

Subject: Hebrews 11
Lesson: By Faith Isaac
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Hebrews 11

ISAAC

Hebrews 11:20-21
Genesis 22-28

Introduction

Born:	<i>2061 BC</i> Genesis 21:5 Genesis 17:17
Abrahamic Covenant:	Genesis 17:1-14
Circumcised:	Eight days <i>Genesis 17, 23-27</i> <i>Genesis 21:4-7 (Isaac)</i>
Weaning:	Two years old <i>Genesis 21:8</i>
Offering:	Sixteen plus <i>Genesis 22:1-14</i>
Marriage:	<i>2021 BC</i> 40 years old Genesis 24, 25:5-11
Death of Abraham:	Isaac receives all of his possessions.
Death of Isaac:	<i>1881 BC</i> Aged 180 Genesis 35:27-29

Key Verse:	Hebrews 11:20
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The Hebrew meaning of the name Isaac is laughter, he laugheth or the laughing one. He is the only son of Abraham by Sarah. The name Isaac was fully chosen by Jehovah in commemoration of the child's

miraculous birth and of the laughing joy it occasioned to both Sarah and Abram.

Genesis 17:19, *“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”*

Genesis 17:6-13, *“6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. 9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.*

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

Genesis 17:20-22, *“20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. 21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. 22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”*

Hebrews 11:20, *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”*

The fact that Isaac blessed his sons concerning things to come indicates his clear vision of God and His future plan. This gave him stability and a walk with God above other Patriarchs.

“Even though these events of the Book of Genesis 27:1-28:5 seem to involve deceit rather than faith, Isaac's part was in faith in that He was accomplishing God's will. Likewise, Jacob's blessing of both sons of Joseph involved faith, for it also involved the carrying out of God's promise. The choice of these particular events from the lives of Isaac and Jacob to

serve as the one demonstration of this faith surely demonstrates the intimacy between faith and God's will and Word."¹

Isaac is referred to as a man of faith, carrying on the godly line of faith we see in Abraham. His life is a testimony to answered prayer in a man who prayed, meditated and relied on God's promises by faith.

"Isaac's beautiful and suggestive name, "he laughed," commemorates the two laughings at the promise of God – the laughing of the father's joy and the laughing of Sarah's incredulity which soon passed into the penitence and faith (Gen 21:6). Isaac was the child of the covenant, "I will establish My covenant with him." To three patriarchs in succession was this covenant specifically given: to Abraham, as he left Chaldea (Gen 12:3); to Isaac, when in Canaan during the famine (Gen 26:4) to Jacob, at Bethel (Gen 28:14). Isaac, however, was the first to inherit the covenant, and to him God gave the whole inheritance of Abraham (Gen 24:35)."²

Isaac is included in the Royal line of FAITH through whom the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, would come (Matthew 1:1-25). God was not ashamed to be the God of Isaac, honouring Isaac's justifying faith (Romans 5:1). Isaac's God is our God!

I. JOY IN THE WILL OF GOD

A. Isaac's early life

His early years with his elderly parents were marked by great joy.

Abraham's faith and patience was blessed. We see the **will of God is best and blessed.**

Genesis 21:6, "*6, And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.*"

B. The weaning feast at two years old

In honour of the occasion Abraham made a great feast, as an expression of his joy. This happiness was no doubt shared by the mother and the friends of the family. Oh the joy of the will of God!

Genesis 21:8, "*And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.*"

C. Ishmael's jealousy

By contrast, Ishmael saw no occasion for gladness. Sadness and sorrow came as a result of the violation of God's will. To him being supplanted in the more particular honour of the house of his younger brother. He was the son of the bond

¹ King James Bible Commentary, p 1705

² Lockyer, All the Men of the Bible, pp 155, 156.

woman. **The law and the flesh bring sadness and defeat.** He mocked Isaac and so angered Sarah that she sent him away.

