

10-2018

A Biographical Study of Isaac

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Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "A Biographical Study of Isaac" (2018). *Old Testament Biographies*. 17.
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Isaac

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

I. Isaac and Abraham

A. The supernatural birth of Isaac

1. Isaac was promised to his parents and named by God himself even before he was born (Gen. 17:9, 21).
2. He was born from Sarah's barren womb, which God had supernaturally touched (Gen. 18:10-11).
3. Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 at the birth of their son (Gen. 17:17; 21:5).

B. The submissive spirit of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-11)

1. Isaac accompanied Abraham upon Mt. Moriah to become a sacrifice as commanded by God.
2. At first he was unaware that he himself would be the sacrifice.
3. He thus asked his father: "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7).
4. Upon being told, he willingly allowed Abraham to bind him upon the altar (Gen. 22:9).

C. The substitute lamb for Isaac (Gen. 22:12-14)

1. Abraham saw a ram nearby, caught by his horns in a thicket.
2. At God's command, Abraham offered up the ram as a substitute for Isaac.

II. Isaac and Ishmael

A. Isaac was ridiculed on the day of his weaning by his older half-brother Ishmael (Gen. 21:8-11).

B. Because of this, Abraham sent away Ishmael and his mother Hagar (Gen. 21:12-14).

C. Isaac and Ishmael would be reunited years later at the burial of their father Abraham (Gen. 25:9).

III. Isaac and Rebekah

A. His marriage to Rebekah

1. Isaac married Rebekah, who was selected and brought to him by Abraham's servant from the Mesopotamian city of Nahor (Gen. 24:10, 62-67).
2. He was 40 years old at this time (Gen. 25:20).

B. His prayer for Rebekah

1. God answered Isaac's prayer for his barren wife Rebekah, resulting in the birth of twins, Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25:21-26).
2. Isaac was 60 at this time (Gen. 25:26).

C. His lie concerning Rebekah

1. In a time of famine, Isaac moved to the Philistine city of Gerar (Gen. 26:1).

2. Fearing the Philistines might kill him in order to marry his wife, Isaac lied about Rebekah, telling the Philistine King Abimelech that she was his sister (Gen. 26:7).
3. He was caught in this lie through an embarrassing incident and rebuked by Abimelech (Gen. 26:8-11).

IV. Isaac and the Philistines

- A. In spite of his carnality, Isaac was blessed by God, reaping a 100-fold increase of his crops in one year (Gen. 26:12-13).
- B. This aroused the envy of the Philistines, who retaliated by filling up Isaac's wells with debris (Gen. 26:14-15).
- C. Finally, at Abimelech's request, Isaac moved away from Gerar and reopened those clogged wells (Gen. 26:16-22).
- D. Realizing the blessings of God upon Isaac, Abimelech visited him and requested they sign a peace treaty, which they did (Gen. 26:26-33).

V. Isaac and God

- A. The appearance at Gerar (Gen. 26:2-5)
 1. He was warned not to go to Egypt in time of famine as his father Abraham had once done.
 2. God then reaffirmed the Abrahamic Covenant to him, which consisted of seed, soil, and a Savior.
 - a. Seed—God would make his seed “to multiply as the stars of heaven” (26:4).
 - b. Soil—The land of Canaan would be given to his descendants (26:3).
 - c. A Savior—Someday “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (26:4).
- B. The appearance at Beer-sheba (Gen. 26:23-25)
 1. Once again the Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed to Isaac.
 2. He built an altar there and worshiped God.

VI. Isaac and his sons

- A. Esau, the favorite of Isaac
 1. Both Isaac and Rebekah were grieved when Esau married two pagan Hittite women (Gen. 26:34-35).
 2. In spite of this, however, Isaac looked upon Esau as his favorite son (Gen. 25:28).
 3. One day, fearing his life might be ending, Isaac called for Esau (Gen. 27:1-4). Actually he would live many years longer, reaching the age of 180 (Gen. 35:28).
 - a. He instructed his son to kill and prepare some wild game for him.
 - b. He then promised to bestow upon Esau the patriarchal blessing.
- B. Jacob, the favorite of Rebekah
 1. Rebekah, upon overhearing the words of Isaac, quickly summoned Jacob, her favorite son (Gen. 25:28; 27:5-6).

