

Ishmael

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(Heb. Yishmael', יִשְׁמָאֵל, heard by God; Sept. Ἰσμαήλ, Joseph. Ἰσμάηλος), the name of several men.

1. Abraham's eldest son, born to him by the concubine Hagar ([Genesis 16:15](#); [Genesis 17:23](#)). (See ABRAHAM); (See HAGAR). It may here be remarked that the age attributed to him in [Genesis 21:14](#) is not inconsistent with [Genesis 17:25](#) (see Tuch, Comm. p. 382). The story of his birth, as recorded in Genesis 16, is in every respect characteristic of Eastern life and morals in the present age. The intense desire of both Abraham and Sarah ' for children; Sarah's gift of Hagar to Abraham as wife; the insolence of the slave when suddenly raised to a place of importance; the jealousy and consequent tyranny of her high-spirited mistress; Hagar's flight, return, and submission to Sarah-for all these incidents we could easily find parallels in the modern history of every tribe in the desert of Arabia. The origin of the name Ishmael is thus explained. When Hagar fled from Sarah, the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness in the way of Shur... and he said, "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael (' God hears'), because the Lord hath heard thy affliction" ([Genesis 16:11](#)). Hagar had evidently intended, when she fled, to return to her native country. But when the angel told her of the dignity in store for her as a mother, and the power to which her child, as the son of the great patriarch, would attain, she resolved to obey his voice, and to submit herself to Sarah ([Genesis 16:10-13](#)).

1. Ishmael was born at Mamre, in the eighty-sixth year of Abraham's age, eleven years after his arrival in Canaan, and fourteen before the birth of Isaac ([Genesis 16:3](#); [Genesis 16:16](#); [Genesis 21:5](#)). B.C. 2078. No particulars of his early life are recorded, except his circumcision when thirteen years of age ([Genesis 17:25](#)). B.C. 2065.

His father was evidently strongly attached to him; for when an heir was promised through Sarah, he said, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" ([Genesis 17:18](#)). Then were renewed to Abraham in more definite terms the promises made to Hagar regarding Ishmael: "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; 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" ([Genesis 21:20](#)). Before this time Abraham seems to have regarded his first-born child as the heir of the promise, his belief in which was counted unto him for righteousness ([Genesis 15:6](#)); and although that faith shone yet more brightly after his passing weakness when Isaac was first promised, his love for Ishmael is recorded in the narrative of Sarah's expulsion of the latter: "And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son" ([Genesis 21:11](#)).

Ishmael seems to have remained in a great measure under the charge of his mother, who, knowing his destiny, would doubtless have him trained in such exercises as would fit him for successfully acting the part of a desert prince. Indulged in every whim and wish by a fond father, encouraged to daring and adventure by the hardy nomads who fed and defended his father's flocks, and having a fitting field on that southern border-land for the play of his natural propensities, Ishmael grew up a true child of the desert—a wild and wayward boy. The perfect freedom of desert life, and his constant intercourse with those who looked up to him with mingled feelings of pride and affection as the son and heir-apparent of their great chief, tended to make him impatient of restraint, and overbearing in his temper. The excitement of the chase — speeding across the plains of Beersheba after the gazelles, and through the rugged mountains of Engedi after wild goats, and bears, and leopards, inured him to danger, and trained him for war. Ishmael must also have been accustomed from childhood to those feuds which raged almost incessantly between the "trained servants" of Abraham and their warlike neighbors of Philistia, as well as to the more serious incursions of roving bands of freebooters from the distant East. Such was the school in which the great desert chief was trained. Subsequent events served to fill up and fashion the remaining features of Ishmael's character. He had evidently been

treated by Abraham's dependents as their master's heir, and Abraham himself had apparently encouraged the belief. The unexpected birth of Isaac, therefore, must have been to him a sad and bitter disappointment. And when he was afterwards driven forth, with his poor mother, a homeless wanderer in a pathless wilderness; when, in consequence of such unnatural harshness, he was brought to the very brink of the grave, and was only saved from a painful death by a miracle; when, after having been reared in luxury, and taught to look forward to the possession of wealth and power, he was suddenly left to win a scanty and uncertain subsistence by his sword and bow - we need scarcely wonder that his proud spirit, revolting against injustice and cruelty, should make him what the angel had predicted, "a wild-ass man; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Genesis 16:32).

