Genesis 17:13, 19, 21**
barakh (to bless), **בָּרַךְ**	H1288	To bless; said of Ishmael in the completed form: ***"I have blessed him"***	**Genesis 17:20**
na'ar (lad / youth), **נַעַר**	H5288	The young man whose voice **Elohim** heard; the same word for Isaac on Moriah	**Genesis 21:17–20; 22:5, 12**
chatser (unwalled village) and ***tirah (encampment)***	H2691 / H2918	The settlements of a herding people, not walled cities	**Genesis 25:16**; **Isaiah 42:11**
El Ro'i (El who sees me), **אֵל רֳאִי**	H410 + H7210	The name Hagar gives to **Yahweh** who spoke to her; the well ***Be'er-lachai-ro'i*** is named for it	**Genesis 16:13–14; 24:62; 25:11**
ne'esaf el-amav (gathered to his people)	H622 + H5971	The death-formula of the fathers; used of Abraham and of Ishmael alike	**Genesis 25:8, 17**

Three lexical observations govern what follows.

First, **Ishmael's princes are called by Israel's own word.** ***Nasi (prince / chief)*** is the title of the heads of Israel's tribes (**Numbers 1:16; 7:2**). The Torah does not describe Ishmael's sons in a lesser

vocabulary. Twelve ***nesi'im*** for Ishmael (**Genesis 25:16**); twelve tribes and their ***nesi'im*** for Israel. The two houses are drawn in parallel by the text itself.

Second, the promise to Ishmael repeats the promise to Abraham word for word. ***"I will make of you a great nation"*** (**Genesis 12:2**) becomes ***"I will make him a great nation"*** (**Genesis 17:20; 21:18**). The words ***goy gadol (great nation)*** are not a lesser blessing borrowed from somewhere else; they are Abraham's own blessing, extended to his son.

Third, Ishmael's name and Isaac's name are both confessions about Elohim. ***Yishma'el (El hears)*** answers Hagar's affliction; ***Yitzchak (he laughs)*** answers Sarah's and Abraham's disbelief turned to joy (**Genesis 17:17; 18:12; 21:6**). The word Sarah sees Ishmael doing in **Genesis 21:9**, ***metzachek***, is formed from Isaac's own root. Whatever the boy was doing, the text ties it to Isaac's name.

III. ISHMAEL IN THE TORAH — THE SON WHOM ELOHIM HEARD

III-A. Genesis 16 — The Affliction Heard

Ishmael's story begins with a decision that was not his. Sarai, barren, gave her Egyptian maidservant Hagar to Abram ***"to be his wife"*** (**Genesis 16:3**). When Hagar conceived, the household broke apart, and the text records it plainly: ***"Sarai afflicted her, and she fled from her face"*** (**Genesis 16:6**). The verb is ***anah (to afflict)***, **עָנָה**, the same verb **Yahweh** had used one chapter earlier for what Egypt would do to Abraham's seed: ***"they will afflict them four hundred years"*** (**Genesis 15:13**).

Here the first appearance of ***mal'akh Yahweh (the angel of Yahweh)*** in all the Tanakh takes place — to an Egyptian slave woman, alone, at a spring in the wilderness on the way to Shur (**Genesis 16:7**). He sends her back, and He promises:

"I will greatly multiply your seed, so that it cannot be counted for multitude... Behold, you are with child and shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael, because Yahweh has heard your affliction." (**Genesis 16:10–11**)

The word for her affliction, ***oni***, **עָנְיִי**, is the word **Yahweh** will use at the burning bush:

"I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry" (**Exodus 3:7**).

The **Elohim** who heard the Egyptian woman afflicted by a Hebrew household is the **Elohim** who later heard the Hebrew people afflicted by Egypt.

The Torah turns this into law:

"You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land" **(Deuteronomy 23:7** [Hebrew 23:8]), and ***"you know the soul of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt"*** **(Exodus 23:9)**.

Finding — the Elohim who heard Hagar is the Elohim who heard Israel; the same words of affliction and hearing bind the two stories. Corroborated (Genesis 15:13; 16:6, 11; Exodus 3:7).

Then the angel describes the son:

"And he shall be a wild donkey of a man; his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; and he shall dwell over against all his brothers." (Genesis 16:12)

Two words decide how this verse is heard. The first is ***pere (wild donkey)***. Tanakh uses the image both ways.

In **Job 39:5–8** it is freedom itself: ***"Who sent out the wild donkey free?... He scorns the tumult of the city; he does not hear the shouts of the driver."***

In **Jeremiah 2:24** and **Hosea 8:9** it is a creature that goes its own stubborn way. Spoken to a runaway slave woman as part of a promise, the first sense lies nearest: **her son will not be anyone's slave**.

The second is ***al-penei (before / facing / east of)***. The same phrase closes Ishmael's genealogy nine chapters later, and in that same verse it plainly means a direction on the map: ***"***

from Havilah to Shur, which is al-penei Egypt" — "east of" or ***"facing"*** Egypt **(Genesis 25:18)**.

It is used again of the burial cave: Machpelah ***"which is al-penei Mamre"*** **(Genesis 23:17; 25:9)**. The angel's words describe a people living free on the edge of their kinsmen's lands. They are not a curse, and nothing in the verse lays hostility on Ishmael's descendants for all time.

Finding — that Genesis 16:12 is a curse on Ishmael or a decree of perpetual enmity is Not in the text. The verse is part of a promise (Genesis 16:10–11); *al-penei* is a word of position (Genesis 25:9, 18); and the wild-donkey image includes freedom (Job 39:5–8). That Ishmael's line would live as a free desert people beside its kin is Corroborated (Genesis 16:12; 21:20–21; 25:16–18).

Hagar's answer is one of the Tanakh's great confessions. *"She called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, You are El Ro'i" — El who sees me* **(Genesis 16:13)** — and the well was named ***Be'er-lachai-ro'i (the well of the Living One who sees me)*** **(Genesis 16:14)**. **Ishmael's mother is the first person in the Tanakh to give Yahweh a name of her own experience**.

III-B. Genesis 17 — The Father's Prayer Answered

Thirteen years later **Yahweh** appears to Abram as ***El Shaddai***, changes his name to Abraham, gives the sign of circumcision, and promises a son by Sarah (**Genesis 17:1–16**).

Abraham's first words in reply are a prayer for the son he already has:

"O that Ishmael might live before You!" (Genesis 17:18)

Elohim answers both halves of the prayer — the son to come and the son already born:

"No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, for his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." (Genesis 17:19–21)

The words ***"I have heard you"*** are ***shema'tikha***, **שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ** — Ishmael's name spoken back to his father. And ***"I have blessed him"*** is a completed act: ***berakhti oto***, **בֵּרַכְתִּי אֹתוֹ**. Abraham's prayer was heard and answered on the same day.

