

11547

ISAAC, WE BRETHREN, AS ISAAC WAS, ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE

Speaker: Bro. J. Cowie

Study #2: They went both of them together

Reading: Genesis 22

Thanks bro. Glen, my dear brethren and sisters and our very dear young people.

The wise man said, 'Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old'; he added, 'the father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him'. Rarely in history has there ever been such joy as was experienced by Abraham and Sarah as the child of promise grew up and became a young man. And there came that time in the life of Abraham, when he was called upon to make the supreme sacrifice, b&s and young people, and I mean the supreme sacrifice, for if he could have had a choice, he would have rather died himself than to deliver up his only begotten son.

But he had no choice, it was required of him that he deliver up as a burnt offering, the son which Yahweh had given to him and Sarah, by the power of the spirit. And when we come to consider Genesis 22, we normally, of course, focus I guess, very much upon Abraham and his faith; and we shall do a bit of that this evening as well, but given that this study is about the life of Isaac, the real focus has to be on him, and we're going to see him tonight, I hope, perhaps in a different light. We're going to see him, young people especially, as an unique young person. An unique young man in very many ways, and yet not so unique that we can't match him at least in some degree.

You know, tucked away in the ten commandments, there's that 5th commandment which stands virtually in the middle, and says, 'Honour thy father and thy mother', and the apostle Paul, in Ephesians 6 and verses 2 and 3, picks up those words and he says, 'there was the first commandment with promise'; and, the promise, of course, was that they should live long upon the land. If there was respect in the home, if in every family in Israel there were children growing up who not only loved their parents but honoured them, and obeyed them (which is what honour means), then there would be in Israel, peace and quietness, and there would be perpetuity for that people; generation would follow generation, and there would be happiness in the land. The antithesis, of course, is seen in modern society. We see the breakdown, of course, of discipline in the home, and the failure and the abdication of parents in their duty of parenthood, we see split homes, single parents raising children, and the society is suffering, of course, the blight which comes from those things. Brethren and sisters and young people, that 5th commandment is the only positive commandment of the ten; it's the only one that

doesn't have in it a negative. In fact, in the other 9 you'll find 11 negatives in the 10 commandments, and 11 is the number of failure. It was the Law's way of saying that just merely keeping Law wasn't going to save anybody. But the 5th commandment is an outstanding extraordinary one. It sits there appended, as it were, to the first four, which speak of our responsibilities to God, and preceding the last 5, which speak of our responsibilities to others; and, I believe b&s and young people, that Yahweh was telling His nation, Israel, that their future depended very much on growing up and keeping that commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother'.

And I'll tell you something, I've been around a little while and I've observed a little bit, even though I don't class myself as being very old, (I may look it to some of you) but I've seen this, I've seen where children are raised in a home where there is respect for their parents, and for that matter, for all adults, where there is obedience in measure in the home, invariably those children grow up loving and respecting and obeying their God! Where there is a breakdown of that honour, where children are either not encouraged or fail to honour and obey their parents, sometimes, not always, but sometimes the outcome is the opposite. You see, we spoke the last time we were here about developing a personal relationship; you can say those words, but it might mean nothing. We need to talk a little bit more about what that means and how we achieve a personal relationship with our God. And much of what I've got to say this evening is on that matter.

I learnt to respect my God because I respected my parents! It doesn't mean that I was always obedient, young people, I might not have been rebellious but I wasn't always obedient; and there's not many people who can say they were, but I did respect my parents. I respected their stand in the truth and their love for it, and they were not perfect either! I don't know any parents who are, but you see, while I was going through my teenage years, my faith and my stand on issues, on the issues of life and death, was that of my parents. And when it came time for me to give up some of those things that I had while I was a schoolboy, teenager, football and cricket, etc., it was good enough for me that my father said, 'We will support you son at school, but when you leave school it's time for you to think about the serious responsibilities of life'. I might not have been ready for it, but I was ready to obey, and I'm very thankful that I did! The way my body feels now, one wonders how it would have felt if one went on playing football; we would have had more bad legs than we've already got in this place. You see, b&s and young people, there is something very important about the simple fundamental of respect and honour and love and obedience in the home. And would you not agree with me, that this world has been encouraging now for some time, the absolute opposite to that. Is that not true? that this world is teaching individuals from a very early age to have their own mind on everything; not to listen to anybody, leave alone their parents, but to make up their mind as to what they want to do and don't listen to mom and dad if their feelings are the opposite to yours! It's having a devastating effect upon society and, might we also say, it's having a major impact upon our community as well. We're going to see what God desires of us as young people, and as children when we come to look at the life of Isaac.