2. The first recorded outbreak of Ishmael's rude and wayward spirit occurred at the weaning of Isaac. B.C. 2061. On that occasion Abraham made a great feast after the custom of the country. In the excitement of the moment, heightened probably by the painful consciousness of his own blighted hopes, Ishmael could not restrain his temper, but gave way to some insulting expressions or gestures of mockery. Perhaps the very name of the child, Isaac ("laughter"), and the exuberant joy of his aged mother, may have furnished subjects for his untimely satire. (See ISAAC). Be this as it may, Sarah's jealous eye and quick ear speedily detected him; and she said to Abraham, "Expel this slave and her son; for the son of this slave shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac" (**Genesis 21:10**). Now Abraham loved the boy who first, lisping the name "father," opened in his heart the gushing fountain of paternal affection. The bare mention of such an unnatural act made him angry even with Sarah, and it was only when influenced by a divine admonition that he yielded. The brief account of the departure of Hagar, and her journey through the desert, is one of the most beautiful and touching pictures of patriarchal life which has come down to us: "And Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread, and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the lad (הַיֶּלֶד), and sent- her away;. and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And when the water was

spent in the skin, she placed the lad under one of the shrubs. And she went and sat down opposite, at the distance of a bowshot; for she said, I will not see the death of the lad. And she sat opposite, and lifted up her voice and wept" ([Genesis 21:14-16](#)).

Isaac was born when Abraham was a hundred years old ([Genesis 21:5](#)), and as the weaning, according to Eastern usage, probably took place when the child was about three years old, Ishmael himself must have been then about sixteen years old. The age of the latter at the period of his circumcision, and at that of his expulsion, has given occasion for some literary speculation. A careful consideration of the passages referring to it fails, however, to show any discrepancy between them. In [Genesis 17:25](#), it is stated that he was thirteen years old when he was circumcised; and in 21. 14 (probably two or three years later) "Abraham took bread, and a bottle- of water, and gave [it] unto Hagar, putting [it] on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away." Here it is at least unnecessary to assume that the child was put on her shoulder the construction of the Hebrew (mistranslated by the Sept., with whom seems to rest the origin of the question) not requiring it; and the sense of the passage renders it highly improbable: Hagar certainly carried the bottle on her shoulder, and perhaps the bread: she could hardly have also thus carried a child. Again, these passages are quite irreconcilable with [Genesis 17:20](#) of the last quoted chapter, where Ishmael is termed הַנֶּעֱר, A.. "lad" (comp., for use of this word, [Genesis 34:19](#); [Genesis 37:2](#); [Genesis 41:12](#)). It may seem strange to some that the hardy, active boy, inured to fatigue, should have been sooner overcome by thirst than his mother; but those advanced in life can bear abstinence longer than the young, and, besides, Ishmael had probably exhausted his strength in vain attempts to gain a supply of food by his bow. Again Hagar is saved by a miracle: "God heard the voice of the lad .. and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water" ([Genesis 41:17](#); [Genesis 41:19](#)). And again the cheering promise is renewed to her son, "I will make of him a great nation" ([Genesis 41:18](#)).

3. The wilderness of Paran, lying along the western side of the Arabah, between Canaan and the mountains of Sinai, now became