2. Rapid plans were made for Jacob to deceive the dim-eyed Isaac (Gen. 27:7-17).
 - a. He was to assume the identity of Esau so that he, Jacob, might receive the blessing.
 - b. Rebekah quickly prepared the food Isaac had requested from Esau.
 - c. She then dressed Jacob with Esau's clothes, covering his hands and the smooth part of his neck with goat skins.
3. Isaac was successfully deceived by Jacob and gave him the patriarchal blessing, predicting the following (Gen. 27:18-29):
 - a. That Jacob would become a prosperous man
 - b. That Esau's descendants would serve Jacob's descendants
 - c. That other nations would serve Jacob's descendants
 - d. That God would bless those who befriended Jacob and curse those who cursed him
4. A shocked Isaac later learned from Esau of Jacob's deception (Gen. 27:30-36).
5. At Esau's request, Isaac pronounced a modified blessing upon him, predicting the following (Gen. 27:37-40):
 - a. That Esau's life would not be one of ease and luxury
 - b. That he would live by the sword
 - c. That for a while he would serve his brother, but eventually he would shake loose from him.
6. Realizing that Esau was planning to kill Jacob, Isaac did the following (Gen. 28:1-5):
 - a. He called for Jacob and blessed him.
 - b. He commanded him not to marry a Canaanite wife.
 - c. He told him to find a wife among Rebekah's relatives in Nahor.
 - d. Finally, he prayed that Jacob would eventually return and possess the land given him by the Abrahamic Covenant.

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. On at least 25 occasions in the Old Testament, God identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- II. These five individuals described the Lord as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:
 - A. Moses (Deut. 9:27)
 - B. Elijah (1 Kings 18:36)
 - C. David (1 Chron. 16:16; 29:18)
 - D. The psalmist (Psa. 105:9-10)
 - E. Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:6)
- III. Jesus and Isaac
 - A. Jesus on two occasions referred to his Father as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 22:32; Luke 20:37).

- B. Jesus predicted that saved Gentiles would someday fellowship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8:11).
- IV. Peter and Isaac: Peter referred to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Acts 3:13).
- V. Stephen and Isaac
 - A. Stephen referred to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Acts 7:32).
 - B. Stephen mentioned the birth and circumcision of Isaac (Acts 7:8).
- VI. Paul and Isaac
 - A. Paul referred to Isaac and his two sons in illustrating the sovereignty of God (Rom. 9:7-15).
 - B. Paul referred to Isaac and Ishmael, using them to contrast law and grace (Gal. 4:28-31).
- VII. James and Isaac—James referred to the offering up of Isaac on Mt Moriah (James 2:21).
- VIII. The book of Hebrews and Isaac
 - A. Hebrews mentions the offering up of Isaac on Mt. Moriah (Heb. 11:17).
 - B. It refers also to Isaac’s faith in blessing Jacob and Esau (Heb. 11:20).

STATISTICS

Father: Abraham

Mother: Sarah (Gen. 21:3)

Spouse: Rebekah (Gen. 24:67)

Sons: Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25:24-26)

Brothers: Half-brothers: Ishmael, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (Gen. 16:16; 25:1-2)

First mention: Genesis 17:19

Final mention: James 2:21

Meaning of his name: “Laughter”

Frequency of his name: Referred to 128 times

Biblical books mentioning him: 21 books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Jeremiah, Amos, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, James)

Place of death: At Mamre, near Hebron (Gen. 35:27-29)

Age at death: 180 (Gen 35:28)

Important fact about his life: He was Abraham’s promised son and father of Jacob (Gen. 17:19; 25:21-26).