Then comes the fact that the research sheet, and much teaching, passes over entirely. The first son to receive the sign of the covenant after Abraham himself was Ishmael.

"And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all who were born in his house... every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in that very day, as Elohim had said to him... And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In that very day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son." (Genesis 17:23, 25–26)

The command had said: *"My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant"* (Genesis 17:13).

Ishmael bore that sign in his flesh before Isaac was even conceived.

What was ***"established"*** (***akim***, **אָקִים**) with Isaac was the covenant line — the seed through whom the promises of the land and the nation of Israel would pass (**Genesis 17:19, 21; 21:12**). What was placed in Ishmael's flesh was the sign of belonging to Abraham's covenant household.

Finding — Ishmael was circumcised with Abraham on the day the covenant sign was given, and bore ***"My covenant in your flesh."*** **Corroborated (Genesis 17:13, 23, 25–26).** The covenant line, with its oath of land and nation, was established through Isaac. **Corroborated (Genesis 17:19, 21; 21:12;**

26:3–4; **Psalms 105:9–10**). **That Ishmael stood wholly outside Abraham's covenant is Not in the text**.

III-C. Genesis 21 — Two Sons on the Edge of Death

At the feast for Isaac's weaning, ***"Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, metzachek"*** (**Genesis 21:9**).

The text does not say what he was doing. Translations give ***"mocking"*** (following Galatians 4:29 and rabbinic readings) or ***"playing"*** (following the Septuagint, which adds ***"with Isaac her son"***).

The root is Isaac's own name, and Sarah's complaint is about inheritance, not about a deed: ***"the son of this maidservant shall not inherit with my son, with Isaac"*** (**Genesis 21:10**).

The Torah records Abraham's grief: ***"the thing was very evil in Abraham's eyes on account of his son"*** (**Genesis 21:11**).

And Elohim's answer joins the two sons in one sentence:

"Let it not be evil in your eyes because of the lad and because of your maidservant... for in Isaac shall seed be called to you. And also the son of the maidservant I will make a nation, because he is your seed." (Genesis 21:12–13)

The title of this document is taken from that verse: ***ki zar'akha hu***, **כִּי זַרְעֲךָ הוּא** — ***"because he is your seed."***

The reason **Elohim** gives for Ishmael's nation is not pity alone; it is Abraham's fatherhood. **Ishmael is Abraham's seed, and Elohim keeps faith with the seed of Abraham.**

What follows is drawn by the Torah as a mirror of the next chapter. In **Genesis 21**, Ishmael lies dying of thirst; in **Genesis 22**, Isaac lies bound on the altar. The wording of the two accounts runs side by side:

	ISHMAEL — GENESIS 21	ISAAC — GENESIS 22
Abraham rises early	***"Abraham rose early in the morning"*** and sends Hagar with bread and water (21:14)	***"Abraham rose early in the morning"*** and goes with the boy and the wood (22:3)
The son near death	The lad cast under a bush, the water gone (21:15–16)	The son bound on the wood, the knife raised (22:9–10)
A voice from heaven	***"The angel of Elohim called to Hagar from heaven"*** (21:17)	***"The angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven"*** (22:11)

	ISHMAEL — GENESIS 21	ISAAC — GENESIS 22
Eyes opened	***"Elohim opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water"*** (21:19)	***"Abraham lifted his eyes and saw, behold, a ram"*** (22:13)
The son called na'ar (lad)	21:17, 18, 19, 20	22:5, 12
A promise of nationhood	***"I will make him a great nation"*** (21:18)	***"I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven"*** (22:17)

"And Elohim heard the voice of the lad, and the angel of Elohim called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for Elohim has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." (Genesis 21:17–18)

The phrase ***ba'asher hu sham (where he is)***, **בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא־שָׁם**, is a quiet word of mercy: **Elohim** heard the boy as he was, where he lay, before he had done anything to deserve it.

Then the Torah adds what it says of very few: *"And Elohim was with the lad, and he grew, and he dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer"* (Genesis 21:20).

The same words — *"Elohim was with him"* — are said of Isaac (Genesis 26:24, 28), of Jacob (Genesis 28:15), and of Joseph (Genesis 39:2, 21).

Finding — Elohim saved both sons from death, by the same pattern of a heavenly voice, opened eyes, and a promise of seed. Corroborated by the Torah's own parallel wording **(Genesis 21:14–20; 22:3–17). That Elohim was with Ishmael is Corroborated (Genesis 21:17, 20; 17:20).**

III-D. Genesis 25 — The Brothers at the Grave

The last time Isaac and Ishmael appear together in the Tanakh, they are standing at their father's grave:

"And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron... which is before Mamre." (Genesis 25:8–9)

The Torah names both sons as ***banav (his sons)***, and it names them in birth order only when it lists the generations; at the grave Isaac, the heir, is named first, and Ishmael stands with him. No quarrel is recorded. No inheritance is disputed. Abraham had already given ***"all that he had"*** to Isaac and

"gifts" to the sons of his concubines while he lived (**Genesis 25:5–6**; see **Doc 268**). The settled house could bury its father in peace.

Then the Torah gives Ishmael his own ***toledot (generations)*** — the same heading it gives Isaac in the very next verse (**Genesis 25:12, 19**):

"These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments: twelve princes according to their peoples." (Genesis 25:16)

"And these are the years of the life of Ishmael: a hundred and thirty-seven years; and he expired and died, and was gathered to his people. And they dwelt from Havilah to Shur, which is before Egypt, as you go toward Assyria; over against all his brothers he settled." (Genesis 25:17–18)

Ishmael's death is told in the same three verbs as his father's: ***va-yigva (he expired)***, ***va-yamot (he died)***, ***va-ye'asef el-amav (and was gathered to his people)*** (**Genesis 25:8, 17**). The Torah gives Ishmael the death of a patriarch.

Finding — the Tanakh records Isaac and Ishmael together burying Abraham, without conflict. **Single witness** in the narrative (**Genesis 25:9**), and it is the last scene of the two brothers. That Ishmael was given his own generations and a patriarch's death is **Corroborated** (**Genesis 25:8, 12–17**).

III-E. After Abraham — The Well, the Marriage, and the Caravan

Three further notes in Genesis show the two houses touching rather than separating.

The well. Isaac made his home at the very well that had been named for Hagar's encounter with **Yahweh**. ***"Isaac came from the way of Be'er-lachai-ro'i"*** (**Genesis 24:62**), and after Abraham died, ***"Elohim blessed Isaac his son, and Isaac dwelt by Be'er-lachai-ro'i"*** (**Genesis 25:11**). The son of promise lived beside the well where the Egyptian mother of his brother had confessed ***"El who sees me."***

The marriage. Esau, Isaac's son, ***"went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth"*** (**Genesis 28:9**; called Basemath in **36:3**). From the next generation on, the blood of Isaac's house and of Ishmael's house were mixed in Edom.