the home of Ishmael (see Baumgarten, Comm. I, 1, 22): "And God was with him, and he became a great archer" ([Genesis 41:20](#)). Some of the border tribes with which the shepherds of Abraham were wont to meet and strive at the wells of Gerar, Beersheba, and En-Mishpat probably received and welcomed the out cast to their tents. A youth of his warlike training and daring spirit would soon acquire a name and a high position among nomads. (See Prokesch, Spec. Hist. Arab. p. 46.) His relationship to Abraham also would add to his personal claims. It would seem to have been the original intention of his mother to return to Egypt, to which country she belonged; but this being prevented, she was content to obtain for her son wives from thence ([Genesis 21:9-21](#); on which latter verse the Targum of Jonathan adds traditionally that he divorced his first wife Adisha, and then married an Egyptian Phatima). His mother, accordingly, as soon as she saw him settled, took for him an Egyptian wife-one of her own people, and thus completely separated him from his Shemitic connections. This wife of Ishmael is not elsewhere mentioned; she was, we must infer, an Egyptian; and this second infusion of Hamitic blood into the progenitors of the Arab nation, Ishmael's sons, is a fact that has generally been overlooked. No record is made of any other wife of Ishmael, and failing such record, the Egyptian was the mother of his twelve sons and daughter. This daughter, however, is called the "sister of Nebajoth" ([Genesis 28:9](#)), and this limitation of the parent-age of the brother- and sister certainly seems to point to a different mother for Ishmael's other sons. The Arabs, probably borrowing from the above Rabbinical tradition, assert that he twice married; the first wife being an Amalekite, by whom he had no issue; and the second a Joktanite, of the tribe of Jurhum (Mir-dt et-Zemdn, MS, quoting a tradition of Mohammed Ibn-Is-hak). Though Ishmael joined the native tribes of Arabia, his posterity did not amalgamate with them. The Joktanites have left traces of their names and settlements chiefly in the southern and southeastern parts of the peninsula, while the Ishmaelites kept closer to the borders of Canaan (see Forster's Geography of Arabia, 1, 77. sq.).

4. Although their lots were cast apart, it does not appear that any serious alienation existed between Ishmael and Isaac; for when

Abraham died, we read that "his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah." The rival brothers then met, in the vale of Mamre, at their father's tomb ([Genesis 25:9](#)). B.C. 1989. (The Talmud states [Baba Bathra, 16] that prior to Abraham's death Ishmael had forsaken the nomadic mode of life.) That must have been a strange and deeply interesting scene at the burial of the great patriarch. All his own old "trained servants." with Isaac, the peaceful shepherd chief, at their head, were assembled there; while Ishmael, surrounded by the whole body of his wild retainers and allies, as was and still is the custom of Bedawy sheiks, stood there too. As funerals in the East take place almost immediately after death, it is evident that Ishmael must have been called from the desert to the death-bed of his father, which implies that relations of kindness and respect had been kept up, although the brevity. of the sacred narrative prevents any special notice of this circumstance. Ishmael had, probably, long before received an endowment from his father's property similar to that which had been bestowed upon the sons of Keturah ([Genesis 25:6](#)).

5. Of Ishmael's personal history after this event we know nothing. The sacred historian gives us a list of his twelve sons, tells us that Esau married his daughter Mahalath, the sister of Nebajoth ([Genesis 28:9](#)), and sums up the brief simple sketch in these words: "These are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirtyseven years; and he died, and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 25, 17). B.C. 1941. Where he died, or where he was buried, we know not.

6. It has been shown, in the article ARABIA, that Ishmael had no claim to the honor, which is usually assigned to him, of being the founder of the Arabian nation. That nation existed before he was born. He merely joined it, and adopted its habits of life and character; and the tribes which sprung from him formed eventually an important section of the tribes of which it was composed. (See also Hottinger, Hist. Orient. p. 210.) At this period the Arabian desert appears to have been thinly peopled by descendants of Joktan, the son of Eber, "whose dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east" ([Genesis 10:25-30](#)). The Joktanites, or Bene-Kahtan, are regarded by Arab historians as the first and most honorable progenitors of the Arab tribes (D'Herbelot, Bibliotheque Orientale, s.v.

Arabes). (See JOKTAN).

