

Isaac: The Child of Promise

Passages: Gen 24; 26; 28:3–4

Memory Verse

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:28–29)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Isaac, a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham, served as a bridge to pass on that promise.2. Isaac was a prefiguration of the Christ to come.	God is faithful, and His promises are true.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trust in God’s promises and commit to obeying His word.2. Understand the importance of being children of promise, and of how this should affect our lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Miracle of Isaac’s Birth
- B. Isaac: A Life Defined by Obedience
- C. Isaac: A Life of Faith

Life Application

- 1. Living as a Child of Promise
- 2. Trusting in God’s Promises

Memory Verse

Conclusion: When compared to his father Abraham and to his son Jacob, Isaac might seem a less important figure. However, we can see that Isaac served important roles as both a bridge and a symbol of promise.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

What do you know about Isaac?

Activity: Quick Write

1. Give each student a piece of paper and set a timer for three minutes. Ask the students to write down everything they know about Isaac without opening their Bibles or textbooks. (Note: If you have a large class, you may choose to divide your students into teams.)
2. When the three minutes are up, select one student and ask them to share their list. If anyone else has the same thing, then the duplicate item must be crossed off. If no one else has the same item, then do not cross it off.
3. Do this for all the students, until all have shared. The student with the most items left on their list is the winner.

A. The Miracle of Isaac’s Birth

Today, we’ll be studying Isaac. But before we read about him, we need to backtrack a bit to before he was born. Isaac’s birth was not your typical event! First, let’s read about God’s promise to Abraham regarding Isaac, recorded in Genesis 15:1–6. God had previously appeared to Abraham twice, promising to make him into a great nation, and that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. In this passage, however, Abraham pointed out that he had no son. God’s response was clear: despite their old age, Abraham would receive a son by his wife, Sarah.

Years later, Abraham thought that maybe this son would be Ishmael, born by Sarah’s maidservant, Hagar. But God once again insisted otherwise, despite the seemingly impossible circumstances (Gen 17:18–19). Of course, just as God promised, despite both of them being far beyond childbearing years, Sarah eventually bore a son to Abraham.

Understanding God’s Sovereignty

It is clear that human logic does not apply to the Lord! He is an amazing God, and nothing is impossible for Him. His sovereignty and power are both incomparable. However, this event is important not just because of Isaac’s miraculous birth, but because he also represents all those children who have been born into the promise of God. Let’s read Romans 9:7–9. Here, Paul uses the example of Abraham to describe two different children: children of the flesh, and the children of the promise. Ishmael and Isaac were both Abraham’s sons, but in the eyes of God, only Isaac was the child of promise. So, what are the differences between these two types of children? Paul explains in Galatians 4:23–26.

Children of the Flesh	Children of the Promise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born according to the flesh (Gal 4:23) • Born into bondage (Gal 4:24–25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born through the promise (Gal 4:23) • Born free (Gal 4:26)

Paul wrote in Galatians 4:28 that the believers, like Isaac, are children of the promise, meaning God has specially chosen us to receive His promises. This special status, however, is not because of anything that we have done, or because of the Jews’ genealogy as Abraham’s descendants. Rather, this selection is part of God’s sovereignty and choosing.

B. Isaac: A Life Defined by Obedience

Let's now take a look at Isaac himself. If we look at the events of his life, we can see that his obedience to his parents later translated into his obedience towards God. Let's first examine how he was obedient.

1. Isaac's obedience to his parents

Isaac proved his trust and obedience towards his father when the Lord commanded Abraham to sacrifice him. The Bible makes no mention of any protests on Isaac's part. If we put ourselves in his shoes, it would be difficult to imagine that we would be silent as our parent ties us up and places us on an altar! But Isaac was obedient to his father, even in the face of death.

We can also see Isaac's obedience in his marriage. Let's read Genesis 24:62–67. The Bible does not record that Isaac was aware that Abraham had sent a servant to find a wife for him, but Isaac was willing to accept Rebekah once he heard the servant's explanation of events. We can see from this second example that Isaac really trusted in his father, as he was willing to submit to him even well into adulthood. Later, this trust was rooted in God Himself.

