

Sunday School Class - HPC - May 29, 2022

ISAAC - SON OF ABRAHAM - GENESIS 13...35

I. OVERVIEW

Isaac was the son of a great father and the father of a great son, but he himself left a mixed record. In contrast to the sustained prominence Genesis gives to Abraham, the life of Isaac is split apart and told as attachments to the stories of Abraham and Jacob. The characteristics of Isaac's life fall into two parts; one is decidedly positive and one negative. On the positive side, Isaac's life was a gift from God. Abraham and Sarah treasured him and passed on their faith and values, and God reiterated Abraham's promise to him. Isaac's faith and obedience when Abraham bound him as a sacrifice is exemplary, for he must have believed what his father told him; "God Himself will provide a lamb for the burnt offering, my son." (Genesis 22:8). Throughout most of his life he followed Abraham's footsteps. Expressing the same faith, Isaac prayed for his childless wife (Gen 25:21). Isaac became a successful farmer and shepherd that the local population envied and asked him to move away (Gen 26:12-16). He reopened the wells that had been dug during the time of his father, which again became subjects of dispute with the people of Gerar concerning water rights (Gen 26: 26-31). The writer of Hebrews noted that Isaac lived in tents and blessed both Jacob and Esau (Heb. 11:10,20). In short Isaac inherited a large family business and considerable wealth. Like his father he did not hoard it, but fulfilled the

role that God had chosen for him to pass on the Blessing that would extend to all nations. In these positive events Isaac was a responsible son who learned how to lead a family and to manage a business in a way that honored the example of his capable and Godly father. Abraham's diligence in preparing a successor and instill long-lasting values brought blessings to his enterprise once again. When Isaac was one hundred years old it became his turn to designate his successor by passing the family Blessing. Although he would live another eighty years the bestowal of the Blessing was the last meaningful thing about Isaac recorded in the book of Genesis. Regrettably, he failed in this task. Somehow he remained oblivious to God's revelation to his wife that the younger son Jacob was to become the head of the family instead of the older son Esau (Gen 25:23). God allowed but did not sanction a clever ploy by Rebekah and Jacob to put Isaac back on track to fulfill God's purposes. Maintaining the family business meant that the fundamental family structure had to be intact. It was the father's duty to secure this. Foreign to most today, two related customs were in Isaac's family, the birthright (Gen 25:31), and the Blessing (Gen 24:4). The birthright conferred the right to inherit a larger share of the father's estate both in terms of goods and land though sometimes the birthright was transferred. Typically, the birthright was reserved for the oldest son. The various laws concerning it varied, but it seems to have been a stable feature of Near East culture. The Blessing was a corresponding invocation of prosperity from God and succession of leadership in the household. Esau

wrongly believed that he could surrender the birthright yet still get the blessing (Heb. 12:16,17). Jacob recognized that they were inseparable. With both in possession, Jacob would assume the right to carry on the heritage of the family economically, socially, and in terms of its faith as well. Central to the unfolding plot of Genesis the blessing entailed not only receiving the covenant promises that God had made to Abraham but also mediating them to the next generation. Isaac failed to recognize that Jacob should receive the blessing arose from Isaac putting personal comfort above the needs of the family organization. Isaac favored Esau because he was a skilled hunter who provided him with savory venison which he loved. Esau proved himself unworthy as he sold his birthright for one meal and later married two daughters of Ishmael to the grief of his parents.

Isaac's example reminds us that immersing ourselves in our private perspective too deeply can lead us into serious errors of judgment. Each of us is tempted by personal comforts, prejudices and private interests to lose sight of the wider importance of our work. Our weakness for accolades, financial security, conflict avoidance, inappropriate relationships, short-term rewards or other personal benefits that may be at odds with doing work to fulfill God's planned purposes.

II. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN ISAAC'S LIFE

- The Promise of a Son (Gen 15:2-6)
 - Establishment of the Covenant (Gen 17:7,8-15-19)
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- The miraculous birth of the son (Gen 21:1-5)

- The offering of Isaac (Gen 22:1-19)

The first occurrence of a word in the Bible often sets the pattern for its usage the scripture. "LOVE" (v2) and "WORSHIP" (v 5) are first found here. Abraham's love for his son is a faint picture of God's love for the Lord Jesus. The sacrifice of Isaac was a picture of the greatest act of worship-the Savior's self-sacrifice to accomplish the will of God. God's call of Abraham, Abraham is the first of ten name duplications found in the Bible. They introduce matters of special importance. The Angel of God was the Son of God.

The spiritual experience of Abraham was marked by four great crises, each of which involved a surrender of something *naturally* most dear. These were: 1. Country and kindred (Gen 12:1)

2. His nephew Lot (Gen 13: 1-18)

3. His own plan about Ishmael(Gen 17:17,18)

4. Isaac (Gen 22:1-19)

The significance of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, it gives an exemplary paradigm of faith-both Isaac's as well as Abraham's-at its strongest, and shows how the strength of true faith will inevitably find expression in outer action. On the other hand, the chapter presents one of the most vivid (prophetic symbol patterns of the Messiah to be found anywhere in the OT. In fact this is the *only* episode identified in the NT as a type of Christ in both His death and resurrection (Heb 11:17,19). Even in long-standing Jewish tradition- which precludes any specifically

Christological significance- the general spiritual symbolism of this chapter is reflected in the practice of reading this chapter on the second day of Rosh Hashanah (the New Year festival which commences the ten-day period of awe and repentance).

