

Isaac

Read Genesis 16-17, 21-24

Isaac means "laughter." As his name suggests, Isaac brought laughter to the home of Abraham and Sarah. Right on time, Isaac was born, fulfilling God's unconditional covenant with Abraham.

Talking Points

- God unconditionally guaranteed Abraham a great family. After many years of waiting, God set His promise to Abraham and Sarah in motion through the birth of their son, Isaac.
- Abraham walked with eyes of faith. Even when God asked for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham trusted God would restore Isaac's life after death. Abraham passed his faithfulness to Isaac, his only son, who walked according to his belief in the One God.
- Isaac means laughter. He brought joy to his parents and even to God, Himself.

Background Comments

The covenantal bond between God and Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:7-19, 17:19-22) would be repeated twice, first to Isaac in Canaan (Genesis 26:4) and then to Jacob at Bethel (Genesis 28:14).

Apart from his circumcision on the eighth day, there isn't much information about Isaac's early life. What is clear is that Abraham instilled in his son the knowledge of the Lord and a desire to obey Him.

An Obedient Son

According to Josephus, Isaac was twenty-five years of age when he went with Abraham from Beer-sheba to the land of Moriah. There, the only begotten son of the promise to Abraham would be offered to God as a burnt sacrifice.

Much is rightly made of Abraham's unflinching faith and submission to the divine command to offer up his only son. Don't forget Isaac's supreme confidence in his father and his willing consent to God's directive (Gen. 22:12; 26:5; Heb. 11:17). In Isaac, we have a type of Him who *gave Himself* for our sins. Isaac became a dedicated man from the day of his surrender to death. "The altar sanctified the gift."

Isaac's mother, Sarah, died when he was thirty-six years old. He grieved deeply. It was not until Isaac took Rebekah as his wife that a vacant place in his heart was filled, and he received comfort.

Isaac had only one wife, unlike his father before him and Jacob afterward. The Bible informs us that Isaac left his wife's choice to God. When the caravan bearing Rebekah neared his home, Isaac was in the fields meditating (Gen. 24:63).

The Covenant Continues

Isaac and Rebekah were childless for many years, but God heard Isaac's prayers, and Rebekah gave birth to twins Esau and Jacob. Isaac seems to have outlived his wife, dying at 180 years old (Gen. 35:28).

Isaac's character, in many ways beautiful, was marred with individual human failures. As an example, he followed in Abraham's footsteps when he called Rebekah his sister, bringing upon himself the rebuke of Abimelech.

Isn't it wonderful that God uses us despite our sins? As God's followers believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of His only begotten Son, our past does not define us. God blessed Abraham not because Abraham was good but because the Lord was good. Isaac lived in the truth that he observed his father walk in. Now it is our turn.

Bible Conversations & Questions

- What did Isaac know about God's covenant with Abraham, his father?
- How did Isaac's knowledge impact what he did when Abraham was going to sacrifice him?
- What role does Hebrews 11:17-19 play in your understanding of the story of Isaac?