2. Isaac's obedience to God

Although Isaac was born into the promise given to Abraham, God still required Isaac's obedience. Let's read Genesis 26:2–5. Despite the famine, God commanded Isaac to stay in Gerar, when he might have gone to Egypt to provide for his family. Isaac obeyed, and, as a result, God blessed him greatly by allowing him to reap a hundredfold of what he had planted, an impossibility during a time of famine (Gen 26:12–14). Yet even though Isaac had received such an abundance of physical blessings, he did not let this get in the way of his relationship with God. Let's continue by reading verses 23–25. What three actions did Isaac take upon arriving in Beersheba? He:

- a. Built an altar
- b. Pitched his tent
- c. Dug a well

These three actions represent three different aspects of Isaac's life. The altar, used for worship, represents his relationship with God. Tents were needed for his family to dwell in, so pitching a tent represents his family life. Lastly, the well was required to water his flock, and represents his work and career life. Isaac had his priorities in the correct order; he placed his relationship with God first, even above his own family. In exchange for his faith, God blessed and watched over all the different aspects of his life.

A Prefiguration of Christ

If we closely examine Isaac's birth and early life, we can actually see many similarities between him and the Lord Jesus. Let's take a look at how they parallel each other.

Isaac		Jesus Christ
Genesis 18:14	The promised child	Isaiah 7:14
Genesis 21:1–2	Miraculously conceived	Matthew 1:18
Genesis 22:12	Sacrificed by their father, who loved them	1 John 4:9–10
Genesis 22:2	Sacrificed on Mount Moriah	John 19:17
Genesis 22:6	Carried wood on their back for their own sacrifice	John 19:17
Genesis 22:9	Was bound	John 18:12
Genesis 22:9	Submissive to their sacrifice	Philippians 2:8

Genesis 22:16–18	All nations blessed through their sacrifice.	Galatians 3:14, 16
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Though Isaac seemed less significant compared to Abraham, or even to his two sons, Jacob and Esau, he held great symbolic importance. He not only came to represent the future children of promise (Gal 4:28), but his actions also foreshadowed the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation in Jesus Christ.

C. Isaac: A Life of Faith

Let’s now take a look at Isaac’s actions during his adult life, and how they reflected his faith in God.

1. Faith in God’s provision

When the Lord commanded Isaac to remain in Gerar, He blessed Isaac with such abundant wealth that the Philistines envied him. Abimelech finally told Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we” (Gen 26:16). While seeking out a new place, however, the locals quarreled with him over the wells that his herdsmen dug up. Let’s read Genesis 26:16–22. Each time, instead of arguing over the wells that were rightfully his, he simply packed up, moved on, and found another place.

Abimelech later approached Isaac once again, but this time, on a mission of peace. He told Isaac, “We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you” (Gen 26:28). It is truly amazing that a group of people who normally worshipped pagan gods both saw and admitted the existence of the one true God! Their realization was due to Isaac’s faith and his willingness to follow God’s commands.

2. Faith in God’s promise

One of Isaac’s most important actions occurred towards the end of his life. Isaac’s eyesight had deteriorated, so he was unable to recognize when his younger son Jacob took his elder son Esau’s blessing. Let’s read Genesis 28:3–4. These were Isaac’s last words recorded in the Bible. Hebrews 11:20 says, “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” From this verse, we can see that giving the blessing to his son was, itself, an act of faith. The person giving the blessing must believe that it will come to pass. This small action that Isaac took showed his belief and submission to God’s will.

Despite Jacob’s deception, Isaac fulfilled his duty in passing on God’s blessings. He successfully passed on God’s promise to the next generation, a seemingly small but vital action in the Israelites’ history. His obedience to both his father and to God allowed Abraham’s lineage to successfully continue, which eventually led to the birth of the nation of Israel. This lineage would continue to the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross has allowed all those who believe in Him to be God’s promised children!

When compared to his father Abraham or to his son Jacob, it seems that Isaac lived a very peaceful life with relatively few problems. However, we can view Isaac as a bridge. He was the receiver of God’s promise from his father, and he would be the one to pass down this blessing to his son, Jacob. It is through Isaac that the promise of God was passed on to the next generation.

In the New Testament, Isaac has come to symbolize those who were born according to the promise of God. Like Isaac, we are also the children of promise, able to experience true freedom found in Christ (Gal 4:31). In exchange for being chosen for this promise, we need to learn from Isaac and continue doing good works for the Lord. We must remember that it is only through His grace that we have received His blessings, so we must continue to pursue after Him (Eph 2:8).

Check for Understanding

1. **Why was Isaac's birth a miracle?** He was born when both Abraham and Sarah were well past childbearing age.
2. **In what way did Isaac demonstrate his faith when blessing Jacob?** Giving the blessing to his son was, itself, an act of faith. The person giving it must believe it will come to pass.
3. **When Isaac arrived in Beersheba, what three things did he do, and in what order?** He first built an altar to God, then set up his tent, and lastly, dug a well.
4. **What does each action taken in Beersheba represent, and what does Isaac's order of operations teach us about our own lives?** The altar represents his relationship with God. The tent, his family life, and the well, his work and career. Like Isaac, we should place our relationship with God first, above our family and careers. In exchange for our faith, God has promised His blessings and His care.
5. **How did Isaac respond to the locals when they claimed his wells for themselves?** Each time, instead of arguing over the wells that were rightfully his, he simply packed up, moved on, and found another place.

