

-Save This Page as a PDF-

The Birth of Isaac

21: 1-7

The birth of Isaac DIG: What does this story reveal about God's patience and faithfulness? Abraham's obedience (see 17:12, 19)? How did the birth of Isaac once again show that the LORD is El Shaddai, God Almighty? What are the nine ways that Isaac is a type of Christ?

REFLECT: What promises has the LORD kept in your life? What personal dream would you like to see fulfilled in your lifetime? Does God need us to carry out His plan?



The birth of Isaac (Hebrew: **Yitz'chak**) marked a pivotal point in the outworking of **God's** eternal purpose. After the call of **Abraham** to be the father of the faithful, **the birth of Isaac** was the second great step toward the fulfillment of **the LORD's** plan. **His** eternal desire was to have a people of **His** own, separate from the surrounding nations; a people who should be trusted with **His** Word; a people through whom **the Savior** was to be born; and a people who, ultimately, would become the means of blessing to the entire earth.³³⁸

Now the appointed time for the fulfillment of **God's** promises to **Abraham** and **Sarah** had come and **ADONAI**, *the giver of blessings*, kept **His** promise. **He was gracious to Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised** in **17:19** and **18:10**. This is the bedrock in the life of a believer. **God** is faithful. **Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Avraham in his old age.**

There is a striking similarity between **the birth of Isaac** and **the birth of the Messiah**. Isaac was to be **born at the very time Elohim, the God of creation, had promised him (21:1-2)**. More is said about **Isaac's birth** than any other **birth** in the Bible except for **the birth of Jesus Christ**. Therefore, **Isaac is a type of Christ and his birth foreshadowed the birth of the Lord, because when the time had fully come, God sent His Son (Galatians 4:4a; Mark 1:15; Romans 5-6; Ephesians 1:10)**.

Abraham gave the name Isaac, or Yitz'chak, to the son Sarah bore him. For the second time **Abraham** names a son. Ishmael was **Abraham's** choice for **the name of his son** of the flesh, but **Isaac** was **God's** choice for **the name of the son of promise**. **When his son Isaac was eight days old, Avraham circumcised him, as God commanded him (21:3-4)**. Isaac was greatly loved by **his parents**, who taught **him** in the ways of righteousness (**18:19**), and no doubt, rehearsed over and over again all the great promises that **God** had in store for **him**. In turn, **Isaac** was an obedient **son**, fulfilling **his parents'** hopes and dreams.

Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Yitz'chak was born to him (21:5). The age of the patriarchs are given at the important turning points in their lives. The bodies of **Abraham** and **Sarah** had been miraculously rejuvenated. **Sarah** not only gave birth at ninety, but **she** also nursed **Isaac**. **Abraham** not only fathered **Isaac**, but also six other sons of **his** wife Keturah after **Sarah** died (**25:2**).³³⁹

Sarah said to **him**, "**God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me,**" compared to the past when Hagar had **laughed at her**. **And she** also said: **Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?** In fact, **God** had said several times to **Abraham** that **his wife** would **bear a son**. **Sarah** was aware of that promise. What **she** wishes **Elohim** would have said is that **she** would mother **children**, and not just one son.³⁴⁰ **Yet, I have borne him a son in his old age (21:6-7)**.

The birth of Isaac foreshadowed the birth of Jesus Christ in nine ways. **God** did not suddenly spring **the virgin birth** on mankind. **He** had prepared us by several miraculous births before this, including **the birth** of John the Baptizer, **the birth** of even Samson, and here, **the birth** of **Isaac**. The foreshadowing between **the birth** of **Isaac** and **the birth** of **Christ** is truly remarkable.³⁴¹

First, the birth of Isaac and the birth of the Meshiach had both been

promised. When **God** called **Avraham** out of Ur of the Chaldean's twenty-five years earlier, **God** said to **him**, "I am going to give **a son** to you and **Sarah**." And after all that time, **ADONAI** has made good on **His** promise. **God** also said to the nation of Isra'el: **The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14; also see Matthew 1:23).** When **Yeshua** was finally **born** in Bethlehem, it was a fulfillment of prophecy (**Micah 5:2**). In fact, both **births** had been promised.

Secondly, with both births there was a long interval between the promise and the fulfillment. Twenty-five years passed from the time **God** promised that **Isaac** would be born until it came to pass (**12:2**). There were also many generations between the prophecies in the TaNaKh and **the birth** of **Yeshua**. For example, a thousand years before **Christ** was **born**, **God** had promised that **the Messiah** would be a descendant of King David, so both had long intervals of time between the promise of their coming and their births.

Thirdly, the announcement of the births seemed amazing to both Sarah and Mary. You will recall that two angels and **the Lord** visited **Abraham** on the way to Sodom, and they announced **the birth** of **Isaac**. It seemed so amazing that **Sarah laughed to herself (18:10-12)**. And **Miryam** was just as amazed. When the angel Gabriel announced **the virgin birth** to **Mary** she said: **How can this be, since I am a virgin (Luke 1:34)?**

Fourth, both Isaac and Jesus were named before their births. **Avraham** and **Sarah** were told **they** were going to have **a son** and they were going to **call him Isaac (17:19)**. And with **the birth** of **the Lord Jesus**, we find that **He** was also named beforehand. The angel said to Joseph: **You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21b).**

Fifth, both births occurred at God's appointed time. Earlier in this chapter we were told that **Yitz'chak** was born **at the very time God had promised him (21:2)**, and regarding **the birth** of **Jesus**, we note that Paul says: **But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son (Galatians 4:4a).**

Sixth, both births were miraculous. **The birth** of **Isaac** was a miraculous **birth** because **Avraham's body** was as good as dead and **Sarah's womb** was also dead (**Romans 4:19**), and certainly **the virgin birth** of **the LORD** was a miracle (**Luke 1:34-35**).

Seventh, both sons were a particular joy to their fathers. Abraham gave the name Isaac, or laughter, to the son Sarah bore him (21:3). Both Avraham and Sarah laughed when she heard they would have a son; she laughed because of the sheer joy of it all. When Yeshua was baptized, God the Father spoke out of heaven and said: **This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased (Matthew 3:16).** Both sons were a joy to their fathers.

Eighth, both sons were obedient to their fathers, even to the point of death. In the next chapter we are going to see that his father offered Yitz'chak as a sacrifice. Isaac was not a young boy of seven or eight years, but a full grown man in his early thirties, and he was obedient even to the point of death. That was true of Isaac and it was true of Jesus Christ. Isaac foreshadows the birth, life and death of Messiah.

Finally, the miraculous birth of Isaac is a picture of the resurrection of Christ. As Paul stated above, **Abraham's body was as good as dead and Sarah's womb was also dead (Romans 4:19).** The resurrection brings life out of death. Then Rabbi Sha'ul goes on to say that Yeshua was **delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Romans 4:25).**³⁴²

But soon after Yitz'chak was born, opposition was aroused.