And yet we don't really see that much, it's remarkable! but I'll tell you something, this is what you won't find in the life of Isaac, even though the record is silent about it. You'll not find the sort of thing that's been coming to my ears in recent times. We get around a little bit, and you go to other places and you get told all sorts of stories, and here's just one! I was told (not that long ago) of a case of a young Christadelphian, who was an active member, (we're not talking here about young people who have turned their back on the truth and their parents and have gone another way, we're talking about active young people), I was told of a young person, who has an arrangement with his parents, almost like a contract with his parents, that his room is his domain! and in that room he does as he pleases and the parents do not go through the door. That's his little kingdom, and in that little kingdom he can do as he likes, as it were, have his TV, liquor in the cupboard, and a rack of magazines, of dubious character perhaps, I don't know all the details, but I do know that the young man who told me was quite disturbed, very disturbed in fact. Now I found that remarkable, I guess I've only got into the early years of bringing up teenagers, maybe our problems are not yet over, but I would have great difficulty in coming to an agreement with my children, that they could do what they liked in my house, and lock the door on us! I'd have great difficulty with that. Okay, it may be that the young fellow said, 'Well, look, I won't live here unless I get that agreement! (I don't know all the details) I'll go and live out somewhere else, I'll be independent of you'. I don't know, but what I do know is this, that that can only be disastrous in the end, it's the absolute opposite to what we are going to see in the case of Abraham and Isaac, who went both of them together!

And yet, in that family there were two different types of sons; there was Ishmael who, by the time we get to chapter 21 and the birth of Isaac, was 19 years of age. And there was this young child, Isaac, who was to grow up in the presence of Ishmael for 5 years, until the time of separation came! And although it was very difficult for Abraham to put Ishmael out of his house, he was instructed so to do by the Spirit, as we're going to see in a moment. And from that point on, of course, Abraham's full concentration was upon the development of Isaac, his son!

Question! Just answer these questions in your own mind. What do you know about Isaac in the record of scripture?

Do you know about the promise of Genesis 17? 'Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, his name will be called Isaac because, of course, that word means 'he laughs' or 'laughter', and the kind of laughter, of course, was the laughter of conviction, which Abraham manifested in Genesis 17.

Sarah wasn't able to laugh like that just yet, but the record of Genesis 21 tells that she did come to laugh like that! Okay, Genesis 21 is the record of his birth, what else do we know about Isaac?

Well, verse 8 of chapter 21 is about his weaning; when do you meet him next? Genesis 22, on Mount Moriah as a sacrifice.

When does he next appear in the record, b&s and young people? Well, it's not until the end of chapter 24 that we meet him again, when he comes out of the field to take a bride!

Now you think about that for a while! That's the only records we've got! The promise of his birth, of course, the record of his birth, the record of his public manifestation, you might say, he comes out of the tent of his mother and he's weaned, and is now able to operate as a growing child, no longer in the bosom of his mother, his public manifestation! Then the next time we see him, we see him carrying a tree on his back, as it were, on the way to sacrifice; and the next time we see him, he arrives to take a bride! Now isn't that marvelous? The scripture has concealed the bits in between, it's just told us about certain features of Isaac's life and it's powerfully obvious, isn't it? that he is being set forth as a type of the Son of God, himself.

Here is, the delegated father! 'I have made thee a father of many nations', said Yahweh to Abraham, and as Paul said in Romans chapter 4, 'Abraham stood in the presence of God, that he might be delegated in that work, to be the father of a multitude'. And from him came a Spirit born son, and through that son would be developed a vast multitude of people, from Jew and Gentile. And so Isaac is deliberately set forth in the record as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they're the only occasions that we see him, birth, public manifestation, the time of sacrifice, and the time of his return to take to himself that multitude who constitute his bride! And we'll talk a lot more, of course, about that in our next study, tomorrow evening, God willing. So what we have before us is a remarkable allegory, or type, of the work of our Father; but it's much more than that! it's also a remarkable exhortation to all of us, and especially to our young people!

