

Isaac

**The Miracle Child of
Abraham & Sarah**

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Overview

ISAAC WAS A PROTECTED CHILD

Isaac's story is told in Genesis 17:15-35:29. He is also mentioned in Romans 9:7-8; Hebrews 11:17-20; James 2:21-24.

A name carries great authority. It sets you apart. It triggers memories. The sound of it calls you to attention anywhere.

Many Bible names accomplished even more. They were often descriptions of important facts about one's past and hopes for the future. The choice of the name *Isaac*, "he laughs," for Abraham and Sarah's son must have created a variety of feelings in them each time it was spoken.

At times it must have recalled their shocked laughter at God's announcement that they would be parents in their old age. At other times, it must have brought back the joyful feelings of receiving their long-awaited answer to prayer of a child. Most important, it was a testimony to God's power in making his promise a reality.

In a family of forceful initiators, Isaac was the quiet, "mind-my-own-business" type unless he was specifically called on to take action. He was the protected only child from the time Sarah got rid of Ishmael until Abraham arranged his marriage to Rebekah.

In his own family, Isaac had the patriarchal position, but Rebekah had the power. Rather than stand his ground, Isaac found it easier to compromise or lie to avoid confrontations.

In spite of these shortcomings, Isaac was part of God's plan. The model his father gave him included a great gift of faith in the one true God. God's promise to create a great nation through which he would bless the world was passed on by Isaac to his twin sons.

The miraculous son of Abraham

Genesis 17:15-19

Then God added, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai; from now on you will call her Sarah. And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!"

Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of one hundred?" he wondered. "Besides, Sarah is ninety; how could she have a baby?"

And Abraham said to God, "Yes, may Ishmael enjoy your special blessing!"

But God replied, "Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.

How could Abraham doubt God? It seemed incredible that he and Sarah in their advanced years could have a child.

Abraham, the man God considered righteous because of his faith, had trouble believing God's promise to him. Despite his doubts, however, he followed God's commands (Genesis 17:22-27).

Even people of great faith may have doubts. When God seems to want the impossible and you begin to doubt his leading, be like Abraham. Focus on God's commitment to fulfill his promises to you, and then continue to obey.

The Lord Appears to Abraham

Genesis 18:1-8

Abraham was waiting to entertain any weary travelers, for inns were not to be met with as among us. While Abraham was thus sitting, he saw three men coming.

These were three heavenly beings in human bodies. Some think they were all created angels; others, that one of them were the Son of God, the Angel of the covenant.

Washing the feet is customary in those hot climates, where only sandals are worn. We should not be forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares, Hebrews 13:2; nay, the Lord of angels himself; as we always do, when for his sake we entertain the least of his brethren.

Cheerful and obliging manners in showing kindness, are great ornaments to piety.

Though our condescending Lord vouchsafes not personal visits to us, yet still by his Spirit he stands at the door and knocks; when we are inclined to open, he deigns to enter; and by his gracious consolations he provides a rich feast, of which we partake with him, Rev 3:20.

Sarah's Unbelief Reproved

Genesis 18:9-15

Where is Sarah thy wife? Was asked. Note the answer, in the tent. Just at hand, in her proper place, occupied in her household concerns. There is nothing got by gadding.

Those are most likely to receive comfort from God and his promises, who are in their proper place, and in the way of their duty, Luke 2:8. We are slow of heart to believe, and need line upon line to the same purport.

The blessings others have from common providence, believers have from the Divine promise, which makes them very sweet, and very sure. The spiritual seed of Abraham owe their life, and joy, and hope, and all, to the promise.

Sarah thinks this too good news to be true; she laughed, and therefore cannot as yet find in her heart to believe it. Sarah laughed.

We might not have thought there was a difference between Sarah's laughter and Abraham's, Gen 17:17; but He who searches the heart, saw that the one sprung from unbelief, and the other from faith.

Birth of Isaac, Sarah's Joy

Genesis 21:1-8

Few under the Old Testament were brought into the world with such expectations as Isaac. He was in this a type of Christ that Seed which the holy God so long promised, and holy men so long expected. He was born according to the promise, at the set time of which God had spoken.

God's promised mercies will certainly come at the time which He sets, and that is the best time. Isaac means "laughter," and there was good reason for the name, Gen 17:17; Gen 18:13.

When the Sun of comfort is risen upon the soul, it is good to remember how welcome the dawning of the day was. When Sarah received the promise, she laughed with distrust and doubt.