The caravan. When Joseph's brothers sold him, the buyers were ***"a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spice, balm, and myrrh"*** (**Genesis 37:25, 27–28**; also called Midianites, **37:28, 36**; compare **Judges 8:22–24**).

Joseph would later say, ***"you meant evil against me; Elohim meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive"*** (**Genesis 50:20**). Ishmael's descendants carried the son who would save the house of Jacob.

Finding — the Torah shows the houses of Isaac and Ishmael living near one another, marrying one another, and trading with one another after Abraham's death. Corroborated (**Genesis 24:62; 25:11; 28:9; 36:3; 37:25–28**).

IV. COVENANT AND BLESSING — WHAT WAS GIVEN TO ISAAC, AND WHAT WAS GIVEN TO ISHMAEL

The research sheet sets the two sons side by side in a four-row table: a ***"spiritual and eternal"*** covenant for Isaac against a ***"material and temporal"*** blessing for Ishmael; a supernatural birth against a birth of ***"human effort and impatience"***; the Messiah's line against exclusion from it; the Promised Land against ***"the wilderness."*** Each row is tested here against the text.

THE SHEET'S CLAIM	WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS	GRADE
Isaac: a ***"spiritual, eternal"*** covenant. Ishmael: a ***"material, temporal"*** blessing	The covenant line, with the land and an everlasting covenant, is established with Isaac (17:19, 21). But Ishmael received the covenant sign in his flesh (17:13, 23–26), **Elohim** was with him (21:20), and the prophets brought his sons' offerings to **Yahweh**'s altar ***"with acceptance"*** (**Isaiah 60:7**). Nothing calls his blessing ***"temporal only."***	First half **Corroborated**; ***"temporal only"*** **Not in the text**
Ishmael born by ***"human effort and impatience"***; Isaac by miracle	Isaac's birth to Sarah at ninety is a sign of **Elohim**'s power (17:17; 18:14; 21:1–2). Sarah's plan with Hagar is recorded (16:2), and Abraham ***"listened to the voice of Sarai"*** — but the text passes no judgment on the child. **Yahweh** named Ishmael before birth (16:11). ***"The flesh"*** as a label for Ishmael comes from Galatians 4:23, not the Tanakh.	Isaac's miraculous birth **Corroborated**; Ishmael as ***"the flesh"*** **Not in the text**
The Messiah through Isaac, ***"designated for David and Jesus Christ"***	The anointed king comes from Judah and David (**Genesis 49:10**; **2 Samuel 7:12–16**; **Isaiah 11:1**), and so through Isaac and Jacob. The Tanakh does not name Jesus. See **Docs 340** and **341**.	Davidic line **Corroborated**; the Jesus claim **Not in the text**

THE SHEET'S CLAIM	WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS	GRADE
Isaac: the Promised Land. Ishmael: ***"the wilderness"***	Canaan is sworn to Abraham's seed through Isaac and Jacob (17:8; 26:3; 28:13). Ishmael's sons received their own lands, ***"from Havilah to Shur"*** (25:18), with villages and encampments (25:16).	**Corroborated**, with the note that Ishmael's portion was a homeland, not a punishment

IV-A. What the Text Says Was Established with Isaac

The text is plain and repeated: ***"My covenant I will establish with Isaac"*** (**Genesis 17:21**);

"in Isaac shall seed be called to you" (**Genesis 21:12**);

"I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father... to you and to your seed I will give all these lands" (**Genesis 26:3**).

The Psalmist summarizes the line: ***"the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, To you I will give the land of Canaan"*** (**Psalms 105:9–11**).

This is not in doubt in the written text, and no reading of Ishmael's honor may undo it.

IV-B. What the Text Says Was Given to Ishmael

#	WHAT ELOHIM GAVE ISHMAEL	TEXT
I	A name meaning ***El hears***, given before birth by the angel of **Yahweh**	**Genesis 16:11**
II	A seed too many to count	**Genesis 16:10**
III	Freedom — a son of a slave woman who would be no one's slave	**Genesis 16:12**; compare **Job 39:5**
IV	His father's prayer heard, and a blessing already spoken	**Genesis 17:18, 20**
V	The covenant sign in his flesh, with his father, on the same day	**Genesis 17:23–26**
VI	Twelve ***nesi'im (princes)*** and a great nation	**Genesis 17:20; 25:16**
VII	Rescue from death, and **Elohim** with him as he grew	**Genesis 21:17–20**
VIII	A homeland of his own and a patriarch's death	**Genesis 25:17–18**

IV-C. Why the Line Went Through Isaac — and What That Does Not Mean

The Tanakh gives one reason for the choice of Isaac: Elohim's word (**Genesis 17:19; 21:12**).

It does not say Ishmael was wicked. It does not say Hagar was unworthy. Isaac was not chosen because he was better; Jacob would later be chosen over Esau ***"before they were born"*** (**Genesis 25:23**; compare **Malachi 1:2**).

The Library has already shown that Deuteronomy 21:15–17 binds a father, who may not move the firstborn's right by preference, but does not bind Elohim, who announced His choice by His own word (**Doc 268**, VI-B).

Abraham obeyed the word and still provided for the son who did not inherit (**Genesis 21:14; 25:6**).

Choice in the Tanakh is never a license for pride. Israel was told: ***"Not because you were more in number than any people did Yahweh set His love on you"*** (**Deuteronomy 7:7**), and ***"Do not say in your heart... For my righteousness Yahweh has brought me in"*** (**Deuteronomy 9:4–6**).

The line of promise carries a charge, not a privilege: Abraham was chosen ***"that he may command his children and his house after him, that they keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice"*** (**Genesis 18:19**).

Finding — Isaac was chosen to carry the covenant line by Elohim's word alone, without any recorded fault in Ishmael. Corroborated (**Genesis 17:19–21; 21:12–13; 25:23**). **That the choice gives the sons of Isaac a right to despise the sons of Ishmael is Not in the text**; **the Torah forbids such pride** (**Deuteronomy 7:7; 9:4–6**).

V. ISHMAEL THROUGH THE PROPHETS AND WRITINGS — KINSHIP, CONFLICT, AND THE ALTAR

After Genesis, Ishmael's descendants appear in the Tanakh in four ways: as kin, as enemies, as nations under judgment, and as worshippers. All four must be read together.

V-A. Kinship — An Ishmaelite in the House of David

The Chronicler, listing the family of Jesse, records: ***"And Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite"*** (**1 Chronicles 2:17**).