Genesis 21:9-14, “9, *And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. 10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. 11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. 12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. 13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. 14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.*”

It is noted that Abraham grieved that Ishmael acted this way; though he loved Ishmael, yet he had to send him away. The flesh brings pleasure only for a season. Law works do not bring the blessing and inheritance. This mistake in the will of God proved costly even to this day!

We are shown an example here of the heartache of a wrong decision which was made outside of the will of God.

D. Abraham's faith

Hebrews 11:9, “*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*”

E. Sarah's faith

Hebrews 11:10-13, “*10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*”

I Peter 1:8, “*...yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

F. The Will of God

Genesis 24:67, *“And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”*

1. It is the way of **FAITH**
2. It is the way of **OBEDIENCE**
3. It is the way of **JOY** and **GLADNESS**

The joy of the Lord is our strength.

4. Many people (especially family) are hurt when we move out of the will of God and do it “our way.”
5. As believers we must come to the place of brokenness and full surrender, so that the will of God is pleasurable to us.
6. Abraham and Sarah had to face a hard decision in sending away their step son. Abraham grieved over this decision.
7. As the years went by Ishmael became more bitter. God graciously moved in this situation because we see much later in Isaac’s life that Ishmael and Isaac buried their father, Abraham, together.
8. We must be careful as we travel down life’s way that we apply biblical principles that will keep us in the will of God.

Proverbs 3:5&6, *“5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

II. THE OFFERING OF ISAAC

Genesis 22:1-2, *“1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.*

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”

- A. This was an act of **FAITH** shown by **OBEDIENCE** to God’s plan to test Abram and also Isaac.
- B. Isaac was somewhere around 16-25 years of age and as such it would have been impossible for Abraham to put him there and hold him there against the strength of youth. Parents take note:– young people must be brought to the Lord and taught to follow God from a young age, before they rebel, so they will apply their heart to wisdom and remain tight in the family.
- C. Isaac put himself on the altar in willingness to sacrifice his life to God. He did this at a young age and stayed in that way for his life.

Romans 12:1&2, “1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This is a beautiful picture of Christ’s obedience to the FATHER.

Philippians 2:8, “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

D. Isaac climbed there and stayed there by FAITH in God’s will to the point of Faith in the resurrecting power of the Father.

E. Isaac saw God’s provision of a substitute supplied at the last minute; God’s ideal moment. This set Isaac up for a life of Faith which marked his whole life. Genesis 22:8&9, “8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. 9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.”

Genesis 22:13&14, “13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”

F. Isaac followed in his father’s footsteps and inherited the blessing of covenant promise. God, in line with this, gave him a beautiful wife. This was in answer to Isaac’s prayer.

III. THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC

A. A Beautiful Bride

Genesis 24:3, “And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:”

Genesis 24:12, “And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.”

Genesis 24:26-28, “26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. 27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren. 28 And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.”

- B.** For many years nothing is said about Isaac. He stayed in the will of God at home. It was at about 37 years old, after the death of his mother, that he married one of the most beautiful women of the Old Testament. Isaac is one of the great examples of marriage fidelity: marrying one beautiful wife and staying with her through his whole life.
- C.** At the same time God had kept Rebekah as a pure virgin bride for Isaac. The story of the servant's trip to meet a bride is beautiful. This is all in answer to prayer 24:63. Meditation and prayer marked Isaac's life. Wait on the Lord you who are single!
- D.** The bride is provided by the Lord in faith.
- E.** In obedience to the command of Abraham a trusted servant went to Mesopotamia to take, under divine direction, a wife from among his own kin for Isaac.
- F.** The events recorded are amazing – God makes no mistakes and He orchestrated these events.
- G.** This meant that when requested by the servant, Rebekah was willing to go in faith. She seemed to exhibit more faith than her family: - after all she had waited for a while to meet the right man!