Ishmael had twelve sons: Nebajoth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. To the list of them, the sacred historian appends ([Genesis 25:16](#)) an important piece of information: "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their cities (חצריהם, "fortified towns"), and their camps (טירתם); twelve princes according to their nations" (לאמתם). Every one of the twelve sons of Ishmael, therefore, like the children of Jacob, was the head of a tribe, and the founder of a distinct colony or camp. In this respect the statements in the Bible exactly accord with the ancient traditions and histories of the Arabs themselves. Native historians divide the Arabs into two races: 1. Pure Arabs, descendants of Joktan; and, 2. Mixed Arabs, descendants of Ishmael. Abulfeda gives a brief account of the several tribes and nations which descended from both these original stocks (*Historia Anteislamica*, ed. Fleischer, p. 180, 191 sq.). Some of the tribes founded by sons of Ishmael retained the names of their founders, and were well known in history. The Nabathceans, who took possession of Idumaea in the 4th century B.C., and constructed the wonderful monuments of Petra, were the posterity of Nebajoth, Ishmael's eldest son. (See NABATHIEANS).

The descendants of Jetur and Naphish disputed with the Israelites possession of the country east of the Jordan, and the former, described by Strabo as κακοῦργοι πάντες ([Genesis 16:2](#)), gave their name to a small province south of Damascus, which it bears to this day. SEE ITUREA.

The black tents of Kedar were pitched in the heart of the Arabian desert, and from their abundant flocks they supplied the marts of Tyre ([Jeremiah 2:10](#); [Isaiah 60:7](#); [Ezekiel 27:21](#)). The district of Tema lay south of Edom, and is referred to by both Job and Isaiah ([Job 6:19](#); [Isaiah 21:14](#); Forster's Geogr. of Arabia, 1, 292; Heeren's Historical Researches, 2, 107). Dumah has left his name to a small province of Arabia. Since the days of Abraham the tents of the Ishmaelites have been studded along the whole eastern confines of Palestine, and they have been scattered over Arabia from the borders of Egypt to the banks of the Euphrates. As friends and foes, as oppressors and

oppressed-but ever as freemen-the seed of Ishmael have "dwelt in the presence of their brethren."

Of this last expression various explanations have been given, but the plainest is the most probable; which is, that Ishmael and the tribes springing from him should always be located near the kindred tribes descended from Abraham. This was a promise of benefit in that age of migration, when Abraham himself had come from beyond the Euphrates, and was a stranger and sojourner in the land of Canaan. There was thus, in fact, a relation of some importance between this promise and the promise of the heritage of Canaan to another branch of Abraham's offspring. It had seemingly some such force as this-The heritage of Canaan is, indeed destined for another son of Abraham; but still the lot of Ishmael, and of those that spring from him, shall never be cast far apart from that of his brethren. This view is confirmed by the circumstance that the Israelites did, in fact, occupy the country bordering on that in which the various tribes descended from Abraham or Terah had settled-the Ishmaelites, Edomites, Midianites, Moabites, Ammonites, etc. Most interpreters find in this passage a promise that the descendants of Ishmael should never be subdued. But we are unable to discover this in the text; and, moreover, such has not been the fact, whether we regard the Ishmaelites apart from the other Arabians, or consider the promise made to Ishmael as applicable to the whole Arabian family. The Arabian tribes are in a state of subjection at this moment; and the great Wahaby confederacy among them, which not many years ago filled Western Asia with alarm, is now no longer heard of.

The prophecy which drew their character has been fulfilled with equal minuteness of detail. "He shall be a wild ass of a man (פָּרָא אָדָם); his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him." This means, in short, that he and his descendants should lead the life of the Bedouins of the Arabian deserts; and how graphically this description portrays their habits may be seen in notes on these verses in the Pictorial Bible, and in the works of Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Lane, etc.; and, more particularly, in the Arabian romance of Antar, which presents the most perfect picture- of real Bedouin manners now in existence. A recent commentator on the passage has illustrated the

prophecy with equal force and beauty. "The character of the Ishmaelites, or the Bedouins, could not be described more aptly or more powerfully. Against them alone time seems to have no sickle, and the conqueror's sword no edge. They have defied the softening influence of civilization, and mocked the attacks of the invader.