Abigail was David's sister (**1 Chronicles 2:16**). Amasa, the son of an Ishmaelite father, became commander of the army of Judah (**2 Samuel 17:25**; **19:13** [Hebrew 19:14]). The Hebrew text of **2**

Samuel 17:25 calls his father ***"Ithra the Israelite"***; most scholars read the Chronicler's ***"Ishmaelite"*** as the better reading, since calling an Israelite in Israel ***"the Israelite"*** would say nothing. That textual question is noted honestly here.

In David's own administration, ***"over the camels was Obil the Ishmaelite... and over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagrite"*** (**1 Chronicles 27:30–31**). The king of Israel trusted his herds to the sons of Ishmael and of Hagar.

Finding — Ishmaelites were joined to the house and court of David. Corroborated (**1 Chronicles 2:17; 27:30–31**; **2 Samuel 17:25**, with its textual variant).

V-B. Conflict — The Tents of Kedar

The Tanakh does not hide conflict. Gideon fought Midianite raiders who wore gold earrings ***"because they were Ishmaelites"*** (**Judges 8:24**).

The tribes east of the Jordan made war with the Hagrites, with ***"Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab"*** (**1 Chronicles 5:10, 18–22**). The Psalmist names the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites, among those who ***"have taken counsel together with one consent; against You they make a covenant"*** (**Psalms 83:5–6** [Hebrew 83:6–7]). Another psalm cries:

"Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar! My soul has long dwelt with him who hates peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war." (**Psalms 120:5–7**)

After the exile, ***"Geshem the Arab"*** joined Sanballat and Tobiah in mocking and opposing Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall (**Nehemiah 2:19; 6:1–6**). A silver bowl found at Tell el-Maskhuta in Egypt, inscribed in Aramaic to ***"Qaynu son of Gashmu, king of Qedar,"*** is widely taken by scholars as an outside witness to this same Geshem as a Qedarite king.

V-C. Judgment — As on Every Nation

The prophets pronounce judgment on Kedar, Dumah, and Tema as they do on Israel, Judah, Egypt, Assyria, and every nation. ***"Within a year... all the glory of Kedar shall fail"*** (**Isaiah 21:16–17**). ***"The oracle concerning Dumah"*** (**Isaiah 21:11**).

Jeremiah names Kedar among the peoples struck by Nebuchadnezzar (**Jeremiah 49:28–33**; compare **25:23–24**).

Ezekiel names ***"Arabia and all the princes of Kedar"*** as Tyre's partners in trade (**Ezekiel 27:21**).

Even in the oracle of judgment, Isaiah gives Tema a word of mercy: ***"Bring water to the thirsty, O inhabitants of the land of Tema; meet the fugitive with his bread"*** (**Isaiah 21:14**).

V-D. Worship — The Flocks of Kedar on Yahweh's Altar

Then the prophets do what no internet summary of Ishmael mentions. They bring Ishmael's sons to Yahweh's house as worshippers.

"Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to Yahweh, and declare His praise in the coastlands." (Isaiah 42:11–12)

"All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on My altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory." (Isaiah 60:7)

Kedar and Nebaioth are Ishmael's two eldest sons (**Genesis 25:13**). The phrase ***ya'alu al-ratzon mizbechi***, **יַעֲלוּ עַל־רָצוֹן מִזְבְּחִי** — ***"they shall come up with acceptance on My altar"*** — uses ***ratzon (acceptance / favor)***, the Torah's word for an offering that **Yahweh** receives (**Leviticus 1:3; 22:20–21**).

In the same chapter the sons of Keturah, Abraham's third wife — ***Midian, Ephah, and Sheba*** (**Genesis 25:2–4**) — come bearing gold and frankincense and ***"proclaim the praises of Yahweh"*** (**Isaiah 60:6**). Isaiah's vision of the restored Zion gathers Abraham's other sons to the house of Isaac's sons.

Finding — the prophets foresee the sons of Ishmael worshipping Yahweh with offerings accepted on His altar. Corroborated (Isaiah 42:11–12; 60:6–7). That Ishmael's line is excluded forever from Yahweh's worship is Not in the text.

VI. THE TWELVE PRINCES AND THE PEOPLES TODAY — WHAT THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS

VI-A. The Ancient Record

The Tanakh's list of Ishmael's sons is one of the best-attested genealogies in the ancient world. Several of the names appear as Arabian peoples in the royal inscriptions of Assyria, written centuries before the classical historians and more than a thousand years before Islam.

Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) records that the people of Mas'a and Tema, the Sabaeans, and the tribe of Idiba'ilu, on the western border, brought him tribute of gold, silver, camels, and spices; one of his summary inscriptions records that he set Idibi'ilu to guard the border of Egypt. Assyrian records name the Qedarites under several spellings (Qidri, Qidarāya), and under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal ***"Qedar"*** became almost a byword for the Arabs as a whole. Sennacherib's army struck ***Adummatu***,

called ***"the stronghold of the Arabs,"*** the oasis known today as Dumat al-Jandal in Saudi Arabia's al-Jawf province, which Italian-Saudi excavations have explored since 2009. Ashurbanipal fought the ***Nabayati*** alongside Qedar.

These are outside witnesses, written by the enemies of the peoples they describe. They do not prove the Tanakh by themselves, and they are not needed to establish it. But they agree with it on the point that matters here: the names in **Genesis 25:13–15** were real peoples in the real deserts between Egypt and Assyria — exactly where **Genesis 25:18** places them.

VI-B. The Twelve Sons, Name by Name

SON	OUTSIDE WITNESS	REGION (TODAY)	GRADE
1. Nebaioth, נְבָיֹת	***Nabayati*** in Ashurbanipal's annals, beside Qedar; with Kedar in **Isaiah 60:7**. The link to the later Nabataeans of Petra is disputed: their name is spelled with ט, Nebaioth with ת.	Northern Arabia; the Petra link uncertain	Tribe **Corroborated**; Nabataean link **Disputed**
2. Kedar, קֵדָר	Qidri / Qedarites in Assyrian records from the 8th century BCE; Qedar in Old North Arabian; the Tell el-Maskhuta bowl	Northern Arabia and the Syrian desert; center at Dumat al-Jandal	**Corroborated**
3. Adbeel, אַדְבְּאֵל	***Idiba'ilu / Idibi'ilu*** of Tiglath-pileser III, posted on the border of Egypt	Northern Sinai and the Negev border	**Corroborated**
4. Mibsam, מִבְשָׂם	None secure. The sheet's ***"spice trade"*** rests only on the name's likeness to ***besem (spice)***. The same name appears among Simeon's descendants (**1 Chronicles 4:25**).	Unknown	**Not corroborated**
5. Mishma, מִשְׁמָע	None secure; a possible place-name link (Jabal Misma') is conjecture. Also among Simeon's descendants (**1 Chronicles 4:25**).	Unknown	**Not corroborated**
6. Dumah, דּוּמָה	***Adummatu*** of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon; **Isaiah 21:11**	Dumat al-Jandal, al-Jawf, Saudi Arabia	**Corroborated**

