

BIBLE STUDY LESSON: 10 PEOPLE IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Isaac

- Gen. 17:19 But God said, No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.
- Gen. 26:3-4 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you; for to you and to your seed I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and will give to your seed all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

I. ABRAHAM

- A. God's aim in calling Abraham was to accomplish His purpose:
- a. To establish a kingdom
 - i. He might rule on the earth
 - ii. Express His glory
- B. In order to have a kingdom, seeds were needed
- C. Therefore, God promised Abraham that he would beget a son by his wife Sarah (Gen. 17:19) to be his heir

II. BORN OF SARAH

- A. Isaac
1. Son born of Abraham by his wife Sarah
 2. Became the unique seed who inherited all the riches of his father (Gen. 17:19; 21:2-3; 25:5)
- B. Sarah
1. Free woman (Gal. 4:22b)
 2. Symbolizes the new covenant of grace (Gal. 4:24a)
 3. Has the proper position in God's economy to bring forth children as God's heirs who will inherit what is of God
- C. Therefore, Isaac represents
1. New Testament believers
 - i. Born to be sons of God according to His grace
 - ii. Are His heirs who will inherit His possessions (Gal. 4:28, 30-31).

III. BORN ACCORDING TO PROMISE

- A. Isaac was born when:
- a. Abraham had become old and as good as dead
 - b. Sarah had become out of function (Rom. 4:19)
 - c. According to God's promise
 - d. At the appointed time, the time of life (Gen. 17:21, lit.)
 - e. The time when the effort of the natural life ceases
- B. Therefore, Isaac was
- a. Not produced by the natural strength, the strength of the flesh (Gal. 4:23)
 - i. Born not of blood
 - ii. Nor of the will of man
 - iii. Nor of the effort of the flesh (John 1:13)
 - b. But by God's strength in grace
 - c. According to the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:29)
 - i. Who is God reaching man (cf. Gen. 17:21—21:1)

- C. Therefore, Isaac represents the New Testament believers, who are born according to the grace of God's promise—those who are not born of the flesh but of the Holy Spirit.

IV. INHERITING AND RESTFULLY ENJOYING THE FATHER'S RICHES

- A. Isaac lived a life of inheriting and restfully enjoying all his father's riches
 - a. Born of grace
 - b. Grew up in grace
 - c. Became the heir in grace (Gen. 21:9-12)
 - i. Inheriting all that his father had (Gen. 25:5)
- B. Furthermore, he inherited God's promise to his father, especially the promise concerning Christ, in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 26:3-5)
- C. His entire life was a resting and enjoying life. He was always resting
 - a. At a time when he had lost his mother, did not yet have a wife, and his servant had gone away from him, he was not troubled
 - i. He went to the field to meditate (Gen. 24:63)
 - b. When he encountered the trouble with the Philistines over the wells
 - i. He remained restful and did not contend with them (Gen. 26:18-22).
 - c. He was not merely resting; he was also enjoying
 - i. His father and his father's servant did everything to prepare a bride for him (Gen. 24:61-67)
 - d. During his whole life, he never suffered thirst
 - i. Wherever he went, even when he went downward, going south to the land of the Philistines, there was always a well for his enjoyment.
 - e. Whenever he sowed in the land, he received a hundredfold
 - f. He became great and continued to grow greater until he became very great (Gen. 26:12-14)
 - g. When he was old, he still asked Esau to go out to the field to get some venison for him and make him savory meat, which he loved (Gen. 27:1-4)
- D. Throughout his whole life he did not do anything by his own effort
 - a. From the beginning to the end, he was a man who inherited his father's possessions (Gen. 25:5) and restfully enjoyed all his father's riches
- E. Isaac represents the New Testament believers, who do not need to strive to accomplish something and who need only to inherit the grace in Christ and enjoy the unlimited grace of God (1 Cor. 15:10)

V. INHERITING GOD'S PROMISE

- A. First, God gave the promise to Abraham, Isaac's father
 - a. He would make him a blessing to all the nations of the earth.
- B. Later, He gave the same promise to Isaac to confirm in him what He had promised to Abraham (Gen. 26:3-4)
- C. The focus of this promise was Christ in God's economy
 - a. All the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gal. 3:16)
- D. The blessing that Christ gives to all the nations of the earth is the Triune God, who is embodied in Him
- E. This Triune God in Christ, through Christ's becoming the all-inclusive Spirit, is received and enjoyed as the greatest blessing in the universe by all those on earth who have believed into Christ (Gal. 3:14)

VI. PERSECUTED BY ISHMAEL

- A. According to Genesis 21, after Isaac had grown up and was weaned, Ishmael began to mock him (v. 9)
 - a. This means that Ishmael persecuted Isaac

- b. God considered this persecution the beginning of the four-hundred-year persecution of His people, the Israelites (Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6)
- B. Isaac was born
 - a. according to the Holy Spirit
 - b. Through the promise
- C. Ishmael was born
 - a. according to the flesh
 - b. Through the natural strength
- D. As it was then, that he who was born according to flesh persecuted him who was born according to Spirit, so also it is now (Gal. 4:19)
- E. Therefore, Isaac's suffering of Ishmael's persecution signifies that the believers
 - a. Born according to the Spirit of grace in the New Testament,
 - b. Will suffer persecution from those who are born according to flesh (Gal. 4:29)

VII. OFFERED AS A BURNT OFFERING AND EXPERIENCEING DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- A. After Isaac had grown up, in order to test Abraham
 - a. God told him to bring Isaac to the appointed mountain and to offer him as a burnt offering
 - b. By faith Abraham offered Isaac
 - c. After Isaac was laid upon the altar on the wood, as Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay him
 - d. God prepared a ram as Isaac's substitute (Gen. 22:2-13)
 - e. In this way, Isaac was offered as a burnt offering and thus experienced death and resurrection.
- B. This signifies that the New Testament believers also must be offered as a burnt offering and experience death and resurrection
- C. When the New Testament believers, constrained by the Lord's love, present their bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), a sacrifice of resurrection and life, they experience co-crucifixion with Christ (Gal. 2:20a)
 - a. Thus, they live a crucified life by being conformed to Christ's death,
 - b. Thereby know and experience Christ and the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10)
 - c. Eventually, they will attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead (Phil. 3:11)

VIII. HAVING NO MATURITY IN LIFE

- A. As a historical figure in the Bible, Isaac, like Abraham, does not represent a complete, spiritually mature man
- B. He represents only a part of the experience and life of a spiritually mature person, which includes:
 - a. The inheriting of grace
 - b. Not using one's own effort
 - c. The restful enjoyment of the riches of Christ.
- C. When he was old, he blessed Jacob blindly (Gen. 27:1-29), this proves that:
 - a. He was not sufficiently mature in his spiritual life
 - b. He was not a complete, spiritually mature person, but can be considered only a part of such a person, just as we saw previously concerning Abraham

Focus: Isaac, the promised seed of Abraham, was born not by the strength of the flesh, but by God's grace. As the fulfillment of God's divine promise, Isaac lived a life of rest, enjoying all his father's riches. He also suffered earthly persecution from Ishmael and later in life he was presented as a living sacrifice to God. As a picture of the Christian life, Isaac signifies the continuation of a life of faith, in the enjoyment of the riches of his inheritance and in absolute dependence on his father