Ungovernable and roaming, obeying no law but their spirit of adventure, regarding all mankind as their enemies, whom they must either attack with their spears or elude with their faithful steeds, and cherishing their deserts as heartily as they despise the constraint of towns and communities, the Bedouins are the outlaws among the nations. Plunder is legitimate gain, a daring robbery is praised as valor" (Kalisch, ad loc.). (See ISHMAELITE).

7. The notions of the Arabs respecting Ishmael (Ismail) are partly derived from the Bible, partly from the Jewish Rabbins. and partly from native traditions. The origin of many of these traditions is obscure, but a great number may be ascribed to the fact of Mohammed's having, for political reasons, claimed Ishmael for his ancestor, and striven to make out an impossible pedigree; while both he and his followers have, as a consequence of accepting this assumed descent, sought to exalt that ancestor. Another reason may be safely found in Ishmael's acknowledged headship of the naturalized Arabs, and this cause existed from the very period of his settlement. (See ARABIA).

Yet the rivalry of the Joktanite kingdom of Southern Arabia, and its intercourse with classical and medieval Europe, the wandering and unsettled habits of the Ishmaelites, their having no literature, and, as far as we know, only a meager oral tradition, all contributed, till the importance it acquired with the promulgation of El-Islam, to render our knowledge of the Ishmaelitic portion of the people of Arabia, before Mohammed, lamentably defective. That they maintained, and still maintain, a patriarchal and primitive form of life, is known to us. Their religion, at least in the period immediately preceding Mohammed, was in Central Arabia chiefly the grossest fetishism, probably learnt from aboriginal inhabitants of the land; southwards it diverged to the cosmic worship of the Joktanite Himyerites (though these were far from being exempt from fetishism), and northwards (so at least in ancient times) to an approach to that true faith which Ishmael carried with him, and

his descendants thus gradually lost. This last point is curiously illustrated by the numbers who, in Arabia, became either Jews (Karaites) or Christians (though of a very corrupt form of Christianity), and by the movement in search of the faith of the patriarchs which had been put forward, not long before the birth of Mohammed, by men not satisfied with Judaism or the corrupt form of Christianity with which alone they were acquainted. This movement first aroused Mohammed, and was afterwards the main cause of his success. The Arabs believe that Ishmael was the first-born of Abraham, and the majority of their doctors (but the point is in dispute) assert that this son, and not Isaac, was offered by Abraham in sacrifice. The scene of this sacrifice is Mount 'Armafah, near Mecca, the last holy place visited by pilgrims, it being necessary to the completion of pilgrimage to be present at a sermon delivered there on the 9th of the Mohammedan month Zu-l-Hejje, in commemoration of the offering, and to sacrifice a victim on the following evening after sunset, in the valley of Mina. The sacrifice last mentioned is observed throughout the Muslim world, and the day on which it is made is called "The Great Festival" (Lane's Mod. Egypt. Ch. 3). Ishmael, say the Arabs, dwelt with his mother at Mekke, and both are buried in the place called the "Hejra," on the north-west (termed by the Arabs the north) side of the Kaabah, and enclosed by a curved wall called al-Haram, "Haram." Ishmael was visited at Mekke by Abraham, and they together rebuilt the temple, which had been destroyed by a flood. At Mekke, Ishmael married a daughter of Mudad or El-Mudad, chief of the Jokanite tribe Jurhum, and had thirteen children (Mir-at ez-Zemdn, MS.), thus agreeing with the Biblical number, including the daughter. Mohammed's descent from Ishmael is totally lost, for an unknown number of generations, to 'Adnan, of the twenty-first generation before the prophet: from him downwards the latter's descent is, if we may believe the genealogists, fairly proved. But we have evidence far more trustworthy than that of the genealogists; for, while most of the natives of Arabia are unable to trace up their pedigrees, it is scarcely possible to find one who is ignorant of his race, seeing that his very life often depends upon it. The law of blood-revenge necessitates his knowing the names of his ancestors for four generations, but no more;