In Genesis 21 verse 1, the record tells us that Yahweh visited Sarah as He had said, and Yahweh did unto Sarah as He had spoken, (or as the Interlinear bible puts it, for the word 'debar' it translates it as 'He had promised', for here was the child of promise), For Sarah conceived'. Now she conceived after the incident in the house of Abimelech, where she had been for some time, in very difficult circumstances, her husband having let her down again; she's protected only by divine intervention, through the answer that God gave to her prayers and to the prayers of Abraham, who was helpless in this situation. It came after the shame that Abraham felt in the presence of Abimelech, who rebuked him, and then rebuked Sarah; 'and Abraham prayed for Abimelech and his household and Yahweh opened the wombs of the wives of Abimelech'; and Abraham saw, b&s and young people, that nothing was too hard for Yahweh. And as Sarah walked out of the palace of Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, he could see in her face (Can you imagine that scene? Here's a man who had stood helplessly outside the palace of the king, he told the half-truth, which was really an untruth, the half-truth about Sarah being his sister, which of course, she was his half sister, he made no mention about her being his wife! And he stood there helpless as she went into Abimelech's house; all he could do was prostrate himself before his God; all she could do was prostrate herself before her God, but in the aftermath of that, when God released them), can you imagine the scene, when she walked out of the palace of Abimelech, into the arms of her husband, there must have been something there that indicated to Abraham,

that a change had overtaken Sarah at last, and a process that had gone on now for over 2 1/2 months, had culminated after this series of events of having to move house, or move their position from where they were to the land of the Philistines, and having gone through all the trials and tribulations, God had achieved what Sarah thought He couldn't achieve! He visited her and she conceived and bare Abraham a son, says verse 2, in his old age, at the set time exactly one year after the events of Genesis 17. Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac (laughter, he laughs). Abraham had laughed in belief, now they're both laughing together, with the same absolute conviction that the hand of God had worked mightily in their lives.

You know, there are times in life like that, aren't there? doesn't happen every day, but there are times in life, b&s and young people, when we do see the hand of God at work in our life or in the life of others. And there's no greater joy than that! is there? there's no greater joy than to see that God is actually there at work, if not in your life, in the life of others! There's nothing like that, to build confidence, that if He can do it once, He can do it twice; and when you've seen the hand of God at work in your life, b&s and young people, though there may be a long period of time in between those indications that God is at work (because we can't always see His hand), let's never, ever give up and think that anything is too hard for Him, because if we've got the conviction that Sarah now had, and that Abraham had from the very beginning, this sort of thing is going to happen. The day of the birth will come! For us, of course, the greatest day of birth will be that time when the Lord is back in the earth, and there will be a Spirit birth, and our nature will be changed, and our hopes and desires will be fulfilled, and we shall stand there with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful, and that's what Sarah had in mind. In fact, 'Abraham was 100 years old and he circumcised Isaac, in verse 4, at eight days old as God had commanded him, and Sarah said, verse 6, God hath made me to laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me'.

I want you to notice that phrase 'with me'. Now we don't have time tonight here to take you to Isaiah chapter 54 verse 1, but in Isaiah 54 verse 1, we have a passage that the apostle Paul quotes in Galatians chapter 4; and Galatians 4 is that place where he speaks about the allegory of two women, Sarah and Hagar and their sons, Isaac and Ishmael. We might just say a bit more about that in a moment, but in Isaiah 54 and verse 1 we have a reference to the barren bringing forth children, and the desolate being a mother of many children, so that all they that see her will rejoice with her'. That language is taken from this passage in Genesis 21 verse 6, 'All that hear will laugh with me'. Why will they laugh with Sarah? because she then says in verse 7, 'who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?' I want you to notice a couple of things about that, she calls herself Sarah, so you see, she has now adopted what Abraham adopted immediately back in chapter 17. He immediately adopted the new name of his wife. 'Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah should have given him children?' Well, Abraham believed it! she didn't initially, and what she's now saying, b&s, is that there would be others who would share that conviction, that one day the children of Zion will emerge, and there will be a bringing forth of what God has achieved as a Father, through a Son, and there would be a vast multitude of

people who would all have the faith of Abraham.