Life Application

1. Living as a Child of Promise

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." (Gal 4:28)

How should the knowledge that we are children of promise change how we live our life? Isaac not only trusted in God's sovereignty and faithfulness, but also actively sought after Him. He allowed the Lord to lead him in all the different aspects of his life, and he understood that as long as he obeyed God, then God would take care of him. Let's look at a few scenarios to understand how we should live our life as a child of promise.

Scenario 1

Lillian had a big argument with her older sister Lisa, and they were no longer speaking to one another. Two weeks had passed since their argument, but both continued to give the other the cold shoulder. It was like a game of who could ignore the other person more! Lillian didn't like how things were, but she also didn't want to be the one to apologize, since she didn't do anything wrong!

Discussion

- As a child of promise, what should Lillian do? Use a Bible verse to support your answer.
- *Example answer: In the Lord's Prayer, we always ask God to forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors (Lk 11:4). As a child of His promise, God wants us to forgive those who have wronged us. If we are able to do so, then God has promised to forgive our own wrongdoings!*

Scenario 2

Nicholas was constantly glued to his phone. It was instinctual for him to pick it up and check for messages every few minutes. He ate meals with his phone and always had it close at hand when he was out. It was the last thing he looked at before sleeping, and the first thing he reached for when he woke. Nicholas didn't feel like it was a problem, though, because all his friends were exactly the same way.

Discussion

- As a child of promise, what should Nicholas do? Use a Bible verse to support your answer.

- *Example answer: We need to evaluate our priorities as a child of God! We should constantly think about whether our actions will please Him or not. As His precious child, we have the freedom to choose what we do; however, not all things are beneficial or edifying (1 Cor 10:23). Nor do all things glorify His name.*

Scenario 3

Eric's parents have a strict rule that all homework must be done before going out to play. One day, his friends tell him that they will be playing a new video game after school. They are all excited because this is the latest game in a popular series that they have been anticipating. Other people at school have already begun raving about how good it is! Eric is already on his way to his friend's house when he suddenly remembers that he has an unfinished English paper, due the next day.

Discussion

- As a child of promise, what should Eric do? Use a Bible verse to support your answer.
- *Example answer: God trains us through the decisions that we make in our life. Even the smallest choices that we make reflect our character and train us for the big choices that we will later encounter. If we can be faithful in the small things, then God will trust us with greater things later on (Lk 16:10).*

2. Trusting in God's Promises

Aside from living as a child of promise by following God's will, it is also important to learn to trust in His promises. It is one thing to know what God's promises are. It is another to show our trust in them through our words and actions. Let's go over a few promises in the Bible and consider how our trust in these promises should affect our lives.

a. He provides for our needs

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:31–33)

These days, many people become anxious or depressed because of the overwhelming burdens of life. We may face burdens such as family finances, our studies, or our future. But God has promised that He will provide for all of our needs. As long as we do our best, God will take care of us so that we can live without worry or anxiety. On the other hand, if we are constantly anxious about our life, then that means we do not yet fully trust God. Can you think of any recent events that you have felt anxious about?

b. He never tempts us beyond what we can bear

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor 10:13)

Sometimes, we may be faced with situations that are so overwhelming that we don't know what to do. We may even begin to question if God is truly with us. But if we are facing tribulations, we must learn to rely on God rather than on human knowledge or logic. Especially in the case of temptation, remember that God has always given us a way out of it. Have there been any recent tribulations or temptations in your life that you didn't know how to face?

c. He blesses those who tithe

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” (Mal 3:10)

This is a unique promise, because God actively challenges us to test Him. When we earn money, whether from an allowance or a part-time job, it is normal to want to save it all for ourselves. But God has challenged us to offer tithe to Him, and in exchange, He will bless us so abundantly that “there will not be room enough to receive it”! Have you or someone you know ever given tithe to the Lord and received God’s blessings in exchange?

d. He is always by our side

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Josh 1:9)

When we are scared, distressed, or worried, it is easy to feel as if no one understands our problems, making us feel lonely and miserable. But God has promised us: He is right there by our side. Have you ever felt like no one was there to help you? In those times, we must remember that God is here, and He understands. Most importantly, He has the power to help and protect us, so we should never feel discouraged or afraid. Have you ever felt like you were totally alone in the world? Did you kneel down to pray, or did you forget about God?