and this law, extending from time immemorial, has made any confusion of race almost impossible. This law, it should be remembered, is not a law of Mohammed, but an old pagan law that he endeavored to suppress, but could not. In casting doubt on the prophet's pedigree, we must add that this cannot affect the proofs of the chief element of the Arab nation being Ishmaelitish (and so, too, the tribe of Kureysh, of whom was Mohammed). Although partly mixed with Joktanites, they are more mixed with Keturahites, etc.; the characteristics of the Joktanites, as before remarked, are widely different from those of the Ishmaelites; and, whatever theories may be adduced to the contrary, we believe that the Arabs, from physical characteristics, language, the concurrence of native traditions (before Mohammedanism made them untrustworthy), and the testimony of the Bible, are mainly and essentially Ishmaelitish.

2. The father (or ancestor) of Zebadiah, which latter was "ruler of the house of Judah" under Jehoshaphat ([2 Chronicles 19:11](#)).. B.C. cir. 900.

3. Son of Jehohanan, and captain of a ' hundred" under the regency of- Jehoiada ([2 Chronicles 23:1](#)). B.C. 877.

4. One of the six sons of Azel, of the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:38](#); [1 Chronicles 9:44](#)). B.C. ante 588.

5. The son of Nethaniah, whose treachery forms one of the chief episodes of the history of the period immediately succeeding the first fall of Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 40:7](#); [Jeremiah 41:15](#), with a short summary, in [2 Kings 25:23-25](#)). B.C. 587. His full description is "Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal" of Judah ([Jeremiah 41:1](#); [2 Kings 25:25](#)). Whether by this is intended that he was actually a son of Zedekiah, or of one of the later kings, or, more generally, that he had royal blood in his veins - perhaps a descendant of Elishama, the son of David ([2 Samuel 5:16](#)) — we cannot tell. Jerome (Qu. Hebr. on [2 Chronicles 28:7](#)) interprets this expression as meaning "of the seed of Molech." He gives the same meaning to the words "the king's son" applied to Maaseiah in the above passage. The question is an interesting one, and has recently been revived by Geiger (Urschrift, etc., p. 307), who extends it to other passages and-persons. — (See MOLECH).

Jerome (as above) further says-perhaps on the strength of a tradition that Ishmael was the son of an Egyptian slave, Gera: as a reason why the "seed royal" should bear the meaning he gives it. During the siege of the city he had, like many others of his countrymen (**Jeremiah 40:11**), fled across the Jordan, where he found a refuge at the court of Baalis, then king of the Bene- Ammon (Josephus, Ant. 10:9, 2). Ammonitish women were sometimes found in the harems of the kings of Jerusalem (**1 Kings 11:1**), and Ishmael may have been thus related to the Ammonitish court on his mother's side. At any rate, he was instigated by Baalis to the designs which he accomplished but too successfully (**Jeremiah 40:14**; Josephus, Ant. 10:9, 3). Several bodies of Jews appear to have been lying under arms in the plains on the southeast of the Jordan, during the last days of Jerusalem, watching the progress of affairs in Western Palestine, commanded by "princes" (שָׂרִים), the chief of whom were Ishmael, and two brothers, Johanan and Jonathan, sons of Kareah. Immediately after the departure of the Chaldean army these men moved across the Jordan to pay their respects to Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had left as superintendent (פֶּקִיד) of the province. Gedaliah had taken up his residence at Mizpah, a few miles north of Jerusalem, on the main road where Jeremiah the prophet resided with him (**Jeremiah 40:6**). The house would appear to have been isolated from the rest of the town. We can discern a high-enclosed courtyard and a deep well within its precincts. The well was certainly (**Jeremiah 41:9**; comp. **1 Kings 15:22**), and the whole residence was probably, a relic of the military works of Asa, king of Judah. Ishmael made no secret of his intention to kill the superintendent and usurp his position. Of this Gedaliah was warned in express terms by Johanan and his companions; and Johanan, in a secret interview, foreseeing how irreparable a misfortune Gedaliah's death would be at this juncture (**Jeremiah 40:15**), offered to remove the danger by killing Ishmael. This, however, Gedaliah, a man evidently of a high and unsuspecting nature, would not hear of (**Jeremiah 40:16**; and see the amplification in Josephus, Ant. 10:9, 3). They all accordingly took leave. Thirty days after (Josephus, Ant. 10:9, 4), in the seventh month (**Jeremiah 41:1**), on the third day of the month-so says the tradition-Ishmael again

appeared at Mizpah, this time accompanied by ten men, who were, according to the Hebrew text, "princes of the king" (רְבֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ), though this is omitted by the Sept. and by Josephus. Gedaliah entertained them at a feast (**Jeremiah 41:1**).