IV. ISAAC'S CHILDREN

After 20 years of marriage and in answer to prayer by faith, Rebekah gave birth to two sons. Jacob and Esau. These sons were twins. As the boys grew; Isaac loved Esau while Rebekah loved Jacob. Isaac's partiality brought about a divided family. Isaac's son disregarded his birth right. Genesis 25:29-34, *"29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: 30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."*

How sad the family divided. What conflict and trouble is brought to them.

The flesh desires instant gratification and goes for a quick meal instead of his family inheritance. This reveals his bad attitude toward God and family. He later experienced the ramifications leading to him not receiving the inheritance blessing.

V. ISAAC PROSPERS IN THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES

Genesis 26:12-22, “12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. 13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: 14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. 15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. 16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. 17 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. 19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. 20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. 21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

A. God appears to Isaac

Genesis 26:1-5, “1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. 2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; 4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; 5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

B. Do not go down into Egypt

Genesis 26:2, *“And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:”*

Egypt speaks of the sphere in which we lived prior to conversion (World flesh, Devil, pride of life, sinful appetites, worldly ways.)

Separation naturally should follow salvation.

C. Genesis 26:23-25, *“23 And he went up from thence to Beersheba. 24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. 25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.”*

The Lord renewed the Abrahamic covenant to Isaac with the promises and blessings. In thankfulness Isaac builds an altar and calls on the Lord there; there he builded a tent and dug a well. How God blessed this faithful man of faith!

VI. DEATH OF ISAAC

Isaac died at age 180 and was gathered with his people. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him in Hebron in 1881 BC. Genesis 35:27-29. *“27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. 28 And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. 29 And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”*

Psalms 23:1-6 *“1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”*

Hebrews 11:13, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

VII. ISAAC'S COMMENDABLE CHARACTER

“When his mother Sarah died, Isaac was a man thirty-six, and was deeply grieved over the death of his mother. Comfort was his when he took Rebekah as his wife to help fill the vacant place in his heart. To the credit of Isaac it must be said that he was the only one of the patriarchs who had but one wife. It is also perfectly clear from the ancient idyll, one of the most beautiful in all literature, that Isaac left the choice of his wife to God. When the caravan bearing Rebekah neared home, Isaac was in the fields Meditating or “praying as the margin expresses it. (Genesis 24:63).

For many years Isaac and Rebekah were childless, but God heard Isaac's prayers and Rebekah gave birth to twins, Jacob and Esau. Isaac seems to have outlived his wife, and died at the age of 180 (Genesis 35:28). For some fifty years Isaac was almost blind, a sad and pitiful lot for God's chosen one.

The character of Isaac, beautiful though it was in many ways, yet carried a few blots. He followed his father, Abraham, in deceitfulness when he called his wife his sister, bringing upon himself the rebuke of Abimelech. He also loved “savory food,” which should have been alien to a man so calm and still, lord of his passion and himself. Then in the matter of Esau and the blessing, Isaac surely rebelled against the Lord's purpose.”³

A. Isaac's prayer

B. Isaac's meditation

Genesis 24:63, *“And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.”*

C. Isaac's submission

Genesis 22:6 *“And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.”*

D. Isaac's trust in God

Genesis 22:7&8, *“7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”*

E. Isaac's deep devotion

³ Lockyer, All the Men of the Bible, p 156.

Genesis 22:6&7, “6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

Genesis 25:21 “And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

F. Isaac’s peacableness

Genesis 26:20-22, “20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. 21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

G. Isaac’s prayerfulness

Genesis 26:25, “And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.”

H. Isaac’s faith

Hebrews 11:16&17, “16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,”

I. The fear of Isaac

Genesis 31:42, “Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.”

Genesis 31:53, “The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.”

The fear of Isaac means that he is the God trembling one adored by the Patriarchs.

J. Isaac passed on the faith

Hebrews 11:20, “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”

All these are aspects of the life of faith.

May the blessing of God be upon us so that we would live a long and fruitful life.

Isaac's life of faith stirs us to go on by faith.