You notice she says in verse 7, 'should have given children suck', she doesn't say a child, she says 'children' plural, so Sarah sees in the birth of this son, (and she expected no more children), she saw in the birth of one son the medium through which Yahweh would develop an expansive family, who would ultimately be called 'the children of Zion'. We could go, of course, into many passages of scripture, especially the book of Isaiah, and expand upon that (we don't have time just now).

We come to verse 8, and here we have a fascinating phrase, 'and the child grew'. You know, that's the first occurrence of that form of words in the scripture; do you know where the last occurrence is of that form of words 'And the child grew'? The last occurrence is in Luke 2 and verse 40, when it says of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'that the child grew in favour with God and man'. So your first occurrence is concerning Isaac the son, born by the power of the Spirit, your last occurrence in Luke 2:40, of our Lord Jesus Christ. I don't think there's any coincidence in that!

And 'he was weaned', as it says in verse 8, 'and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned', it was a time for his manifestation; and, in verse 9 we read, 'That Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian which she had born unto Abraham, mocking'. Now this word 'mocking' here is, in fact, cognate with the word 'Isaac'; it means 'to laugh outright in merriment or sometimes in scorn', to 'sport with someone' (Strong's - 6711 'tsachaq') and, so here we have Ishmael the son of Hagar mocking Isaac.

Now we can get some idea of the respective ages of these two by just looking at some of the information that we have in connection with the persecution of God's people that was prophesied in Genesis chapter 15. You might recall the words when God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 15, He said, 'your seed shall be in a strange land and they will be persecuted for 400 years'. Well, bearing in mind that Israel was in Egypt for about 215 years or thereabout, the 400 years had to start a lot sooner than Jacob's removal into Egypt. And we know, of course, that it started here with the mocking of Isaac by Ishmael, and by doing a little bit of arithmetic, and I guess most of us are not interested in arithmetic and neither am I, we can at least arrive at these details. We know from what Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 3, that from the time that Abraham crossed the river Euphrates to the time when the Law was given through Moses was 430 years and, of course, Abraham was 75 years of age when he crossed the Euphrates, and he was 100, as we're told in verse 5, when Isaac was born. If the persecution began 400 years before Israel came out of Egypt which was the time when the Law was given, it tells us by simple arithmetic, that at the time of verse 9 of chapter 21, Isaac was 5 years old. He was weaned at age 5, and it tells us that Ishmael was 19 years old.

Now, He called Ishmael 'a lad'; you'll notice when you come down a bit further in the chapter to verse 12, when Abraham is told to cast him out with his mother, he's told, 'let this not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad', and down through this chapter he's called 'the lad' or 'the child'; we get down to verse 14, it says, 'he gave Hagar a bottle of

water, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away'; and when you come down to verse 16 it says, 'that Hagar as she watched Ishmael expiring through thirst, she said, let me not see the death of the child', now in fact that word 'child' there is 'yeled' (Strong's - 3206) and 'yeled' to the Hebrew spoke of a 'lad' of any offspring, in fact, but of a lad in particular. So here he is, a 19 year old lad, and he's a real lad! He's the kind of lad that's got a dirty mind, and when he talks, especially when he's talking in scorn of his brother, he imputes to his brother an impure beginning. The mocking that he's going on with here is about origins, and what Ishmael is suggesting is that Isaac has come from adultery! You know, as you proceed down this record you've got the roots here of John chapter 8, which we might get a chance to look at briefly. For what we're looking at really, is an allegory! Ishmael, in the scheme of things is a type of natural Israel, and as God sets out in the record certain features He wants us to see a higher second level to this story. It's what you might call the allegorical level, the level of type. So while there are some very personal lessons at the base level, there's this allegorical level. Now, I guess for some of the younger people this might be something to grapple with, for those of us who are older it's very straight forward, we are very familiar with the allegory of Hagar and Sarah! Well, let's just see if we can grasp, at least, the fundamentals of this.

