

Genesis 25:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

Analysis

And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the ... This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

Historical Context

The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה בְּשָׁמֶת מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂמָעָל בְּשָׁמֶת מִבְּנֵי
H428 And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael And these are the names
H8034 H1121 H3458 H8034

לְתִזְלָדָת מִבְּכָר וְנָבָי תְּנִשְׁמָעָל וְקָדָר
according to their generations the firstborn of Ishmael Nebajoth and Kedar
H8435 H1060 H3458 H5032 H6938

וּמִבְּשָׁמָן אֶזְבְּאֵל וּמִבְּשָׁמָן אַדְבְּאֵל
and Adbeel and Mibsam
H110 H4017

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 60:7 (Parallel theme): All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebajoth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

Isaiah 42:11 (Parallel theme): Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

Psalms 120:5 (Parallel theme): Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

Song of Solomon 1:5: I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

