

# Abraham And Isaac

**Introduction.** When Abraham was 75 years old, he left the city of Haran and traveled to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:4-7). While in Canaan, God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land. Although he believed God, Abraham did not understand how the promise would be fulfilled. He considered a servant named Eliezer as the heir of his house (Genesis 15:2), possibly because he did not expect to father a child since Sarah was barren (Genesis 11:30). Later, God told Abraham that he would have a child, and repeated the land promise (Genesis 15:1-7).

## I. *Isaac, Son Of Promise*

- A. Abraham was not told at first that his future heir would be a child from Sarah.
  1. Upon the insistence of Sarah, Abraham attempted to father a child with Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid (Genesis 16:1-2).
  2. When Hagar conceived, Sarah despised her, complained to Abraham and eventually received permission to deal with Hagar as she saw fit (Genesis 16:4).
  3. Sarah treated her so harshly that Hagar fled (Genesis 16:6).
  4. An angel of the Lord found Hagar in the wilderness and instructed her to return (Genesis 16:10-12).
  5. The angel promised to multiply the descendants of her son, whose name would be "Ishmael" (God hears).
  6. Hagar bore Ishmael when Abraham was 86 years old (Genesis 16:16).
- B. Thirteen years later, God established the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:1-14, 23-24). The sign of the covenant was circumcision.
- C. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "Father of a multitude," and Sarai's name to Sarah, which means "Princess" (Genesis 17:5, 15).
- D. God revealed that Sarah would be given a son, Isaac ("He laughs"), as the son of promise (Genesis 17:15-21).
  1. Apparently, Abraham had believed all these years that the heir would be Ishmael, and even suggested such to God (Genesis 17:18).
  2. God repeated the name of Isaac to Abraham, and later to Sarah.
  3. Because both were advanced in years, Abraham and Sarah laughed to themselves (Genesis 17:17; 18:12).
- E. Appropriate principles.
  1. God tells us that He will help us in this life, but does not always tell us how.

2. God fulfills promises in ways we cannot always predict (Genesis 17:17; 18:12).
3. We can feel certain that we are right, even if we are wrong (Genesis 17:17).

## II. ***Abraham And The Sacrifice Of Isaac***

- A. When Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him on the eighth day as God had commanded (Genesis 21:1-5).
- B. He was told by Sarah and later by God to drive out Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:10-13).
- C. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son.
  1. Abraham gathered wood and fire, then traveled three days to Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:3-5).
  2. He had Isaac carry the wood, while he carried the fire and the knife up the mountain.
  3. As they walked, Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham replied, "God will provide" (Genesis 22:6-8).
  4. Abraham bound Isaac, laid him on the altar, and drew the knife.
  5. He intended to kill his son, knowing that God could raise him from the dead (Hebrew 11:17-19).
  6. An angel of the Lord stopped the sacrifice.
- D. Appropriate principles.
  1. Man can trust in God's providence without knowing His methods.
  2. We must be willing to give everything to God.

## III. ***Paul's Allegory***

- A. Paul contrasted Hagar and Ishmael with Sarah and Isaac (Galatians 4:21-31).
  1. The son born to the bondwoman was according to the flesh, relating Hagar to Mt. Sinai.
  2. The son of the free woman was according to promise, relating Sarah to Jerusalem.
- B. As he contrasted these two families, Paul addressed a principle stated in Galatians 5:1; i.e., if we are free in Christ, we should not again submit to the yoke of slavery. If we submit to the Law, we have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

**Conclusion.** Truly, Abraham is "the father of us all" (Romans 4:16). His faith and his works were approved by God (James 2:21-24). If we can follow after his good example, we can be a "friend of God" as well.

## Questions:

1. After God spoke to him (Genesis 12:1-3), Abraham still thought that his heir would be Eliezer. Later, he was sure that his heir would be Ishmael (Genesis 17:17). Finally, he learned that it would be Isaac. What does his example teach us?
2. When God suggested that Isaac would be born, who laughed at the suggestion? Why did it seem funny?
3. Walking up Mt. Moriah, what did Isaac ask his father? How did Abraham reply?
4. Why would this sacrifice be so difficult for Abraham to accomplish (Genesis 22:2)? Why was it difficult to understand (Genesis 17:19)?
5. What did Abraham's act prove to God (Genesis 22:12)?
6. Would Abraham have been justified if he had withheld Isaac?
7. Explain how Paul's allegory contrasts the old and new covenants.