Ishmael was a son of Abraham, born by flesh from an Egyptian, who was circumcised at age 13. He was circumcised in flesh but not in heart. He was not a respecter or an honourer of his father. He was someone who followed the dictates of his Egyptian mother, and was now obeying her, in casting scorn upon Isaac. He was a young man who, although he had a heritage, was not in love with it, and he is chosen by Yahweh as a type of natural Israel who were circumcised in flesh but not in heart. And that's why when you read of Ishmael, the promises concerning him are not unlike those given to Abraham; in chapter 17 (which we won't turn to) verse 20, God said to Abraham, 'I will make of Ishmael a great nation; 12 princes shall be beget'. So, there would be 12 families as it were, from Ishmael, just like Israel.

You know, when you go to the record of Galatians chapter 4 (which we won't do; what I will do is just put a transparency up for you) this is what you see! You've got the allegory of two covenants. Hagar on the one side who represents the Mosaic system, says the apostle Paul (there's the Law of Moses given at Mount Sinai); and, you've got Sarah on the other hand, who represents the new covenant or the Abrahamic covenant. She is those things that pertain to Mount Zion, which is above, Jerusalem, the mother of us all which is free; whereas Hagar and her children are in bondage, they're slaves. So the apostle sets them forth this way and he speaks of Ishmael as 'born after the flesh' of the bondwoman, and Isaac as 'born after the spirit' of the free woman. One is in bondage and the other is free.

You see, that's why in John chapter 8 the Lord Jesus Christ said this, He said, 'if you know the truth, the truth will make you free', remember those words? John chapter 8 and verse 32, He precedes that phrase with verse 31, 'Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him (He's not talking to people who didn't believe on Him; He's talking to people with a heritage). Now this chapter is all about origins, just take a quick

look at verse 14, 'Jesus answered and said unto them, though I bear record of Myself, My record is true because I know whence I came and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I came and whither I go!' Have a look at verse 23, 'He said unto them, ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world and I am not of this world.' So it was about origins, His origin was from above and He was free, their origin was from beneath and they were locked up in their sins, as He says in verse 21, 'you will die in your sins', they were in bondage! but didn't realize it.

So, that's why He says in verse 32, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'. Have you ever wondered why He uses such language? Well, it becomes obvious as we read on, because the debate then enters into the question of bondage, verse 33, 'They answered Him, we be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man, how sayest Thou that ye shall be made free?' These are the Jews that believed on Him! Jesus answered them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin', and that's your state! And so it goes on down this chapter until we get down to the point where He says in verse 40, 'but now you seek to kill Me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham, and you claim to be his children. Ye do the deeds of your father! Then they said to Him, we be not born of fornication'. You see, there was a question mark in their minds about His origin: Mary, pregnant, unmarried; 'we be not born of fornication'. The 8th chapter of John has its basis in Genesis 21, and the mocking by Ishmael was all about the origins of Isaac, and what he was saying was, 'Ah, ha, I know where you're from! you're actually a son of Abimelech! That's where you were conceived, in the house of Abimelech!'

What happens in this sort of a situation, b&s and young people? Well, look what happens in Genesis 21 verse 10. Sarah saw this mocking and she said to Abraham in verse 10, 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac'. And the apostle Paul picks up those words in Galatians chapter 4, (you'll see from your margin Galatians 4 verse 30), but there's a subtle difference. When the apostle picks up the words, he doesn't say that Sarah said these words, it says, 'see what the scripture said', see what the scripture said! So, Sarah's words, b&s, were the words of God! They were the words of the Spirit! She was absolutely right in this matter, and although Abraham had very strong feelings towards Ishmael, the day had come for him to divide between flesh and spirit in his house. He could no longer keep a young man in his house, who had his own room as it were, locked away where he could do what he liked, and when he came out, cast scorn upon the other children in the house because they were obedient to their parents. He could no long tolerate that! but the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son! And God stepped in and said, 'let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad' (there just happens to be 6 occurrences of that word 'lad' speaking of Ishmael in this chapter! he was a man of the flesh); 'and because of thy bondwoman, in all that Sarah has said unto thee, hearken unto her voice, for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman I will make a nation, because he is thy seed'. And so, of course, we have the allegory that God would deal with natural Israel even though, of course, the time would come when he would have to put them out of His



house as well (which He did, of course).

