

3. This culinary provision was the perfect food and the Jews subsided on it for the entire forty-year wanderings in the Jornada.
4. As was often the case with the first generation, there were periodic spiritual breakdowns among them as is evidenced in the complaints of the “rabble” who were tired of eating manna every day and petitioned for meat instead:

**Numbers 11:5** “We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

**v. 6** but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.”

5. This complaint was voiced to Moses who became disgusted with the ingratitude of those who questioned divine grace provisions:

**Numbers 11:13** “Where am I going to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, ‘Give us meat that we may eat!’”

6. At this point, the Lord is going to answer the petition of “this people” in the affirmative:

**Numbers 11:18a** “Say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat. Therefore the Lord will give you meat and you shall eat.

**v. 19** ‘You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days,

**v. 20** but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wept before Him saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?””

7. It is often a source of great suffering when people pray to the Father in opposition of divine provisions already provided in grace.
8. In arrogance and ingratitude, these people demanded that the Lord change His menu because they were dissatisfied with the current selection.

9. So the Lord answered their prayer in the affirmative and gave them quail and He gave them quail in spades:

**Numbers 11:31** Now there went forth a wind from the Lord and it brought quail from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey<sup>3</sup> on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits deep [ 1 cubit is 17½"; 2 are 35" ] on the surface of the ground.

10. How many quail descended on the Jewish encampment is impossible to calculate for all of its dimensions are provided in Scripture.
11. The Lord's answer to the prayer was no doubt the provision of the biggest flock of birds in history. Spread on each side of the camp for at least ten miles, quail were piled a yard deep.
12. So, how did this work out for the ingrates? It is documented that their desire was not answered:

**Numbers 11:32** The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers<sup>4</sup>) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.

**v. 33** While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very sever plague.

**v. 34** So the name of the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah [קְבֻרַת הַתַּאֲוָה] “the graves of greediness” ], because there they buried the people who had been greedy.

13. The Greed Rebellion's petition was answered but its desire was not only negative but also deadly.

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<sup>3</sup> “The most usual method of calculating distance in traveling in the East. It was not an exact measure, varying as the journey would according to the circumstances of the travellers, the country travelled, etc. The ordinary day's journey among the Jews was twenty to thirty miles, but when traveling in company only ten miles” (Merrill F. Unger, “Metrology: Day's Journey,” in *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3d ed. [Chicago: Moody Press, 1966], 721).

<sup>4</sup> “The *homer* was originally an ass load, and hence a measure of like capacity. It contained ten ephahs, nearly eight bushels.” [Ten homers would amount to almost 80 bushels.] (Ibid.)

## II. Petition Negative—Desire Affirmative:

1. One of the problems believers encounter is the inability to see clearly into the future. This is why understanding the divine decree is so important.
2. When God informed Abram that he would be the father of a great nation He also included the promise that He would also be the patriarch of a great people:

**Genesis 13:14** The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;

**v. 15** for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

**v. 16** “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

3. This prophecy indicated that Abram would have a son that would continue fulfillment of the prophecy of the Abrahamic Covenant. However, his wife Sarai was barren and could not conceive.
4. Abram’s problem-solving device violated divine policy. He decided to help God fulfill His prophecy by following Sarai’s suggestion to cohabit with her Egyptian maid, Hagar.
5. Genesis 16:11 informs us that Hagar did conceive and bore a son whom the Lord told her to name Ishmael.
6. This name in Hebrew looks like this: **יִשְׁמָעֵאל** (*Yishma‘e’l*), but is translated into English as Ishmael \Ish'-ma-el\.
7. In Genesis 17, God reconfirmed the Abrahamic and Palestinian Covenants in verses 1–5. God then renamed Abram, Abraham and Sarai, Sarah.
8. He followed this up with the proclamation that Sarah would bear him a son when she was barren and he was sterile:

**Genesis 17:16** “I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

9. This is described by the Lord as blessings for Sarah who will be the matriarch of nations and kings. On the surface, this seems to be something to celebrate.
10. But wait! Let’s throw in yet another race into the mix:

