

BIRTH NARRATIVES

Isaac

A Yahweh's covenant **Genesis 17.1** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence and be blameless. 2 I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." 3 Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: 4 "As for me, here is my covenant with you: You will become the father of many nations. 5 Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations. 6 I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. 7 I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. 8 And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing — all the land of Canaan — as a permanent possession, and I will be their God." 9 God also said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep my covenant. 10 This is my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you, which you are to keep: Every one of your males must be circumcised. [...]"

15 God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah will be her name. 16 I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her." 17 Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?" 18 So Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael were acceptable to you!" 19 But God said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm my covenant with him as a permanent covenant for his future offspring. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly. He will father twelve tribal leaders, and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But I will confirm my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year." 22 When he finished talking with him, God withdrew from Abraham.

B Sarah's unbelief **18.9** "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he answered. 10 The Lord said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. 11 Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 So she laughed to herself: "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?" 13 But the Lord asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Can I really have a baby when I'm old?' 14 Is anything impossible for the Lord? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son." 15 Sarah denied it. "I did not laugh," she said, because she was afraid. But he replied, "No, you did laugh." [...]"

C Isaac's birth! **21.1** The Lord came to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. 3 Abraham named his son who was born to him — the one Sarah bore to him — Isaac. 4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me." 7 She also said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him in his old age." [...]"

D Yahweh's demand **22.1** After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he answered. 2 "Take your son," he said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell

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you about.” 3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we’ll come back to you.” 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father.” And he replied, “Here I am, my son.” Isaac said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Then the two of them walked on together. 9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” He replied, “Here I am.” 12 Then he said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.” 13 Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14 And Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide, so today it is said, “It will be provided on the Lord’s mountain.”

15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn,” this is the Lord’s declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command.” 19 Abraham went back to his young men, and they got up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham settled in Beer-sheba.

E Abraham’s faith **Hebrews 11.17** By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received the promises and yet he was offering his one and only son, 18 the one to whom it had been said, Your offspring will be traced through Isaac. 19 He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking.

F Jesus’ fulfillment **1 John 4.7** Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is made complete in us.

Romans 5.8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.