

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH**  
*Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries*

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.**  
**The Tree of Life for week ending 02/03/02.**

**The Doctrine of the Sneaky Snake.**

As we move on in our study of the Israeli-Arab conflict, we begin in Gen 16:10, *Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count." Furthermore, the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you have become pregnant, And you shall give birth to a male child; And you shall call his name Ishmael [Jehovah hears], Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he [Ishmael and his descendants] will be a wild ass of a man,"*

We have noted what the Bible says about the wild ass or the *pere'* (peh'-reh) which refers to a wild ass or one who runs wild and disrespects authority; it literally means a fast running wild ass having a lot of hair on his face. These will be the descendants of Ishmael.

There are illustrations of these wild asses throughout the scripture:

1. In our passage, Gen 16:12, the wild ass portrays children rejecting authority and never having to get under authority.
2. In Job 24:5, we noted the wild ass human being does not acknowledge authority and the principle of freedom and privacy. He destroys others, and eventually he destroys himself.
3. In Jer 2:24, the wild ass does not recognize the importance of discipline and faithfulness in human relationships.
4. In Jer 14:6, the wild ass is used in scripture to indicate that he steals from others or is a freeloader.
5. In Hos 8:8-9, the wild ass is the apostate reversionistic believer going back to the cosmic system for help.

So Ishmael will be a wild ass of a man and he will always be trying to prove something. But he will never really prove anything except that he is a wild ass of a man. Ishmael, like all people who reject authority is also a sneak and this is how conspiracy enters into the picture. Ishmael was such a sneak that Abram never really caught on to what he was doing to Isaac, it was the discernment of his wife Sarah that saved the day. Ishmael will prove to be a sneak, hiding his anti-authority attitude and his tendency to overthrow and put down Isaac behind a facade of an extremely pleasing personality. Ishmael abused, ridiculed, tormented and constantly caused trouble for Isaac. In fact, God the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to give those events as the perfect illustration of legalism persecuting grace in Gal 4:22-29, *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through*

*the promise. This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband." And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.*

The point for us is, beware of the wild ass or the sneaky snake. It might be someone really close to us as it was for David, whose son Absalom was a sneaky snake. There have been a lot of other wild asses and sneaky snakes throughout human history.

There was Korah, the cousin of Moses. We saw Joseph's brothers who sold Joseph into slavery. There was Judas Iscariot who was a sneaky snake and of course we saw Satan, the Messiah's personal angel. There is a great lesson here, never be shocked at those involved in the sneaky snake syndrome, they could be someone very close to us. This is why the Bible warns us to be very careful with the friendships that we develop in life.

There are some characteristics of these wild-ass sneaky-snake types to be aware of. For example, they never stop trying to prove their superiority to anyone in their vicinity, therefore, in their periphery, there is always misery by association. This wild-ass type cannot accept the fact of someone being better and this becomes an obsession, they cannot recognize the fact that there will always be people who are better than them. There will always be someone better and someone worse than we are, but as we have seen, our happiness is not found in being better than anyone else but rather it is found in Bible Doctrine and in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

People who succeed in life are generally the pluggers, the ones who keep on doing and learning and although they may be slow, they'll get there and they're happy, low key and very content.

Before we go on in our study of Ishmael, let's look at one of the masters of the sneaky snakes in action.

In Joh 13:17, the night before our Lord's death, our Lord said to His disciples, ***"If you know these things*** [in context, the principles of grace, love and humility], ***happineses are yours if*** [third class condition, maybe you will, maybe you will not] ***if you do them. I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen or elected; but {it is} that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'***

This of course is a reference to Judas Iscariot. The raising up of the heel means to overthrow or to seek one's destruction and to reject one's authority. Judas has pretended to love the Lord but it was a pseudo-love. That's what the wild asses and the sneaky snakes do, love with a pseudo-love, a conditional love.

The Lord knew from eternity past who this sneaky snake would be and yet our Lord always gave Judas his privacy. There is a lot of arrogance in born again believers today who stick their nose into everyone's business, yet notice that the Lord wouldn't even do that to Judas.

In John 13:26 Our Lord is going to tell John who the sneaky snake is without giving him a name. Joh 13:26 **Jesus therefore answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel"** [or the special piece of bread which was dipped in the sauce] **and give it to him."** **So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, {the son} of Simon Iscariot.**

The key to understanding this verse is the word for morsel, "**psomion**" which was a special piece of bread dipped in meat sauce that was in a dish at the center of the table at the Passover. No one ever touched this bread until the host had first dipped a piece of bread into this sauce and then offered it to some person at the dinner. This was a special honor at the dinner and once the person accepted the bread the others were then free to take bread and do the same. This was the final grace appeal to Judas from The Lord Jesus Christ and it brings out something else that is very interesting. The Lord **knew** that Judas was a sneaky snake, He **knew** that Judas had already made arrangements to betray him, yet the Lord offered him the psomion, the highest honor from the host at the Passover. This should be a lesson to all of us, that just because we may be totally convinced that a person will not respond to the Gospel, or to doctrine, that should **not** stop us from treating them with honor and respect. By accepting the honor of the morsel, Judas perpetuated the **hypocrisy** of the wild ass sneaky snake. Judas is an unbeliever who accepted this high honor with negative volition in his soul. In verse 27, when he did this, something very interesting happened, Joh 13:27 **And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, "What you do, do quickly."** God's love and God's grace never gave up on Judas Iscariot nor does God's love and God's grace ever give up on anyone else. Judas Iscariot was a sneaky snake, and the interesting thing is that sneaky snakes are always remembered.

