Abstract

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are some of the most well-known names in the Bible due to the role God gave them in establishing a nation devoted to God. The context of Isaac’s story begins with Abraham’s own life. Although Abraham believed in God, he did not always demonstrate it through his actions and experienced doubt and impatience that led to deceitful interactions with those around him. Isaac repeated his father’s sins in his own life, sowing the seeds of doubt and deceit in his own son, Jacob. Jacob likewise committed the same sins his father and grandfather did. However, Abraham’s devotion to his wife’s happiness is clearly seen, and the traits of love and devotion were passed to his son Isaac when he got married, and on to Jacob, although he only genuinely loved his wife, Rachel. Yet even in the complicated sins committed by these men, their faith outshone their faults, and their names are remembered for their faithful deeds by Christians in the New Testament.

Isaac in the Bible

Genesis chapters 11-50 (KJV) detail the events surrounding the life of Isaac, one of the patriarchs of the Christian faith. Isaac was born to a man named Abraham and his wife Sarah after God promised to give them a child after a lifetime of being barren (Genesis 15:4). Genesis chapters 11-14 set the stage for Isaac’s birth, with his father and mother leaving their homeland to travel to a new land promised to them by God. God blesses Abraham along the way, even when Abraham is deceitful and disobedient to God, such as when he lies about his wife’s identity because he does not trust God to protect him as they pass through different kingdoms (Genesis 12:10-15; 20:1-2).

Although Abraham doubts God frequently, he also has moments of faith in which righteousness is attributed to him. When God tells him that he will have a child, he believes God (Genesis 15:6). However, Sarah becomes impatient and tries to fulfill God’s promise by telling Abraham to have a child with her slave girl (Genesis 16:1-2). This hints at Abraham’s impatience and possible doubt for God to fulfill the promise of having a son with his wife. Finally, in Genesis 17:19 (KJV), God tells Abraham again that he will have a son with Sarah and instructs them to name him Isaac. Even with this fresh reminder of the promise to come, Sarah still doubts she will have a child, and even goes so far as to lie about her doubt, and the theme of dishonesty and doubt continues (Genesis 18:12-15). Genesis 21:1-3 (KJV) tells of Isaac’s birth and circumcision, a sign of the covenant between God and his chosen family. Verses 8-21 of Genesis 21 tell of Abraham’s conflicting situation concerning his wife and her feelings about the child borne by her slave girl, and how God promised to bless both sons because of Abraham’s love for them.

Abraham proved his trust in God when he followed strange instructions to sacrifice the very son who was to become a nation, demonstrating his complete faith in God to keep his promise no matter what happened, and his faith was rewarded with Isaac’s life being spared (Genesis 22). Although Isaac’s parents started out with significant doubt and deceit, this turn of events likely influenced Isaac’s own faith in God as he learned from his father. In Genesis 24 (KJV), a wife is chosen for Isaac, who trusted his father’s servant to choose a woman worthy of marriage. This trust in his father’s directions demonstrates the growing faith that Isaac had. Isaac fell in love with Rebekah, the woman chosen for him, and demonstrated that he was hardworking and devoted to the woman he loved (Genesis 24). They are eventually blessed with two sons: Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25).

Sometime later, God tells Isaac to stay in the land in which he is living, and Isaac obeys, yet commits the same deceit his father did by lying about the identity of his wife (Genesis 26:7). This brings to light the fact that sins committed by the parents are often repeated by their children. Isaac became successful and remained amiable with the neighboring kingdoms (Genesis 26). As Isaac nears death, he wishes to bless his sons, but is tricked into giving his inheritance to the younger son, Jacob (Genesis 27). Again, the pattern of deceit continues in the family.

Just as Isaac’s wife was selected from a land other than the one in which they were living, Jacob finds a wife away from home (Genesis 29). While he is tricked into marrying the wrong woman first, Jacob loves Rachel, his second wife but first choice, and is devoted to her just as his father was devoted to his mother (Genesis 29:20). When Rachel remains barren, she tells Jacob to have a child with her slave girl, repeating the same mistake that Abraham and Sarah committed, and Jacob’s other wife Leah did the same (Genesis 30). This demonstrates Isaac’s sins being perpetuated in his son’s life. In chapter 35 (KJV), Rachel is able to have children, and Jacob receives a fresh reminder from God that his family line will become a nation just before Isaac dies.

**Conclusion**

Even though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were sinful men full of doubt, deceit, and impatience, they still showed great faith in God and were remembered as such in Luke 13:28, Romans 9:7, 10, and James 2:21 (KJV). God established this family as his special people, and regardless of the fear that he would not follow through at times, Isaac’s life demonstrates how he valued love and commitment, just as he knew that God would keep his promise to create a nation from his family (Hebrews 11:9, 18). Because of his great faith in God, Galatians 4:28 (KJV) celebrates the legacy of faith handed down through Isaac’s family.

Reference

King James Version, n.d. The holy Bible. *Zondervan.*