

count of his great faith which made him believe because God told him, what was contrary to all appearance, that he should be the father of a great people, out of which the Messiah was to come.

Q. Who was Ishmael?

A. Ishmael was the son of Abraham, by a second wife who was a bondswoman of his wife Sara. In those early days when the world was still but thinly populated, even the holy patriarchs were allowed to have more than one wife.

Q. Was Ishmael the son promised to Abraham, from whose race the Messiah was to spring?

A. No, that promised son was Isaac, miraculously born to Abraham of his wife Sara, in her old age.

Q. Did Ishmael and his mother, Agar the bondswoman, continue to dwell in Abraham's tents?

A. No, Sara having seen Ishmael treat her son unkindly while they played together, requested Abraham to send the boy and his mother away, which he did, in order to preserve the peace of his household.

Q. What befel Agar and Ishmael in the desert whither they retired?

A. Whilst wandering in the desert, and after having exhausted the provisions given them by Abraham at their departure, Agar and her son were in danger of perishing for want of food and water, when an angel appeared to the unhappy mother, and causing a fountain to spring up out of the sand, gave her bread, and told her to take her son and be careful of him, for that he should be the father of a great people.