According to the statement of Josephus, this was a very lavish entertainment, and Gedaliah became much intoxicated. It must have been a private one, for before its close Ishmael and his followers had murdered Gedaliah and all his attendants with such secrecy that no alarm was given outside the room. The same night he killed all Gedaliah's establishment, including some Chaldean soldiers who were there. Jeremiah appears fortunately to have been, absent, and, incredible as it seems, so well had Ishmael taken his precautions, that for two days the massacre remained perfectly unknown to the people of the town. On the second day Ishmael perceived from his elevated position a large party coming southwards along the main road from Shechem and Samaria. He went out to meet them. They proved to be eighty devotees, who, with rent clothes, and with shaven beards, mutilated bodies, and other marks of heathen devotion, and weeping (Sept.) as they went, were bringing incense and offerings to the ruins of the Temple. At his invitation they turned aside to the residence of the superintendent. Here Ishmael put into practice the same stratagem which, on a larger scale, was employed by Mehemet Ali in the massacre of the Mamelukes at Cairo in: 1806. As the unsuspecting pilgrims passed within the outer gates (Sept. court-yard) he closed the entrances behind them and there he and his band butchered the whole number ten only escaped by the offer of heavy ransom for their lives. The seventy corpses were then thrown into the well, which (as in the Sepoy massacre at Cawnpore) was within the precincts of the house, and which was completely filled with the bodies. It was the same thing that had been done by Jehu-a man in some respects a prototype of Ishmael, with the bodies of the forty-two relatives of Ahaziah (**2 Kings 10:14**). This done, he descended to the town, surprised and carried off the daughters of king Zedekiah, who had been sent there by Nebuchadnezzar for safety, with their eunuchs and their Chaldean guard (**Jeremiah 41:14**; **Jeremiah 41:16**), and all the people of the town, and made off with his prisoners to the country of

the Ammonites Which road he took is not quite clear; the Hebrew text and Sept. say by Gibeon, that is north; but Josephus, by Hebron; round the southern end of the Dead Sea. The news of the massacre had by this time got abroad; and Ishmael was quickly pursued by Johanan and his companions.

Whether north or south, they soon tracked him and his unwieldy booty, and found them reposing by some copious waters (רַבִּים מַיִם). He was attacked, two of his bravoos slain, the whole of the prey recovered, and Ishmael himself, with the remaining eight of his people, escaped to the Ammonites, and thenceforward passes into the obscurity from which it would have been well if he had never emerged. Johanan's foreboding was fulfilled. The result of this tragedy was an immediate panic. The small remnants of the Jewish commonwealth-the captains of the forces, the king's daughters, the two prophets Jeremiah and Baruch, and all the men, women, and children-at once took flight into Egypt ([Jeremiah 41:17](#); [Jeremiah 43:5-7](#)), and all hopes of a settlement were for the time at an end. The remembrance of the calamity was perpetuated by a fast the fast of the seventh month ([Zechariah 7:5](#); [Zechariah 8:19](#)), which is to this day strictly kept by the Jews on the third of Tisri. (See Reland, Antiq. 4:10: Kimchi on [Zechariah 7:5](#)). The part taken by Baalis in this transaction apparently brought upon his nation the denunciations both of Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 49:1-6](#)) and the more distant Ezekiel ([Ezekiel 25:1-7](#)), but we have no record to-show him these predictions were accomplished. (See GEDALIAH).

6. One of the "sons" of Pashur, who divorced his Gentile wife after the Exile ([Ezra 10:22](#)). B.C. 459.