SON	OUTSIDE WITNESS	REGION (TODAY)	GRADE
7. Massa, מַשָּׂא	***Mas'a*** of Tiglath-pileser III. Many scholars read ***massa*** in **Proverbs 30:1; 31:1** as these people; it can also mean ***"oracle."***	Northern Arabian borderlands	**Corroborated** as a tribe; the Proverbs link **Single witness**
8. Hadad, חֲדַד	None secure; some manuscripts read Hadar. The sheet's link to the Arameans is conjecture.	Unknown	**Not corroborated**
9. Tema, תֵּימָא	Tema of Tiglath-pileser III; the oasis of Tayma, where Babylon's king Nabonidus later lived for ten years; **Isaiah 21:14**; **Job 6:19**; **Jeremiah 25:23**	Tayma, Tabuk region, Saudi Arabia	**Corroborated**
10. Jetur, יְטוּר	**1 Chronicles 5:19**; the Septuagint there reads ***"Itureans."*** Many modern scholars doubt the link to the Itureans of Lebanon.	East of Gilead (Tanakh); Lebanon and Hermon (if Iturean)	Tribe **Corroborated** in the Tanakh; Iturean link **Disputed**
11. Naphish, נָפִישׁ	**1 Chronicles 5:19** only	East of the Jordan	**Single witness**
12. Kedemah, קֶדְמָה	None. The sheet's link to ***Kedemoth*** (**Deuteronomy 2:26**) is a guess from the sound of the name.	Unknown (the name means ***"eastward"***)	**Not corroborated**

Two further notes.

First, the names Mibsam and Mishma appearing among the sons of Simeon (**1 Chronicles 4:24–25**), whose towns lay in the Negev on the edge of the desert (**Joshua 19:1–9**), suggests that some families of Ishmael and of Israel may have joined together on that border. That is an inference, labeled as such.

Second, the research sheet's claim that each son's line can be traced to a modern region with confidence goes beyond the evidence. Six of the twelve are well attested; six are not.

VI-C. Who Are the Arab Peoples?

The research sheet says that the twelve tribes ***"dissolved into the broader demographic identity of the 22 nations of the Arab League."*** The Arab League does have 22 member states, from

Mauritania and Morocco to Oman and the Comoros. But ***"Arab"*** today is chiefly a language and a culture. Most of the peoples of North Africa, for example, descend largely from populations who adopted Arabic after the seventh century. To call all 22 nations ***"the sons of Ishmael"*** says more than any genealogy can show.

The Tanakh itself places several lines of Abraham's family, and of his kin, in Arabia:

LINE	TEXT	WHERE
Joktan, son of Eber — Sheba, Hazarmaveth, Ophir, Havilah, and others	**Genesis 10:25–30**	Southern Arabia (Hazarmaveth is Hadramaut)
Ishmael, son of Abraham — the twelve princes	**Genesis 25:12–18**	Northern and central Arabia, Sinai, the Syrian desert
Keturah's sons — Midian, Sheba, Dedan, Ephah	**Genesis 25:1–4**	Northwestern Arabia and the incense routes
Esau / Edom — married into Ishmael's house	**Genesis 28:9; 36:3**	South of the Dead Sea; later absorbed among Arab peoples

Arab tradition says much the same in its own terms. It divides the Arabs into the northern ***Adnanites***, traced through Adnan to Ishmael, and the southern ***Qahtanites***, traced to Qahtan, whom many genealogists identify with the Joktan of **Genesis 10:25**. The majority Islamic genealogy traces Muhammad through Adnan to Kedar; a minority traces him to Nebaioth. These traditions were written down in the Islamic era and are comparative witnesses only. But they agree with the Tanakh on the main point: not every Arab is a son of Ishmael, and many sons of Ishmael are Arabs.

Finding — Ishmael's descendants are among the forebears of the northern and central Arabian peoples. Corroborated (Genesis 25:13–18; Assyrian records of Qedar, Dumah, Tema, Mas'a, and Idiba'ilu). That the Arab peoples as a whole, or the 22 states of the Arab League, are the sons of Ishmael alone is **Not in the text**; **the Tanakh places Joktan's, Keturah's, and Esau's lines in Arabia as well (Genesis 10:25–30; 25:1–4; 36)**.

VI-D. Sons of Eber — The Older Kinship

The Tanakh's genealogies hold one more surprise. Before Abraham, the Torah introduces Shem as ***"the father of all the sons of Eber"*** (**Genesis 10:21**), and Eber had two sons, Peleg and Joktan (**Genesis 10:25**). Abraham descends from Peleg (**Genesis 11:16–26**); the southern Arabian peoples are traced to Joktan.

Abraham is the first man called *ha-Ivri (the Hebrew)*, הָעִבְרִי (Genesis 14:13).

By the Tanakh's own reckoning, then, the sons of Isaac and the peoples of Arabia are kin twice over — once through Eber, and again through Abraham.

Finding — Israel and the peoples of Arabia descend together from Shem and Eber, and many of them from Abraham. Corroborated (Genesis 10:21–30; 11:16–26; 25:1–18).

VII. WHICH SON ON THE MOUNTAIN? — THE TANAKH AND THE ISLAMIC ACCOUNT

The research sheet devotes most of its Islamic section to the son of the sacrifice. The question deserves an honest answer, given with respect.

VII-A. What the Tanakh Says

"Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering." (Genesis 22:2)

The Tanakh names Isaac in the command (**Genesis 22:2**), and it calls him ***yechidkha (your only one)*** three times (**Genesis 22:2, 12, 16**).

The Islamic argument holds that Ishmael was Abraham's ***"only son"*** for thirteen years before Isaac.

But **Genesis 22** comes after **Genesis 21**: by then Ishmael had been sent out with his mother and his own promise (**Genesis 21:14–21**).

Isaac was the only son remaining in Abraham's house and the only son of the promise (Genesis 21:12).

The Tanakh's own word ***yachid***, יָחִיד, means ***"only, unique, beloved"***, and the text explains whom it means by naming him.

Finding — the son bound on Moriah was Isaac. Corroborated within the Tanakh (Genesis 22:2, 9; compare 22:12, 16, and the ram given in his place, 22:13).

VII-B. What the Islamic Sources Say

The Qur'an tells the story without naming the son (Q. 37:100–111), and only afterward gives Ibrahim ***"the good news of Isaac, a prophet among the righteous"*** (Q. 37:112). From this order many commentators concluded the son was Isma'il. The research sheet says the matter is the ***"absolute consensus"*** of Muslims.