When God gives us the mercies we began to despair of, we ought to remember with sorrow and shame our sinful distrust of his power and promise, when we were in pursuit of them. This mercy filled Sarah with joy and wonder. God's favours to his covenant people are such as surpass their own and others' thoughts and expectations: who could imagine that he should do so much for those that deserve so little, nay, for those that deserve so ill?

Who would have said that God should send his Son to die for us, his Spirit to make us holy, his angels to attend us? Who would have said that such great sins should be pardoned, such mean services accepted, and such worthless worms taken into covenant?

A short account of Isaac's infancy is given. God's blessing upon the nursing of children, and the preservation of them through the perils of the infant age, are to be acknowledged as signal instances of the care and tenderness of the Divine providence.

Many descendants will be given.

Joshua 24:3

But I took your ancestor Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him into the land of Canaan. I gave him many descendants through his son Isaac.

Children of promise

Galatians 4:28

And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac.

Ancestor of Jesus

Matthew 1:2

Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Matthew opens his Gospel with a genealogy to prove that Jesus is the descendant of both King David and Abraham, just as the Old Testament had predicted. Jesus' birth didn't go unnoticed, for both shepherds and magi came to worship him.

The Jewish people were waiting for the Messiah to appear. Finally, he was born, but the Jews didn't recognize him because they were looking for a different kind of king.

God Commands Abraham to Offer up Isaac

Genesis 22:1,2

We never are secure from trials In Hebrew, to tempt, and to try, or to prove, are expressed by the same word. Every trial is indeed a temptation, and tends to show the dispositions of the heart, whether holy or unholy.

But God proved Abraham, not to draw him to sin, as Satan tempts. Strong faith is often exercised with strong trials, and put upon hard services.

The command to offer up his son, is given in such language as makes the trial more grievous; every word here is a sword. Observe, 1. The person to be offered: Take thy son; not thy bullocks and thy lambs.

How willingly would Abraham have parted with them all to redeem Isaac! Thy son; not thy servant. Thine only son; thine only son by Sarah. Take Isaac, that son whom thou loveth.

The place: three days' journey off; so that Abraham might have time to consider, and might deliberately obey.

The manner: Offer him from a burnt-offering; not only kill his son, his Isaac, but kill him as a sacrifice; kill him with all that solemn pomp and ceremony, with which he used to offer his burnt-offerings.

Abraham's Faith and Obedience to the Divine Command

Genesis 22:3-10

Never was any gold tried in so hot a fire. Who but Abraham would not have argued with God?

Such would have been the thought of a weak heart; but Abraham knew that he had to do with a God, even Jehovah. Faith had taught him not to argue, but to obey. He is sure that what God commands is good; that what he promises cannot be broken. In matters of God, whoever consults with flesh and blood, will never offer up his Isaac to God.

The good patriarch rises early, and begins his sad journey. And now he travels three days, and Isaac still is in his sight! Misery is made worse when long continued. The expression, we will come again to you, shows that Abraham expected that Isaac, being raised from the dead, would return with him.

It was a very affecting question that Isaac asked him, as they were going together: "My father," said Isaac; it was a melting word, which, one would think, should

strike deeper in the heart of Abraham, than his knife could in the heart of Isaac. Yet he waits for his son's question.

Then Abraham, where he meant not, prophesies: "My son, God will provide a lamb for a burnt-offering." The Holy Spirit, by his mouth, seems to predict the Lamb of God, which he has provided, and which takes away the sin of the world.

Abraham lays the wood in order for his Isaac's funeral pile, and now tells him the amazing news: Isaac, thou art the lamb that God has provided!

Abraham, no doubt, comforting him with the same hopes with which he himself by faith was comforted. Yet it is necessary that the sacrifice be bound.

The great Sacrifice, which, in the fullness of time, was to be offered up, must be bound, and so must Isaac. This being done, Abraham takes the knife, and stretches out his hand to give the fatal blow.

Here is an act of faith and obedience, which deserves to be a spectacle to God, angels, and men. God, by his providence, calls us to part with an Isaac sometimes, and we must do it with cheerful submission to his holy will, 1Sa 3:18.

Another Sacrifice Is Provided Instead of Isaac

Genesis 22:11-14

It was not God's intention that Isaac should actually be sacrificed, yet nobler blood than that of animals, in due time, was to be shed for sin, even the blood of the only begotten Son of God.

But in the mean while God would not in any case have human sacrifices used. Another sacrifice is provided. Reference must be had to the promised Messiah, the blessed Seed.

Christ was sacrificed in our stead, as this ram instead of Isaac, and his death was our discharge. And observe, that the temple, the place of sacrifice, was afterwards built upon this same mount Moriah; and Calvary, where Christ was crucified, was near.