e. He gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Lk 11:9, 13)

Those who don’t have the Holy Spirit may sometimes feel like prayer is an act of futility. But in truth, God is just waiting for you to ask from the depths of your heart. He also wants you to continue to have faith and hope in His promise. Have you felt like God is not listening to your prayers, only to realize later that He really was?

f. He gives salvation to those who believe in Him

“[If] you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom 10:9–10)

This is the most important promise of all because it concerns life after death. Our salvation is the ultimate hope that we should hold on to every day of our lives. As a demonstration of this hope, we should always fix our hearts on God’s kingdom, and always do our best to follow His commands. When you go home after church, do you immediately forget about God, or is He always on your mind at home or at school? Do you try to make decisions that God would want you to make, or do you forget about His teachings?

g. He blesses those who honor their parents

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’ ” (Eph 6:1–3)

The relationship between parent and child is the most important relationship in God's eyes. Just as we honor the God who created us, we are also to honor our parents. If we do, God has promised us a fruitful long life, filled with provision, guidance, and deliverance. Do you love and value your parents? Do you mock them for their age and different upbringing? Or do you bring them joy by respecting their counsel in God's word? If your parents are not believers, do you pray with all your heart for their salvation? Even if your parents have hurt you in the past, God wants us to love them by praying for them and forgiving them. If we struggle with this, then we can ask God to help us in our prayers.

Memory Verse

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:28–29)

Optional Memory Verse Activity:

- *Write out the verse on the board and have the students read it aloud together.*
- *Ask them to draw out the verse using only pictures and symbols. There should be no words on their drawings. They can work independently or in pairs. If they are struggling, try underlining all the key words in the verse first. They can then illustrate each key word.*
- *Erase the verse on the whiteboard. Have the students recite the verse by only looking at what they have drawn.*

Meaning

1. What are the three pairs that we see in the verse? How are all these different identities able to be one? In this verse, Paul is explaining a very important concept: that no matter who we are, or where we come from, when we are baptized, our identities have become unified as one. We now belong to Christ, so we are all equally precious children in His eyes.
2. Because we belong to Christ, we have become the children of promise just like Isaac. We have become heirs of God's promised salvation and inheritance in heaven.

Conclusion

Isaac might seem a less important figure, especially when compared to his father Abraham and to his son Jacob. But we can see that Isaac served as both a bridge and a symbol of promise. As a bridge, he passed on God's promise to his own son through faith. And as a symbol of promise, he showed that he, like us, is a child of the promise of God, able to receive an inheritance in heaven. As children of promise, we must imitate Isaac by placing God first in our lives and being obedient to His word.

Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What unifies all the different pairs in the memory verse?
Once they are baptized, all are unified as one in Christ and equally precious children in His eyes.
2. “So he _____ an _____ there and _____ on the name of the LORD, and he _____ his _____ there; and there Isaac’s servants _____ a _____.”
(Genesis 26:25)
built, altar, called, pitched, tent, dug, well
3. How did Isaac prefigure Christ? Write down at least three ways, with verse references if possible.
 - *Promised child (Gen 18:14; Isa 7:14)*
 - *Miraculously conceived (Gen 21:1–2; Mt 1:18)*
 - *Sacrificed by their father, who loved them (Gen 22:12; 1 Jn 4:9–10)*
 - *Sacrificed on Mount Moriah (Gen 22:2; Jn 19:17)*
 - *Carried wood on their back for their own sacrifice (Gen 22:6; Jn 19:17)*
 - *Was bound (Gen 22:9; Jn 18:12)*
 - *Submissive to their sacrifice (Gen 22:9; Phil 2:8)*
 - *All nations blessed through their sacrifice (Gen 22:16–18; Gal 3:14, 16)*
4. Describe two events in which Isaac showed his faith towards God.
 - *When the Lord commanded Isaac to remain in Gerar, Isaac obeyed despite the famine.*
 - *Instead of quarrelling with the locals over the wells, Isaac moved on and found another place, trusting in God’s provision.*
 - *He did not get angry at Jacob, but obediently passed on God’s blessing.*
 - *His blessing of Jacob was, itself, an act of faith.*
5. How should the knowledge that we are children of promise change how we live our life?
Like Isaac, we need to trust in God’s sovereignty and faithfulness, and actively seek after Him. We should allow the Lord to lead us in all the different aspects of our life and trust that He will bless us and take care of us.
6. Take a moment to reflect on yourself. In what area of your life can you make better choices as a child of promise? Write down how you can be a better child of promise this week.
Personal answers.