

1. *His posterity was to become numerous.* His mother, being an Egyptian woman, "Took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." He became the father of twelve sons—one by the name of Nebajoth, and another by the name of Jetur, or Itur. Some of his posterity were called Hagarenes, after the name of his mother, and others were called Nabethœans, after his son Nebajoth, while others received the name of Iturœans from his son Itur. We also read of "the children of Kedar," who derived their name from another son of Ishmael, and of the "tents of Kedar," as also of the "princes of Kedar." He had another son whose name was Tema, and we read of the "troops of Tema," and the "land of Tema." Thus was he multiplied in his early descendants. He was so multiplied in his son Kedar, that his posterity, were subsequently divided into two different principalities, and hence we have "the princes of Kedar."—The Arabs boast of being descendants from Ishmael; and history, universal tradition; their language, and the fact that they preserved circumcision, as an original rite which they derived from him, for many ages, confirm the truth of their claims as to descent. These people are very numerous at the present time. Thus the prediction of a numerous posterity has received a literal accomplishment.

2. *He was to "beget twelve princes."* This was literally accomplished. "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles—twelve princes according to their nations," or tribes. (Gen. xxv. 16.) Of the Arabian tribes and their *phylarks*, [rulers of tribes,] Strabo, and other writers frequently speak.

3. *He was to be a great nation.* A nation may be numerous without being great. This, however, was not the case with those people. They were not only a numerous people, but a great nation also. They were so great that even Cyrus and the Persians were unable to reduce them to the condition of subjects, if Herodotus can be credited; and he, of all the historians, had the best opportunity of knowing. (Herod. l. 3, § 88.) He also testifies that although Phœnicia, Palestine, and Syria, were subjected to taxation or tribute, yet the Arabs remained free. (Ibid. § 91.)

4. *"He will be a wild man."* Ishmael himself "dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer," (Gen. xxi. 21,) and every man who knows any thing of his posterity, knows it is equally true of them. Isaiah speaks of the "archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar." (xxi. 17.) In the wandering tribes of the Arabs, we have the wildness of Ishmael portrayed. But it is farther declared,

5. *That he would be hostile—"his hand will be against every man."* The descendants of Ishmael still preserve this trait of his character. They are plunderers by profession. They are a