A new name was given to that place, for the encouragement of all believers, to the end of the world, cheerfully to trust in God, and obey him. Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide; probably alluding to what Abraham had said, God will provide himself a lamb.

The Lord will always have his eye upon his people, in their straits and distresses, that he may give them seasonable help.

Abraham received a promise

Hebrews 11:17

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Abraham was willing to give up his son when God commanded him to do so (Genesis 22:1-19). God did not let Abraham take Isaac's life, because God had given the command in order to test Abraham's faith. Instead of taking Abraham's son, God gave Abraham a whole nation of descendants through Isaac.

If you are afraid to trust God with your most prized possession, dream, or person, pay attention to Abraham's example. Because Abraham was willing to give up everything for God, he received back more than he could have imagined.

What we receive, however, is not always immediate, or in the form of material possessions. Material things should be among the least satisfying of rewards. Our best and greatest rewards await us in eternity.

Isaac is provided a wife from among his relatives

Genesis 25:20

And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.

With Ishmael, buries his father in the cave of Machpelah

Genesis 25:9

And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;

The Birth of Esau and Jacob

Genesis 25:19-26

Isaac seems not to have been much tried, but to have spent his days in quietness. Jacob and Esau were prayed for; their parents, after being long childless, obtained them by prayer.

The fulfillment of God's promise is always sure, yet it is often slow. The faith of believers is tried, their patience exercised, and mercies long waited for are more welcome when they come.

Isaac and Rebekah kept in view the promise of all nations being blessed in their posterity, therefore were not only desirous of children, but anxious concerning every thing which seemed to mark their future character. In all our doubts we should inquire of the Lord by prayer.

In many of our conflicts with sin and temptation, we may adopt Rebekah's words, "If it be so, why am I thus?" If a child of God, why so careless or carnal? If not a child of God, why so afraid of, or so burdened with sin?

Isaac inherited everything from his father, including God's promise to make his descendants into a great nation. As a boy, Isaac did not resist as his father prepared to sacrifice him, and as a man, he gladly accepted the wife that others chose for him. Through Isaac, we learn how to let God guide our life and place his will ahead of our own.

As Isaac pleaded with God for children, so the Bible encourages us to ask and even plead for our most personal and important requests. God wants to grant our requests, but he wants us to ask him.

Even then, as Isaac learned, God may decide to withhold his answer for a while in order to (1) deepen our insight into what we really need, (2) broaden our appreciation for his answers, or (3) allow us to mature so we can use his gifts more wisely.

Isaac lives in Gerar

Genesis 26:7-11

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, she is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.

And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how said thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, because I said, lest I die for her.

And Abimelech said, what is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou soundest have brought guiltiness upon us.

And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

Isaac was afraid that the men in Gerar would kill him to get his beautiful wife, Rebekah. So he lied, claiming that Rebekah was his sister. Where did he learn that trick? He may have known about the actions of his father, Abraham (see Genesis 12:10-14 and Genesis 20:1-4). Parents help shape the world's future by the way they shape their children's values. The first step toward helping children live rightly is for the parents to live rightly. Those often copy your actions closest to you. What kind of example are you setting for your children?

Possesses large flocks and herds

Genesis 26:12-14

That year Isaac's crops were tremendous! He harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the Lord blessed him.

He became a rich man, and his wealth only continued to grow.

He acquired large flocks of sheep and goats, great herds of cattle, and many servants. Soon the Philistines became jealous of him,

God kept his promise to bless Isaac. The neighboring Philistines grew jealous because everything Isaac did seemed to go right. So they plugged his wells and tried to get rid of him. Jealousy is a dividing force strong enough to tear apart the mightiest of nations or the closest of friends.

It forces you to separate yourself from what you were longing for in the first place. When you find yourself becoming jealous of others, try thanking God for their good fortune. Before striking out in anger, consider what you could lose—a friend, a job, a spouse?

Digs wells, and is defrauded of them by the herdsmen of Abimelech

Genesis 26:21

Isaac's men then dug another well, but again there was a fight over it. So Isaac named it "Opposition."

The desolate Gerar area was located on the edge of a desert. Water was as precious as gold. If someone dug a well, he was staking a claim to the land.

Some wells had locks to keep thieves from stealing the water. To “stop” or plug up someone’s well was an act of war; it was one of the most serious crimes in the land. Isaac had every right to fight back when the Philistines ruined his wells, and yet he chose to keep the peace. In the end, the Philistines respected him for his patience.