Let's note some principles concerning the Sneaky Snake:

1. The sneaky snake can be someone close to you that has become so familiar with you that they believe that they're more qualified to do what you are doing, Psa 41:9, 55:12-14, 20-22.
2. The sneaky snake is usually someone who is bitter about personal failures. They are losers who are looking for excuses.
3. Many times the sneaky snake can have a good personality and even give the appearance that they are leaders. They will cater to people, compliment them for the sake of gaining an advantage. As Jud 1:16 says **These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.**
4. The sneaky snake can also be very sincere, very emotional, most of all, very arrogant. They establish compatibility on the basis of personality. Every Christian at some time will be attracted to a pleasing personality, whose function is manipulation, undermining of authority and exploitation for evil.
5. The sneaky snake also likes to look for others who have an axe to grind against the one they are betraying. They find people who are jealous, vindictive, bitter or implacable to join them in their betrayal.

6. The sneaky snake is usually jealous, covetous, envious and lustful of what the victim of their betrayal has. If the sneaky snake is a believer, you will always hear the sneaky snake claiming that the Lord is with him or on his side.
7. The sneaky snake likes to get as many individuals involved in his betrayal as he can so that the betrayal will have some credibility and believability. They give the betrayal some credibility and believability and then bully people into supporting something that is evil without them even knowing it. They then put people in a position of supporting the betrayal, which is very difficult for them to get out of, unless, they make some drastic decisions. This causes them to get involved with the **evil** behind the betrayal which can be used in the future to keep them committed to the sneaky snake as well. When the sneaky snake is exposed and his betrayal begins to crumble, **and it will in God's time**, they remind people that they were also involved.
8. The sneaky snake is usually promised some form of personal promotion and prosperity for his betrayal. Sometimes he will get others to do his dirty work while trying to appear to be the right and innocent one who is a victim rather than a villain.
9. The sneaky snake leads others in his betrayal with lies and inventions, corruption, distortion, inaccuracy, misrepresentation, perversion, defamation, and slander. They lead others into shifting the blame for their own misfortunes from themselves to the one who is being betrayed.
10. The sneaky snake works behind the scenes for a long period of time and **waits** for something to reach it's peek, and then it's time to strike.
11. The sneaky snake looks for individuals who can easily be swayed into joining the betrayal. These are people who can easily be swayed, bitter people who are failures and losers in life. They are bitter because they are discontent or malcontent with life itself.
12. There are some sneaky snakes that never face the one they have betrayed, they let other's do their dirty work.
13. The sneaky snake will use anyone as a stepping stone as they are trying to climb the ladder of success.
14. Many sneaky snakes assume that the victim of their betrayal has overlooked their talent and ability.
15. Many sneaky snakes bear a grudge from a sense of grievance or frustrated ambition.
16. The sneaky snake makes false accusations and remember that those who make accusations and judge others are usually guilty of the very thing they judge others for.
17. The sneaky snake thinks that he should be in a position of authority when in reality he does not have the leadership ability to be there. They are often cowards who backbite, slander, gossip and malign anyone who has any authority over them.
18. The sneaky snake must be clever, personable, hypocritical, sly and arrogant. Normally he has two personalities, one that he uses to recruit people for his betrayal and the other which is who he really is. He has to be sly, arrogant and filled with his own self-importance.
19. The sneaky snake is usually dissatisfied with his circumstances and his niche in life and he wants to be promoted beyond his capacity.
20. And then our last principle, in trying to wipe out others, the sneaky snake inevitably wipes out himself.

So back in Gen 16:12 "**And he** [Ishmael and his descendants] **will be a wild ass of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.**

The phrase **His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him;**

There are no verbs here, it should be "**His hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him.**" This is the way the Hebrew language says that this person is a totally violent anti-authority person. Arrogance plus jealousy, plus violence, plus rejection of authority equals inordinate competition.

The last phrase **And he will live to the east of all his brothers.**

The word for **live** is the Hebrew verb **shakan** which is an idiom and it means that he shall live in defiance of his brethren. The phrase "to the east of" means that it is "in defiance of."

The geographical reference is also correct, Ishmael's descendants lived east of the Jews, but this is not what is meant here. It means that he lives in antagonism of his brother Isaac and here is a fantastic prophecy, that the Arabs descended from Ishmael will always hate the Jews, always defy the Jews and it is built into every generation the principle of inordinate competition, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, as we know it today. The Arabs will always be antagonistic toward the Jews. The antagonism will continue between the sons of Abraham, his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, and their descendants.

There are some of Ishmael's descendants who have believed in Jesus Christ and who are not only born again believers, but who have advanced to spiritual maturity and of course they have an entirely different attitude. In our main passage, we are talking about the prophecy of the descendants in general, not the exceptions where there is recovery from this problem through Bible doctrine resident in the soul. The antagonism of the Ishmael's of this life rages against anyone who challenges their deep seeded pride, and that's exactly what the Jews have done from time to time in human history.

So no matter how gracious, how kind, how thoughtful or courteous anyone is to a wild ass type, they will do you in sooner or later.

Job found this out regarding his friends who were very **happy** deep down in their souls about what has happened to Job. They were his friends but they always envied him, Job was more prosperous than them, and throughout the years of their friendship, they were waiting for the time when Job finally got his.

In fact, it was part of their whole happiness structure, that's what motivated them. That's what motivates Arab hatred against the Jews.