In summation Abraham grew in faith not by giant leaps but step by step and we can do the same. Abraham never could have been called the Father of Faith had he not been tested to the utmost.

- A BRIDE FOR ISAAC - (Gen 24: 1-67)

Preliminary events – Death of Sarah (Gen 23:1-2):

Purchase of the cave of Machpela for her burial (Gen 23: 3-20): Eliezer of Damascus identified as the head servant of Abraham (Gen 15:2): Abraham's charge to his servant (Gen 24:1-9).

The 450 mile trip to Mesopotamia to the city of Abraham's brother Nahor and the servant's prayer on arrival (Gen 24:10-15)

The servant's prayer answered before he was done speaking (Gen 24: 15-25)

The servant's prayer of thanksgiving for God's answer to his prayer (Gen 24:26,27)

The servant explained his errand and experience at the well to Rebekah's family (Gen24:31-54)

Her brother (Laban) and her parents (Bethuel and Milcah) approval of Rebekah's leaving to be the bride of Isaac and her agreement (Gen 24:55-58)

The family's prayer for Rebekah's blessing (Gen24:60)

Isaac takes Rebekah as his wife (Gen 24:63-67)

Genesis records the blessing of Rebekah as a continuation of the theme of the “seed” begun in Gen 3:15. Just as the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent (3:15), so the seed of Abraham will rule over the gate of his enemies and bless all nations (Gen 22:17b,18). Here Rebekah’s seed will one day *possess the gate of those who hate Him*. Genesis deliberately shows the progress of that one special offspring, the Messiah, who will have dominion over His enemies and bless the world.

The servant of Abraham proved to be a model servant:

1. he does not run unsent, v 2-9
2. he goes where he is sent v4,10
3. he does nothing else
4. he is prayerful and thankful v.12-14,26,27
5. he is wise to win v.17,18,21
6. he speaks not of himself but of his master’s riches and Isaac’s heirship v22,34-36 Act 1:8
7. he presents the true issue, and requires a clear decision v 49

- ISAAC THE SOLE HEIR OF ABRAHAM Gen 25:1-11)
- THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM Gen 25:7-9
- THE GENERATIONS OF ISAAC Gen 25: 19-26

*Rebekah was barren for twenty years and Isaac prayed for her, and she became pregnant v25:21

*Rebekah's inquiry of the Lord over her difficult pregnancy and the Lord's explanation and revelation that the older will serve the younger.

Gen 25:22-23

*The birth of Esau and Jacob (Gen25:22-26)

*The lapse of faith by Isaac at Gerar (Gen26:6-11)

Interestingly, this passage stands as a testimony to God's absolute, gracious sovereignty in fulfilling His mission to bless even the gentiles, for here as in Ch21, the patriarch failed to exhibit the confident trust and righteous behavior of a believer in the one true God—even common human decency doing what most people know “ought not to be done” (see 20:9). And yet in both instances Abimelech, the one ‘most directly sinned against’, affirmed not only a covenant of peace with Isaac who, by his irresponsible actions, hindered the extension of God's blessing to the Gentiles, but also the supreme sovereignty and gracious character of Isaac's God! Indeed, the possibility that Abimelech's appreciation of, and perhaps *faith in*, the one true God had been deepening since his encounter with Abraham is suggested by his use of the general term for “God” (Elohim) in his encounter with Abraham (Gen 21:22,23). But here Abimelech referred to God by His covenant name “Yahweh” in his encounter with Isaac.

In terms of blessing the nations through Abraham's “seed” today (Gen12:1-3;22:18, 26:4,5). God calls us to share the good news of salvation in Jesus primarily for ^{our} ~~their~~ own sakes, giving ^{us} ~~them~~ the privilege of showing

^{OUR}
their love and gratitude to the Lord as the Church fulfills its redemptive mandate (Mt.28:18-20). Yet the work of salvation is His alone, and regardless of what one does or does not do, God's purposes will be accomplished, and each one who has "been predestined according to His purpose" (Eph 1:11) will ultimately be drawn to Him (cf. Jer 31:3; Jn 6:44-65).

*God's abundant blessing of Isaac (Gen 26:12-15)

- ISAAC THE WELL DIGGER (Gen 26: 17-25)

- THE STOLEN BLESSING (GEN 27: 1-29)

Isaac's lapse – God had said "the older will serve the younger" Gen 25:23) yet Isaac failed to remember that it was Isaac the younger who was to receive the blessing. As related earlier Isaac put personal comfort ahead of the needs of family organization and obedience to the word of God. Isaac made the mistake of also trusting in his feelings; the hairy arm felt like that of Esau's. We should not trust our emotional feeling in spiritual matters:

Martin Luther observed:

"Feelings come and feelings go, and feelings are deceiving; Our warrant is the Word of God; naught else is worth believing."

- Isaac experienced his error by trembling, very exceedingly.
- Isaac confirms the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob (Gen 28: 1-4)
- The Death of Isaac - Gen 35:27-29

Age - 180 years -Buried by Jacob and Esau

The Promises of God: There are no promises of God that are too good to be true!" DL. Moody

"We can depend on God to fulfill His promises even when all roads to it are closed." DLM

"The promises of God for tomorrow are the anchors for believers today." R.C. Sproul

"Promises predict the answer to prayer. They are the molds into which we pour our prayers. They foretell what to expect. This makes Christian praying different. How? In the sense we pray from the answer. This is the way of the Lord-the way of faith-He promises-we believe." Armin Gesswein

Blessings!