

Welcome To

Malvern Bible Chapel



Isaac—The Child Of Promise

Part of the Christ in Genesis Series

Gen. 17:15-19; 21:1-7; Gal. 4:21-31

Robert L. Watt

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Isaac–The Child Of Promise

Gen. 17:15-19 (NKJV)

- ¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be* her name. ¹⁶ And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother of nations*; kings of peoples shall be from her.”
- ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Shall *a child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child*?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!”

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Gen. 17:15-19 (NKJV) (cont.)

¹⁹ Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his descendants after him.

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Introduction:

- We are in the midst of looking for pictures of Christ in Genesis.
- We have seen Him hidden in the creation account, as the Second Adam providing redemption for the problem of sin, and giving a warning to the generations following Noah.
- Today we will begin to see Him typified in the relatively minor person of Isaac, sandwiched between his much better known father (Abraham) and his son Jacob (Israel).

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Introduction (cont.):

- Why look at Isaac?
- First (as we will see today), he is a picture of Christ who also was a Child of promise (many promises made, particularly about his super-natural birth). We will also see a symbolic meaning to Isaac's birth today.
- Then, as Frank will talk about next week, Isaac is a beautiful picture of Christ the Substitutionary Lamb of God.
- Finally, we will see Isaac getting a bride, a clear picture of the work of the Spirit calling out a bride for Christ, His church on earth (which includes us as Christ followers).

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Body of Lesson:

This lesson on Isaac will be divided into three parts: the person, the promise, and the problem.

1. The Person

- Isaac was a very ordinary person, just like most of us. Perhaps that is why I can relate better to him than his more famous father, Abraham, that great man of faith.
- Starting at Gen. 12, Abraham has been the main character as God called him and made a covenant with him, including the unconditional promises to give him a land and a people special to God.
- The promises were repeated to Isaac as we will see today, but he is more like the middle man leading up to his equally famous son Jacob, renamed Israel, the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- God equally loves ordinary people, and for that I am eternally grateful!

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1. The Person (cont.)

- Isaac never left his homeland to travel like Abraham and Jacob, who both went to Egypt (and encountered problems as well). Perhaps God spared weaker Isaac from possible problems and temptations?
- As we will see in our final lesson, God did not even permit him to travel to Mesopotamia to get a wife for himself. (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13)
- Although we know the least about Isaac, he actually lived longer (180 years, Gen. 35:28) than Abraham (175 years, Gen. 25:7) and Jacob (147 years, Gen. 47:28).
- Although he may have been the least of the three patriarchs, nevertheless in God’s perspective he was equal: He was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!
- Genesis 26 is the only chapter devoted entirely to Isaac. He had no new revelations or special calls; God only ratified what he had previously said to Abraham and would repeat to Jacob. He was only told to stay in the land, obey like his father and he would be blessed.

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2. The Promise

- Let's look at the timeline of Isaac as the child of promise.
 - Abraham first given the promise of descendants (Gen. 12:1-4, at the age of 75 yrs.)
 - Covenant renewed to Abraham 10 years later (Gen. 15:1-21, at the age of 85 yrs.)
 - Sarah barren; had Ishmael by Hagar 1 year later (Gen. 16:16, at the age of 86 yrs.)
 - Covenant renewed to Abraham; Isaac promised (Gen. 17:1-19, at the age of 90 yrs.)—Abraham laughs; part of the text read earlier.
 - Isaac again promised by the Lord; Sarah laughs (Gen. 18:1-15, at the age of 99 yrs.)
 - Isaac (“Laughter”) born as promised (Gen. 21:1-7, at the age of 100 yrs, Sarah is 90 yrs.)—their laughter of unbelief turned into their laughter of great joy!

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Gen. 21:1-7 (NKJV)

21 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. ² For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. ³ And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. ⁴ Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, *and* all who hear will laugh with me.” ⁷ She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne *him* a son in his old age.”

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2. The Promise (cont.)

- Is anything too hard for the Lord? (Gen. 18:14) Mary the mother of Jesus experienced something similar with the supernatural birth of her son, also promised (prophesied) in the OT, Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Lk. 1:34-38). (See also: <https://answersingenesis.org/jesus-christ/birth/fulfilled-prophecies-at-the-birth-of-christ/>)

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Luke 1:34-38 (NKJV)

- ³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”
- ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.* ³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible.”
- ³⁸ Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

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2. The Promise (cont.)

- Is anything too hard for the Lord? (Gen. 18:14) Mary the mother of Jesus experienced something similar with the supernatural birth of her son, also promised (prophesied) in the OT, Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Lk. 1:34-38).
(See also: <https://answersingenesis.org/jesus-christ/birth/fulfilled-prophecies-at-the-birth-of-christ/>)
- See how the author of Hebrews describes the supernatural birth of Isaac (Heb. 11:11-12):

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Heb. 11:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

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(See also: <https://answersingenesis.org/jesus-christ/birth/fulfilled-prophecies-at-the-birth-of-christ/>)
- See how the author of Hebrews describes the supernatural birth of Isaac (Heb. 11:11-12):
- See also how Paul writes about the faith of Abraham and Sarah (Rom. 4:18-22):

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Rom. 4:18-22 (NKJV)

¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” ¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. ²² And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

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3. The Problem

- Yes, Isaac was the child of promise, but he had a brother, Ishmael, born to Hagar 14 years before Isaac.
- Abraham was the father of two children but Sarah was the mother of the only child of promise.
- Trouble started when Isaac was weaned (~3 yrs. old) and Ishmael mocked (laughed at) Isaac. Sarah wanted to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (see Gen. 21:9-21).
- What is the meaning of all this, and what is the solution to this serious problem? Paul gives us a very detailed answer in Gal. 4:21-31.

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Gal. 4:21-31 (NKJV)

²¹ Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

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Gal. 4:21-31 (NKJV) (cont.)

²⁷ For it is written: “Rejoice, O barren, *You* who do not bear! Break forth and shout, *You* who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.”

²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise.
²⁹ But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. ³⁰ Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

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3. The Problem (cont.)

- When Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, they were being misled by a group of Jews (called the Judaizers) who insisted that when a Gentile became a Christian he must be circumcised as a Jew and live according to the OT Law.
- They were following a legalistic system but in the NT Paul was teaching salvation by grace alone through faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9). The two religious systems can't co-exist.

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Eph. 2:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

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- They were following a legalistic system but in the NT Paul was teaching salvation by grace alone through faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9). The two religious systems can't co-exist.
- Today this type of legalism takes a different form but the net effect is the same. To be saved and to maintain a right relationship with God requires the keeping of various rules, traditions or ceremonies, but these only condemn us when we can't keep all the laws all the time.

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3. The Problem (cont.)

- There are three stages to Paul's argument:
 - Historical (Gal. 4:22-23): there are 2 sons, Ishmael and Isaac.
 - Allegorical (Gal. 4:24-27): the 2 sons are symbolic of 2 religious systems, Law and Grace (Law is the religion of bondage = Judaism; and Grace is the religion of freedom = Christianity).
 - Personal (Gal. 4:28-31): applies this to us today. If we are Christians, we are not like Ishmael (slaves), but like Isaac (free); but we must also expect to be treated like Isaac (mocked, laughed at and persecuted).
- See the chart in the handout for a summary of Gal. 4:21-31.

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Application:

1. Concerning your person:
Like Isaac, you may be very ordinary—remember you aren't alone!
2. Concerning your promise:
Like Isaac, you have a supernatural birth—remember you are special!
3. Concerning your problem:
Like Isaac, you had a serious problem—remember God's grace to you!