

The Written Account of the Generations of Ishmael

25: 12-18

Moses edited and compiled eleven family documents in the book of **Genesis**. The major structural word for **Genesis** is *toldot*, which means **the written account of**, or *this is what became of these men and their descendants*. The noun is often translated *generations*, *histories* or *descendants*. After the section on the written account of the generations of Terah from 11:27 to 25:11, we have the eighth *toldot*, **the written account of the generations of Ishmael**. **The previous toldot went from God's covenant with Abraham to God's son of promise. So what this eighth family document tells us is what became of Abraham; what became of Abraham was Ishmael, and because he was Abraham's son, God would make him into a nation also, but he was not the son of promise.**

This is the shortest *toldot* and it follows the second longest one. **Ishmael**, too, was a son of Abraham, so **ADONAI** told what became of **him** and **his** line before returning to the seed-line of Isaac and Jacob. Thus, **Ishmael's** descendants are listed before Isaac's descendants. **Ishmael** had **twelve sons** as **the LORD** had prophesied (17:20), and died at the age of **one hundred and thirty seven** years. **His sons** lived in the Arabian Peninsula from **Havilah** (in north-central Arabia) to **Shur** (between Beersheba and Egypt) to the east of Jacob and his sons. The descendants of **Ishmael** would **dwell in the presence of all their brothers** as **God** had prophesied (see Ej - **Hagar and the Angel of the LORD**).⁴⁰²