It is the majority view today, but the record is mixed: the great early commentator al-Tabari held that the son was Isaac, while Ibn Kathir argued strongly for Isma'il. ***"Majority view"*** is the accurate term.

The research sheet also places the Zamzam spring, the angel striking the ground, and Abraham leaving Hagar by divine command under ***"Islamic texts"*** as though they were in the Qur'an. The Qur'an speaks of Ibrahim settling his family ***"in a valley without cultivation, by Your sacred House"*** (Q. 14:37) and of raising the House's foundations with Isma'il (Q. 2:127). The Zamzam narrative comes from the hadith (Sahih al-Bukhari 3364), not from the Qur'an.

The Tanakh places Hagar's two wells in the wilderness of Beersheba and between Kadesh and Bered on the way to Shur (**Genesis 16:7, 14; 21:14, 19**), and Ishmael's home in the wilderness of Paran (**Genesis 21:21**). It does not mention Mecca or a house built by Abraham and Ishmael.

Finding — the building of the Kaaba by Abraham and Ishmael is Not in the text of the Tanakh. That the identity of the son of the sacrifice is *"the absolute consensus"* of Islam is overstated; it is the majority Islamic view.

VII-C. Where the Accounts Meet

Even here the three traditions stand closer than their arguments suggest.

1. **All three honor Abraham's obedience.**
2. **All three confess that Elohim provided a ram in place of the son (Genesis 22:13**; Q. 37:107).
3. **And all three remember that the son was saved, not slain** — the Tanakh's own witness that **Yahweh** does not want the blood of children (**Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5**; **Deuteronomy 12:31**). **A dispute over which son is not a reason for the sons of either to shed one another's blood.**

VIII. HOW WILL YAHWEH BRING THE SONS OF ABRAHAM BACK INTO UNITY?

The question is not what any government, council, or interfaith building can do. It is what Yahweh has said He will do, and what He asks of the sons of Abraham now.

Tanakh answers in five parts.

VIII-A. The Pattern Is Already in Genesis

Genesis is a book of family quarrels, and almost every one ends in reconciliation. The Torah gives the pattern before it gives the law.

BROTHERS	THE QUARREL	THE WAY OF PEACE	TEXT
Abraham and Lot	Herdsmen fight over pasture	***"Let there be no strife between me and you... for we are brothers"***; the elder gives the younger first choice	**Genesis 13:7–9**
Isaac and Ishmael	Inheritance; the mothers' rivalry	The house settled by **Elohim**'s word and the father's gifts; the brothers bury their father together	**Genesis 21:12–13; 25:5–9**
Isaac and Abimelech's men	Wells seized: ***Esek (contention)***, ***Sitnah (enmity)***	Isaac moves on and digs again: ***Rehoboth — "Yahweh has made room for us"***; a covenant sworn, and ***"they departed in peace"***	**Genesis 26:19–31**
Jacob and Esau	A stolen blessing; a vow to kill	Jacob sends gifts and bows; ***"Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept"***	**Genesis 27:41; 33:1–11**
Joseph and his brothers	Hatred, sale into slavery	Truth spoken, repentance tested, then forgiveness: ***"Elohim meant it for good"***	**Genesis 45:1–15; 50:15–21**

Isaac's wells speak directly to the sons of Isaac and Ishmael today, whose quarrels are so often over land and water. Isaac did not seize back the wells by force. He dug again until there was room, and when his enemies came to him, he made a covenant of peace and fed them at his table (**Genesis 26:26–31**). The text says **Yahweh** blessed him in it (**Genesis 26:24**).

Finding — the Torah's own pattern for a divided family is truth, gifts, room for the other, a sworn covenant of peace, and forgiveness. Corroborated (Genesis 13:8–9; 26:22, 28–31; 33:4; 50:19–21).

VIII-B. The Terms Are the Same for Every Son

Unity in the Tanakh is not built on blood. The sons of Isaac do not stand before **Yahweh** by descent alone, and the sons of Ishmael are not shut out by descent alone.

The terms are one:

"One statute shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who sojourns with you, an everlasting statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before Yahweh. One Torah and one judgment shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you." (Numbers 15:15–16)

"Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to Yahweh, to serve Him and to love the name of Yahweh, to be His servants... and who hold fast My covenant — even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer... for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isaiah 56:6–7)

The same Torah that tells Israel it was chosen also tells Israel it will be judged by the same standard it holds out to others (**Leviticus 18:24–28**; **Amos 9:7**). **Doc 329** has examined this in full.

For the sons of Ishmael the door is the one door open to every nation: to join oneself to **Yahweh**, to love His name, to keep His Sabbath, and to hold fast His covenant.

Finding — the sons of Ishmael may come into Yahweh's covenant on the same terms as every son of Abraham and every stranger. Corroborated (Exodus 12:48–49; Numbers 15:15–16; Isaiah 56:6–7).

VIII-C. The Land and the Stranger's Inheritance

The land promise to Isaac's line is real (Genesis 17:8; 26:3).

But the Torah also teaches that Yahweh gave the other sons of Abraham's family lands of their own, and forbade Israel to take them: ***"Do not contend with them, for I will not give you of their land, not so much as a footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession"*** (**Deuteronomy 2:5**; likewise Moab and Ammon, the sons of Lot, **2:9, 19**).

And in Ezekiel's vision of the restored land, the stranger who lives among Israel receives an inheritance:

"You shall divide it by lot for an inheritance for yourselves and for the strangers who sojourn among you, who beget children among you; and they shall be to you as the native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the stranger sojourns, there you shall give him his inheritance, says Adonai Yahweh." (Ezekiel 47:22–23)

Alongside these stand the commands that govern every hand on every side: ***"You shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt"*** (**Leviticus 19:34**); ***"do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place"***

(**Jeremiah 22:3**); ***"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of Elohim He made man"*** (**Genesis 9:6**). **Docs 259** and **297** have applied these texts to the present conflict in the land.

Finding — the Tanakh joins the land promise to Isaac's line with a share for the stranger who lives in the land, with justice, and with the protection of innocent blood. Corroborated (**Leviticus 19:33–34**; **Deuteronomy 2:5, 9, 19**; **Jeremiah 22:3**; **Ezekiel 47:22–23**).

VIII-D. The Highway from Egypt to Assyria

The clearest prophecy of unity among Abraham's neighbors names three peoples:

"In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria shall come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and Egypt shall serve with Assyria. In that day Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom Yahweh of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance." (Isaiah 19:23–25)

Now read again where the Torah placed the sons of Ishmael: *"from Havilah to Shur, which is before Egypt, as you go toward Assyria"* (**Genesis 25:18**). Ishmael's lands are the country between Egypt and Assyria. The highway of Isaiah's vision must cross them.

