

# Islam

Islam only arrived on the scene about 1,500 years ago. But the real problem started 2,500 years before that in the land of Israel. A lot of modern history, especially in the middle east can be much more easily understood once we understand those events.

About 4,000 years ago God chose Abraham. He moved him from Ur, (in the south of Iraq), to Haran, in southern Turkey, and eventually to the land of Canaan, (what we now call Israel).

When Abraham was an old man in his 80's, and still childless, God promised him, and his wife Sarah, (herself in her 70's), a son. But Sarah was also old and well past childbearing, and after waiting some time they impatiently decided that God must have meant him to have a son through her servant girl instead. So he did. They named him Ishmael.

14 years later, when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90, God reminded Abraham of the promise, and a year later Sarah herself had a son. They named him Isaac.

Btw: there is a whole sermon right there! When God promises something, he delivers. But God's view of time is different to ours. We want it now. God wants it when it's the right time.

And you could even follow up with a sermon on what is impossible with man is nevertheless possible with God. But anyway...

God told Abraham that he would make him the father of many nations. He also promised Abraham that his descendants would be given the entire land of Israel, (more than they have now btw. From the river of Egypt, (not sure if that is the Wadi or the Nile), to the Euphrates river in Iraq).

When Abraham was 100, God promised him that Ishmael would indeed be the father of many nations, but he also made it very clear that his promise to Abraham, (giving him the land of Israel and that all nations of the world would be blessed through him), would be through Isaac, (not through Ishmael), and then through Isaac's son, Jacob.

And right there is the problem. Jews and Arabs both trace themselves back to Abraham. Most modern Muslims trace themselves back to Abraham through Ishmael. Of course the Jews trace themselves back through Isaac. So both groups believe that God gave them the land of Israel. Both of them think it is their God given right to live there.

No wonder there are so many problems in Israel. No wonder they can't settle for 50-50. No wonder they both want to annihilate the other. How would you react? If God promised you something and someone else was trying to take it claiming that God had not promised it to you, but to them.

But this is only half the story.

In Revelation we read of "Babylon the Great". The false religion who leads the rulers of the world astray. This one is only, "I think", but it seems very likely to me that towards the end of the age there will be one world wide religion, and I think it will be Islam.

Not just because Islam started around Babylon, and because it makes sense that Islam and Judaism will face off at the end. And that this will finally resolve the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac. But also because of what we see of world events.

Like most religions, Islam has been trying to spread ever since it started. And I don't necessarily think that Christians fighting back with knights and warriors was the correct way to stop them during the crusades of the 11-1300's. But clearly, that was not God's timing for the rise of Islam. But now it seems to be spreading almost without resistance. Instead of going to war, they just migrate and populate. One Muslim friend of mine told me that Australia will be an Islamic nation within 50 years. When I asked why he was so sure, he said, "because our families have 10 children and yours only have 2. It's just a matter of time before there are more of us than there are of you."

There are also some interesting prophecies in Islam. They are one of the only religions that agrees that Yeshua will return. But before he does, they believe that another man will rise to power. The Mahdi. They believe he will rule for 7 years during which he will bring about peace and prosperity, (for Muslims at least). And after the 7 years Yeshua will return to defeat the anti-Christ.

Interesting eh.

READING

Genesis 15-17

Revelation 17-18

I expect to see Islam grow stronger and more widespread as the end approaches. It's kind of exciting to see it happening before our eyes. And if I'm right, then one day soon, the middle east "situation" will finally be resolved. So will the very long running dispute between two nomadic brothers that started 4,000 years ago in a little country called Canaan.

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