**Genesis 17:17** Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

**v. 18** And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!”

11. Abraham has no faith-rest and no efficient transfer of God’s promises to him. He heard the prophecies of the Abrahamic and Palestinian Covenants, yet since he and Sarah are no longer able to conceive, he insists that the Lord just take the hindmost and stay with Ishmael.
12. God had nothing to do with Abram’s decision to impregnate Hagar, but once done, the offspring had to be dealt with:

**Genesis 17:19** But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bare you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

13. With this, the Lord indicates that the Palestinian and Abrahamic Covenants will continue on through Isaac and his progeny until it culminates with the Davidic and New Covenants through David and the Messiah.
14. But an interloper is already on the scene who will want his day in the sun. The day will shift the Angelic Conflict into its most intensified stage and will occur some two-thousand years later with the advent of Islam.

15. We learn from Genesis 16:15 that Abram was 87 years old when Ishmael was born. When he reached age 99 he was empowered again to procreate, as was Sarah. This means that Ishmael was about 14 years old when Isaac was born.
16. Abram's name-change to Abraham indicated his transformation from the Semitic race to the newly formed Jewish race as is noted in:

**Genesis 17:5** "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

17. Therefore, Isaac would become the first natural-born Jew. Ishmael would be a combination of two Semitic parents, Abram of Chaldea and Hagar of Egypt.
18. Interlude. Note what has happened due to human-viewpoint problem solving: Ishmael is one-half Chaldean, one-half Egyptian. Isaac is a full-blooded Jew due to the miracle of reproduction performed by the Lord to his parents.
19. So, with this background, we can now evaluate the Lord's response to Abraham's prayer, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before you!" (Genesis 17:18)
20. Ishmael is about to be blessed by the Lord with assets that have ramifications down to the present hour:

**Genesis 17:20** "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

21. This promise was fulfilled in the life of Ishmael, as he became the father of twelve sons who became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Arabia:

**Genesis 25:13** These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth; Nebāiōth, the first born of Ishmael, and Kédar and Ád'bēel and Míbsam

**v. 14** and Míshma and Dúmah and Mássa,

**Genesis 25:15** Hádad and Téma, Jétur,  
Náphish and Kédemah.

22. This promise to Ishmael was corrupted in the sixth century A.D. by Muhammad who adopted the ancient moon god of the Chaldeans called *kamar*, which he called Allah, as the deity of Islam.

Ur of the Chaldees. Eupolemus,<sup>5</sup> who lived about 150 BC, spoke of it as being a city of Babylonia called Camarina. The most generally accepted theory at the present time is that Ur is to be identified with Southern Babylonia, called Urumma and later Uru in the inscriptions. This borders on the district which in the first millennium BC was called Chaldaeia.

Camarina may be from the Arabic name of the moon *kamar*, which refers to the fact that the ancient city was dedicated to the worship of the moon-god.<sup>6</sup> Another argument which has been advanced for this identification is that Haran, the city to which Terah [Abraham's father] migrated, was also a center of moon-god worship.<sup>7</sup>

23. From all this we are able to describe the second category of prayer. Abraham's petition sought the Lord's approval of Ishmael as the progenitor of the Abrahamic Covenant.
24. That petition was denied. However, what Abraham desired was a son to carry on the line of Messiah. This desire was fulfilled not by Ishmael but by Isaac.
25. God confirmed this divine decision again at the birth of Isaac when he told Abraham, in Genesis 21:12c, "Through Isaac your descendants shall be named."
26. Paul comments on this transformation in his comments on justification apart from the law:

**Romans 4:17** In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be." (Genesis 15:5)

(End JAS1-12. See JAS1-13 for continuation of study at p. 121.)

<sup>5</sup> A Jewish historian of the second century B.C.

<sup>6</sup> In his book, *The Blood of the Moon*, George Grant includes in his glossary the definition, "Allah: The name of the chief pagan Arabian god; adopted by Muhammad for his monotheistic faith" [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001], 191.

<sup>7</sup> A. T. Clay, "Ur of the Chaldees," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:3039.