Three times Isaac and his men dug new wells. When the first two disputes arose, Isaac moved on. Finally there was enough room for everyone. Rather than start a huge conflict, Isaac compromised for the sake of peace.

Would you be willing to forsake an important position or valuable possession to keep peace? Ask God for the wisdom to know when to withdraw and when to stand and fight.

Moves away to the valley of Gerar, afterward called Beer-sheba

Genesis 26:22-33

Abandoning that one, he dug another well, and the local people finally left him alone. So Isaac called it "Room Enough," for he said, "At last the Lord has made room for us, and we will be able to thrive."

From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, where the Lord appeared to him on the night of his arrival. "I am the God of your father, Abraham," he said. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant."

Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord. He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug a well.

One day Isaac had visitors from Gerar. King Abimelech arrived with his adviser, Ahuzzath, and also Phicol, his army commander. "Why have you come?" Isaac asked them. "This is obviously no friendly visit, since you sent me from your land in a most unfriendly way."

They replied, "We can plainly see that the Lord is with you. So we decided we should have a treaty, a covenant between us. Swear that you will not harm us, just as we did not harm you. We have always treated you well, and we sent you away from us in peace. And now look how the Lord has blessed you!"

So Isaac prepared a great feast for them, and they ate and drank in preparation for the treaty ceremony.

Early the next morning, they each took a solemn oath of nonaggression. Then Isaac sent them home again in peace.

That very day Isaac's servants came and told him about a well they had dug. "We've found water!" they said. So Isaac named the well "Oath," and from that time to this, the town that grew up there has been called Beersheba—"well of the oath."

With his enemies wanting to make a peace treaty, Isaac was quick to respond, turning the occasion into a celebration. We should be just as receptive to those who want to make peace with us. When God's influence in our lives attracts people—even enemies—we must take the opportunity to reach out to them with God's love.

His old age, last blessing upon his sons

Jacob, Pretending to Be Esau, Obtains the Blessing

Genesis 27:18-29

Jacob, with some difficulty, gained his point, and got the blessing. This blessing is in very general terms.

No mention is made of the distinguishing mercies in the covenant with Abraham. This might be owing to Isaac having Esau in his mind, though it was Jacob who was before him. He could not be ignorant how Esau had despised the best things.

Moreover, his attachment to Esau, so as to disregard the mind of God, must have greatly weakened his own faith in these things. It might therefore be expected, that leanness would attend his blessing, agreeing with the state of his mind.

Death and burial of

Genesis 35:27-29

So Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, which is near Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron), where Abraham had also lived. Isaac lived for 180 years, and he died at a ripe old age, joining his ancestors in death. Then his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

His filial obedience

Genesis 22:9

When they arrived at the place where God had told Abraham to go, he built an altar and placed the wood on it. Then he tied Isaac up and laid him on the altar over the wood.

Was a prophet

Genesis 27:28-29

May God always give you plenty of dew for healthy crops and good harvests of grain and wine.

May many nations become your servants. May you be the master of your brothers. May all your mother's sons bow low before you. All who curse you are cursed, and all who bless you are blessed."

Hebrews 11:20

It was by faith that Isaac blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau. He had confidence in what God was going to do in the future.

Isaac was the son who had been promised to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. It was through Isaac that God fulfilled his promise to eventually give Abraham countless descendants. Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. God chose the younger son, Jacob, through whom to continue the fulfillment of his promise to Abraham.

Prophecies concerning Isaac

Genesis 17:16-21

And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!"

Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of one hundred?" he wondered. "Besides, Sarah is ninety; how could she have a baby?" And Abraham said to God, "Yes, may Ishmael enjoy your special blessing!"

But God replied, "Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants. As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will cause him to multiply and become a great nation. Twelve princes will be among his descendants.

But my covenant is with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year."

Exodus 32:13

Remember your covenant with your servants—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You swore by your own self, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. Yes, I will give them all of this land that I have promised to your descendants, and they will possess it forever.' "

Romans 9:7

Just the fact that they are descendants of Abraham doesn't make them truly Abraham's children. For the Scriptures say, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted," though Abraham had other children, too.

God's word in the form of beautiful covenant promises came to Abraham. Covenant people, the true children of Abraham, are not just his biological descendants. They are all those who trust in God and in what Jesus Christ has done for them/

Lessons from his life:

Patience often brings rewards
Both Gods plans and his promises are larger than people
God keeps his promises! He remains faithful though we are often faithless
Playing favorites is sure to bring family conflict

Key verse:

“Then God said, yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him” (Genesis 17:19).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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