You can see we've got a wonderful allegory developing, and it goes on like that, because what happens between verses 12 and 21 is that Ishmael and Hagar are put out into the wilderness, and you'll notice it says at the end of verse 14, that it was the wilderness of Beer-sheba; but that wilderness hadn't been named Beer-sheba just yet! It's not named until a little further on in the chapter, in verse 31, 'wherefore, he called that place, Beer-sheba', and that comes in the wake of Abraham making a covenant with Abimelech, the king of the Philistines. And all of this, b&s and young people, is preceding that chapter in our bibles which deals with the offering up of the Son of God, that God's family might be developed both from Jew and Gentile. It's absolutely remarkable. That's why, you see, we're only told certain things about Isaac; we've got his birth, his public manifestation, we've got his sacrifice and his re-emergence to take a bride. But, I know some have said to me, 'Well, I don't know much about Isaac!' Well, there are some chapters that deal quite intimately with his life as we shall see, chapter 26 is not the least of those! But there isn't much revealed about him, is there? In fact, I guess if we were all honest with ourselves and asked, Well, what do you really think about this character, Isaac? We might, some of us anyway, we might say, 'Well, he seems to me to be a sort of a non-person in a sense, it's almost as though he stands in the background in the shadows, and what we do see of him is not terribly encouraging, in part! We need to forget that, we're going to see in this man, a greatness, a simple greatness which every single one of us would do well to emulate, b&s and young people, everyone of us. Do you know what his greatest characteristic was? absolute submission to the will of his father! Total absolute submission to his father! Hands up the young people that can claim that?

Not many of us would claim that in our early years as children, would we? and that's the training ground for adulthood! We talk about personal relationships, you think about this: the apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 2, 'that we should desire the sincere milk of the Word that we might grow thereby', so, when we're baptized we're babies, as it were babies in the arms of a nourishing Father. What do we know about Him then really? You know, honestly, what do we know about God when we're babies in His arms? We're dependent upon Him to be sure, like a baby depends upon its mother's milk; but what kind of a relationship does a baby have with its mother? The mother's got a relationship with the baby, but what about the baby with the mother? All the baby does is scream and squawk until its fed and has to be cleaned up frequently. But it doesn't know much about the relationship, does it? It's a bit like that in the early years, we get baptized pretty young, most of us, and that's a good thing because that tells us something, there's a desire to surrender, a desire to submit, and that's what baptism's about, that's why it's a public manifestation of the repudiation of flesh. You put it in water and you bury it! and you come out dripping wet, and all eyes are upon you, because you're telling the world that you want to put the flesh to death. It's a good start, but how much do we know about our relationship with our Father at that stage of our life? Well, Genesis 22 is a story about an unsurpassed relationship except for one, and that's the one it prefigured; the relationship between Yahweh and His own Son!

So what happened between birth and the record of Genesis 22? Now we don't know how old Isaac was when he was taken to Moriah to be offered. Josephus said he was 25. He could have been anything up to 37 in fact, but most likely he was somewhere in his early 30's. I prefer to think that, b&s and young people, for obvious reasons, because he was there as a type to our Lord Jesus Christ; but whatever he was, he was mature enough to know what he was doing, he was mature enough to ask intelligent questions, and to accept absolutely the answers that were given, in silence! So what happened between birth, as he was dandled upon the knees of his mother, to use the words of Isaiah 66, and as she cuddled this child and looked at him, and gave him to Abraham at 8 days of age, to be circumcised and Abraham used the knife himself upon that boy? Can you imagine how he would have held on to him? What happened between that, and the events of Genesis 22? Well, I'll tell you what happened, there was a lot of nurturing, a lot of attention given, a lot of discipline applied, daily care, wanting to know where he was at all times, and you get a little picture as you read through the record, of the love that developed between Isaac and his mother (we'll see that tomorrow night). There was a love between those two that was unique. All mothers love their children, and there is that sort of mysterious thing between mother and child that a father can't seem to match, but this one was unique! You can just imagine, she would never have let that child out of her sight; and you can see the way she protected him in verses 9 and 10, she says to Abraham, 'Look, that fellow has got to go! because if he doesn't go, he's going to endanger this boy and the principles which would be enshrined in his birth. Flesh and spirit cannot live together in this house, Abraham; you've simply got to get rid of those who stand for flesh'. And God said, she's right!