Ishmael's own mother was an Egyptian, and his wife was taken from Egypt (**Genesis 16:1; 21:21**). This connection is an observation from the text, not a statement of it, and it is labeled so. But it fits what the prophets say elsewhere: the tents of Kedar praising **Yahweh** (**Isaiah 42:11**) and the flocks of Kedar and Nebaioth on His altar (**Isaiah 60:7**).

The other prophets complete the picture. ***"For then I will turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call on the name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one shoulder"*** (**Zephaniah 3:9**).

The nations will go up to ***"the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob,"*** and ***"they shall beat their swords into plowshares"*** (**Isaiah 2:2–4**; **Micah 4:1–3**).

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (**Micah 4:4**).

And all who survive of the nations shall go up year by year ***"to keep the Feast of Tabernacles"*** (**Zechariah 14:16**).

Finding — Yahweh has declared that He will bring the nations around Israel — Egypt, Assyria, Kedar, Nebaioth, and the sons of Keturah among them — to call on His name and

serve Him together. **Corroborated** (**Isaiah 19:23–25; 42:11–12; 60:6–7**; **Zephaniah 3:9**; **Micah 4:1–4**). That the highway of **Isaiah 19** runs through Ishmael's lands is an inference from **Genesis 25:18**, and only an inference.

VIII-E. What Will Not Bring Unity

The prophets are just as clear about what will not bring the sons of Abraham together.

Not pride of blood. Israel was not chosen for its greatness (**Deuteronomy 7:7**), and descent from Abraham without Abraham's way is empty (**Genesis 18:19**; **Jeremiah 9:23–26** [Hebrew 9:22–25]).

Not the sword. ***"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says Yahweh of hosts"*** (**Zechariah 4:6**). Bloodshed defiles the land itself (**Numbers 35:33**).

Not a blended religion. The Torah forbids adding the ways of other gods to the worship of **Yahweh** (**Deuteronomy 12:30–32** [Hebrew 12:30–13:1]). A shared courtyard of three houses of worship, such as the Abrahamic Family House opened in Abu Dhabi in 2023, can teach neighbors to live in peace, and that is good. It cannot make the three faiths one, because unity in the Tanakh is not agreement to differ about **Elohim**; it is return to His word.

Not adding to the word. ***"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it"*** (**Deuteronomy 4:2**). Each tradition must lay its additions down before the same written covenant — the Talmud, the councils, and the hadith alike (**Doc 178**).

The prophet Malachi puts the whole question in one breath:

"Have we not all one father? Has not one El created us? Why do we deal treacherously, every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Malachi 2:10)

IX. HOW MIQDASH BETHEL CAN SHOW THE SONS OF ISHMAEL AND ISAAC THE WAY OF PEACE

The research sheet asks how Miqdash Bethel can show the sons of Ishmael that they can have peace with the sons of Isaac. The Tanakh does not ask this Institution to broker treaties. It asks it to teach the word truly, to live it, and to speak it to both houses without partiality (**Leviticus 19:15**; **Deuteronomy 1:17**).

Seven practices follow from the text.

#	PRACTICE	WHAT IT MEANS	TEXT
I	Tell Ishmael's story as the Tanakh tells it	Teach the sons of Isaac that **Elohim** heard Ishmael, blessed him, circumcised him with Abraham, saved him, and was with him — and teach the sons of Ishmael the same, from the same text	**Genesis 16:11; 17:20–26; 21:17–20**
II	Honor without flattery	Say plainly what was established with Isaac, and say plainly what was given to Ishmael. Correct both houses' additions by the same standard.	**Genesis 17:19–21**; **Deuteronomy 4:2**
III	Begin where the fathers stood together	One **Elohim**; one father Abraham; circumcision; prayer; the burial at Machpelah	**Deuteronomy 6:4**; **Genesis 25:9**; **Malachi 2:10**
IV	Speak against innocent blood on every side	Name violence as sin whether it is done by the sons of Isaac or the sons of Ishmael; refuse to excuse either	**Genesis 9:6**; **Jeremiah 22:3**; **Proverbs 6:16–17**
V	Hold the door open on one set of terms	Invite the sons of Ishmael into **Yahweh**'s covenant as Isaiah does — Sabbath, covenant, love of the Name — not into a new religion	**Isaiah 56:6–7**; **Numbers 15:15–16**
VI	Follow Isaac's wells	Where there is quarrel over land and water, seek room for both, a sworn covenant, and a shared table, rather than force	**Genesis 26:19–31**
VII	Model it in our own house	Let the Institution's own fellowship be a place where Isaac's sons and Ishmael's sons sit together under the written word	**Psalms 133:1**; **Isaiah 2:3**

In practice this means three kinds of work.

First, a plain-language edition of this study, suitable for Arabic translation, that tells Ishmael's story from the Tanakh without polemic.

Second, letters to Arab and Muslim leaders and scholars that begin from ***"El hears"*** and ***"because he is your seed,"*** not from the dispute over Moriah — following the pattern of the Library's outreach letters (**Docs 275**, **325**, and **342**).

Third, the same honesty toward the sons of Isaac: that the Tanakh which gives them the covenant line also gives Ishmael his blessing, and that bloodshed and pride do not belong to the way of **Yahweh** (**Genesis 18:19**).

Finding — the Tanakh asks **Yahweh**'s people to judge without partiality, speak truth to every side, and seek peace. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 19:15**; **Deuteronomy 1:17**; **Psalms 34:14** [Hebrew 34:15]; **Zechariah 8:16–17**).

X. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION HANDLES ISHMAEL

The table sets the three traditions against Tanakh's findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Ishmael's standing	Honored as Abraham's son; rabbinic voices differ, from grave sinner (Genesis Rabbah 53:11) to repentant son (Bava Batra 16b; Rashi on 25:9)	Usually read through Galatians 4 as the son of the flesh and of bondage; Romans 9 cites **Genesis 21:12** for the line of promise	A prophet and messenger, ***"true to his promise"*** (Q. 19:54–55); father of the northern Arabs
The covenant line	Through Isaac and Jacob, as written	Through Isaac; reinterpreted as fulfilled in Jesus	Covenant of leadership not given to wrongdoers (Q. 2:124); the prophetic line through both sons
The sacrifice	Isaac, as written (**Genesis 22:2**)	Isaac, as written; read as a type of Jesus (Hebrews 11:17–19)	The son unnamed in Q. 37; majority view Isma'il, with al-Tabari holding Isaac
Covenant strength	Keeps the written order of **Genesis 17** and **21**; the tradition of Ishmael's repentance honors **Genesis 25:9**	Romans 9:7 quotes **Genesis 21:12** accurately; Christian Arab communities have lived among Ishmael's sons since the first centuries	Preserves the honor the Tanakh gives Ishmael; its ***tawhid (oneness)*** stands near **Deuteronomy 6:4**; circumcision is kept

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Covenant departure	Readings that make Ishmael wicked go beyond **Genesis 21:9**, which records no deed	Making Ishmael ***"the flesh"*** and his casting-out a pattern of rejection goes beyond **Genesis 21:13, 17–20**	The House in Mecca and the Zamzam narrative are not in the Tanakh; naming Ishmael on Moriah contradicts **Genesis 22:2**
Covenant witness	The two brothers at the grave (**Genesis 25:9**) is the scene the tradition of repentance preserves	The New Testament's own Abraham — ***"father of many nations"*** (Romans 4:17) — echoes **Genesis 17:5**	The Qur'an's ***"we make no distinction between any of them"*** (Q. 3:84) names Ishmael and Isaac side by side

XI. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library's rule is that its own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else's. Three points in the June 2026 study ***Avraham: Father of Many Nations*** and one in **Doc 178** need attention.

