

Character Study: Isaac

Part 1 – Isaac’s Early Years and Marriage

Genesis 17-24

What’s happening?

- Isaac’s name means “laughter,” which pictures how Abraham and Sarah responded to the news they would have a son in their old age, as well as the joy they had at his birth. Isaac’s birth was the beginning of the fulfillment of God’s covenant promise to bring about a nation through Abraham and his descendants (17:19; 18:11-13; 21:6).

- As a child, Isaac obediently followed his father to Mt. Moriah, where God had told Abraham to offer his son up as a burnt offering. Once there, God provided a ram to take Isaac’s place, and Isaac saw God’s provision firsthand. (22:1-14)

- Abraham sent one of his servants back to his homeland to get a wife for Isaac. Arriving in the city of Nahor, the servant prayed that God would reveal which woman to take as Isaac’s wife. He said he would request a drink from a woman, and that if the woman offered his camels a drink as well, he would know that she was the one. (24:1-14)

- The servant saw a beautiful woman named Rebekah and asked her for a drink. She offered him a drink, and gave water to his camels as well. Recognizing God’s hand in this, the servant worshiped the Lord. Rebekah’s family granted her permission to return with the servant, and Isaac took her as his wife. (24:15-67)

What’s God doing?

> God, working behind the scenes, was the One who brought about the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. Though no prophetic word or miracle is recorded in Genesis 24, we see God’s hand ensuring all the pieces came together. From the meeting between the servant and Rebekah, to the family’s blessing and Rebekah’s willingness to go, we see that God was clearly directed the events.

What’s to learn?

→ We must trust in God’s providence, but we must also recognize our own human responsibility. The servant was faithful to carry out his mission, while earnestly seeking God’s direction. Individuals who prayerfully and obediently do the will of God, are individuals who are led by God!