

Isaac and Ishmael

Israel, Arabs and the Middle East

Part 1

The key to understanding the modern Middle East is to understand its past. The endless turmoil and insurmountable political problems are ancient in origin. This is the first of an eight-part series in which we will examine the prophetic writings concerning the modern political Middle East and the collision of the spiritual forces at war with one another.

Since all of the prophecies about the Middle East come from the Bible, we will begin our study with a clear understanding of the authority of scripture.

The Authority of the Scriptures In order to understand the importance of the scriptural foundation for our study, we need to consider the truth climate of our current culture. Simply put, our post modern culture no longer believes in absolute truth. The post modernist believes that truth is relative—it is for each individual to decide his or her own truth. That kind of thinking is so pervasive in our world that even God's people are duped by relativism, especially young people.

Dennis Prager writes: the secular indoctrination of a generation that has grown into adulthood is bearing fruit. Unless one receives a strong religious grounding in a religious school and/or religious home, the average young person in the Western world is immersed in a secular cocoon. From elementary school through graduate school, only one way of looking at the world—the secular—is presented. The typical individual in the Western world receives as secular an indoctrination as the typical European received a religious one in the middle ages. I have taught college students and have found that their ignorance not only of the Bible but of the most elementary religious arguments and concepts—such as the truism that if there is no God, morality is subjective—is total.

If truth is relative, then scriptural authority loses its validity. In fact, all authority is deemed valid or invalid, depending on each individual's feelings.

Does God exist? If He exists, who speaks for Him? How can the truth answer be found among the cacophony of conflicting voices that claim with dogmatic certainty to speak for God? How can anyone be sure that they have God's view on the subject and not man-authored philosophies?

Amazingly, the Hebrew Scriptures have addressed these questions in a way that no other sacred writings have dared to try: by objectively proving their claims to truth and authority.

God anticipated the question of how to authenticate a teaching as true and authoritative, that is, as coming from the Creator. He provided a test which no man could falsify or achieve: predict the future with absolute accuracy.

The first test of truth is that it conforms to reality. Truth claims were to be taken seriously. If one dared to claim the office of a prophet and speak truth, he or she must be able to prove that God, the all knowing One, is the source of the teaching by foretelling the future with 100% accuracy or the prophet must die!

'But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die. "But you may wonder, 'How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the Lord?' If the prophet speaks in the Lord's name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the Lord did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared. Deuteronomy 18:20-22

Later God confirmed His own test for His own truth claims when He spoke through the prophet Zechariah:

But everything I said through my servants the prophets happened to your ancestors, just as I said. As a result, they repented and said, 'We have received what we deserved from the Lord of Heaven's Armies. He has done what he said he would do.'" Zechariah 1:6

This is a simple way to tell if something is true. It must “come to pass. It must now or in the future conform to reality. God tells us to examine the predictive content of teaching, especially teaching done in His Name. To be proven as authoritative and as God’s Word, that content must be perfect. The test of truth was penned by Moses and 900 years later, Zechariah says, “God did what He said He would do!”

God passed His own test. He placed proff that He is the

controller of all things and the source of all truth.

This is so important to understand as we look at the turmoil of the Middle East. Everyone claims to be right. Different groups espouse truth claims. The Bible stands alone in its prediction and fulfillment. History and current events objectively prove its truth claims. In our next issue, we will begin to look at those predictions and fulfillments.

John Bell