Correction 1 — *"the Arab peoples."* The June 2026 study (Parts II-C, VI, and IX) calls Ishmael's twelve princes the ***"ancestors of the Arab peoples"*** and says ***"the descendants of Yishmael — the Arab peoples."*** As Section VI-C shows, Ishmael's sons are among the forebears of the northern and central Arabian peoples, but the Tanakh also places Joktan's, Keturah's, and Esau's lines in Arabia (**Genesis 10:25–30; 25:1–4; 36**), and Arab tradition itself traces the southern Arabs to Qahtan. The wording has been refined in the study's Google Doc to ***"among the ancestors of the Arab peoples."***

Correction 2 — *"princess of the nations."* The June 2026 study (Part I-C) glosses ***Sarah*** as ***"princess of the nations."*** The name means ***"princess"***; the nations come from the promise that follows: ***"she shall become nations"*** (**Genesis 17:16**). The gloss has been corrected in the study's Google Doc.

Correction 3 — *the added letter* ה. The June 2026 study (Part I-C) says the letter **ה** added to Abram's name was taken from the Name **יהוה** as a ***"Tanakh-attested act of covenant transformation."*** The Tanakh attests the name change and gives its own reason — ***av hamon goyim (father of a multitude of nations)*** (**Genesis 17:5**). That the letter was taken from the Name is a later homiletic reading and is **Not in the text**. Left for Kepha's decision, since the point is used in teaching.

Correction 4 — *Doc 178, the New Testament quotation of the Shema.* **Doc 178** (IV-B) quotes Mark 12:29 as ***"Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one."*** The Greek of Mark reads ***Kyrios (Lord)***, not the Name, though the verse it quotes, **Deuteronomy 6:4**, has the Name. The quotation should either give Mark's wording or say that Mark is quoting **Deuteronomy 6:4**. Left for Kepha's decision. In the same document, **Joel 2:32** has been given its Hebrew verse number [Hebrew 3:5] in the Google Doc, under the Hebrew verse-number rule.

The research sheet ***"Ishmael's and the Blessing"*** is Kepha's gathered internet research, not a library document, and is left as it is. Its claims are graded throughout this study, chiefly in Sections IV, VI, and VII.

XII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON ISHMAEL AND THE UNITY OF ABRAHAM'S SONS

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	**Elohim** heard Ishmael: his name, his mother's affliction, his father's prayer, and his own voice in the wilderness.	**Genesis 16:11; 17:18–20; 21:17**
II	Ishmael was blessed, made a great nation with twelve princes, circumcised with Abraham, and **Elohim** was with him.	**Genesis 17:20, 23–26; 21:13, 18, 20; 25:16**
III	The covenant line, with the oath of the land, was established through Isaac by **Elohim**'s word alone, not by any fault recorded against Ishmael.	**Genesis 17:19, 21; 21:12**; **Psalms 105:9–11**
IV	Ishmael's sons were real peoples between Egypt and Assyria; they are among the forebears of the Arabian peoples, but not the only ones.	**Genesis 10:25–30; 25:1–4, 13–18**; Assyrian records
V	The Tanakh shows the two houses at their father's grave, at Hagar's well, in marriage, in trade, and in David's household — and also at war.	**Genesis 25:9, 11; 28:9; 37:25**; **1 Chronicles 2:17; 27:30**; **Psalms 83:6**
VI	The way of peace between brothers is truth, room for the other, a sworn covenant, justice for the stranger, and no innocent blood.	**Genesis 13:8; 26:22, 28–31; 33:4**; **Ezekiel 47:22–23**; **Jeremiah 22:3**

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
VII	**Yahweh** will gather the sons of Ishmael with Israel to call on His name, and their offerings will be accepted on His altar.	**Isaiah 19:23–25; 42:11–12; 56:6–7; 60:7**; **Zephaniah 3:9**

XIII. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

Behind the question of Ishmael there are people: Arab families who have been told the Bible curses them, Jewish families who have been told the sons of Ishmael are their eternal enemies, and Christians and Muslims who have argued over Moriah for fourteen centuries.

Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: to the sons of Ishmael — your father's name means ***El hears***. Before he was born, **Yahweh** heard his mother. When he was dying of thirst, **Elohim** heard his voice ***"where he is"*** and was with him (**Genesis 16:11; 21:17, 20**). Nothing in the written covenant curses you, and the prophets see your flocks accepted on **Yahweh**'s altar (**Isaiah 60:7**).

Second: to the sons of Isaac — the covenant line is yours by **Elohim**'s word, not by your merit (**Genesis 21:12**; **Deuteronomy 7:7**). The same chapter that says ***"in Isaac shall seed be called"*** says of Ishmael, ***"because he is your seed"*** (**Genesis 21:12–13**). Carry the line as Abraham was charged to carry it: ***"to do righteousness and justice"*** (**Genesis 18:19**).

Third: to both — you have stood together before. Isaac and Ishmael buried their father side by side (**Genesis 25:9**). Isaac made his home at Hagar's well (**Genesis 25:11**). An Ishmaelite's son led the army of Judah (**1 Chronicles 2:17**). The enmity is real, but it is not the beginning of the story, and it is not the end.

Fourth: the door is one door — the covenant is open to every son of Abraham and every stranger on the same terms: to join oneself to **Yahweh**, to love His name, to keep His Sabbath, and to hold fast His covenant (**Isaiah 56:6–7**; **Numbers 15:15–16**). **Unity will not come by blending three religions, but by all three returning to the one written word**.

Fifth: begin with the wells — where there is strife over land and water, do what Isaac did: dig again until there is room, swear a covenant of peace, and set a table for the one who came against you (**Genesis 26:22, 28–31**). ***"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity"*** (**Psalms 133:1**).

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"All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on My altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory."

Isaiah 60:7 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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