It would have been tough for Abraham, the day had come! and as they then devoted and spent the rest of their time up until the events of Genesis 22, raising up this boy, the relationship between Isaac and his mother, and Isaac and his father, grew on a daily basis. And you can just imagine, can't you? the time that was spent by Abraham talking with his son and just being with him, that he could develop that close relationship with him! Relationships don't work without communication, do they? Anyone have a marriage that prospers when there's no communication between husband and wife? I wouldn't have thought that I was the best talker off the platform when it comes to personal relationships; I enjoy my own company perhaps too much. There are people like that, you know, but you've got to learn to communicate in marriage, don't you? it doesn't work unless you communicate. There have been some absolutely terrible situations where two people won't speak to each other for months! or years! what kind of a relationship is that? You want a personal relationship with God, then you've got to allow Him to talk to you, and you must talk to Him! And what that means in simple terms, young people, is this, you've simply got to make this book the most important thing in your life; you've got to learn to read it and imbibe it every day regularly, preferably throughout the day! (I go to work too. You know, I don't find it an impossibility to open my bible in the middle of the day. I get a 1/2 hour for lunch, that's enough, and I am desperate by that time to open the Word of God, because I need it, just as much as the sandwiches or biscuits or whatever it is that you might be stuffing into your mouth at lunchtime to keep the body going.) The mental food is necessary and when you learn to lean upon that book (which is not leaning on a book with black

and white written on the pages) we're talking about leaning upon divine thoughts; assimilating divine thoughts into our own mind; when you learn to lean upon that and you become totally dependent upon it, you are beginning to develop a relationship. And, of course, it is impossible, if you do that, not to communicate back to the Father, and have that sensitivity grow, of His presence at all times. Sadly, of course, being what we are, we forget the presence of God all too often, but it is possible to grow and develop to a point, b&s and young people, where God is there, and He's real! And we speak to Him because He's real, and when we open our mouth in prayer, we're not just talking to the air, as though, well, we've got to pray. We must pray actually knowing that He's there, and He's listening; and we can conceive some kind of picture of Him and His Son sitting gloriously in the heavens, with the angels surrounding them, and make Him real! And when it happens on a daily basis and grows and increases, and there is an honesty in the heart that wants it to be so (and we're not trying to run away and hide ourselves from God so that we can escape off and do the things that the world wants to do, that our flesh wants to do.), then you're beginning to develop a personal relationship with God that's meaningful in your life. As I said in our first study, that sort of relationship is lacking in some, it is in need of repair in others, it needs to be encouraged in many! And for those who haven't begun, who are maybe too young, just kicking off in life, with the whole world before them so to speak, they haven't yet learned that it's got nothing to offer them; they think perhaps that the horizons are grand, they haven't yet learnt the lessons that the older ones have learnt, that this world will offer you bitterness and emptiness. All its ambitions, all it can offer you, young people, is worth nothing! and all its pleasures will end up being gravel in your mouth. You may not have learnt that yet, you may not have started in this process, you need encouraging but it can be done! It was done in the case of Abraham and Isaac, there was a marvellous personal relationship between these two!

So the record of Genesis 21 goes on to speak of Abraham's covenant with the Gentiles. Now, again, it would have been nice to talk about that; it would also have been nice to talk about Beer-sheba at some length, the well of the seven. We just need to mention it however, because it comes into our story later on in our study tonight. Here was Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, with his chief captain Phicol, making a covenant with Abraham. And there were 7 ewe lambs offered to cement that covenant; and the record of verse 31 says, 'Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba (the well of the seven) because they sware both of them'. It just so happens that the Hebrew words 'shaba' (Strong's - 7650) which means 'to swear' or 'to seven oneself' (a covenant in those days was sworn by saying something seven times; if you said it seven times it was a covenant). That word 'shaba' means that; and the word 'sheba' (Strong's - 7651) which is used in verse 31 also has that same idea. Those two words 'shaba' and 'sheba' just happen to occur 7 times between verse 22 and 32. So there's a definite structure there, and Beer-sheba is the place where this covenant, (notice what I'm saying), this covenant with the Gentiles is made upon the basis of faith in Abraham's God. And the very next thing we find is that God is instructing Abraham as a father, to take his only beloved son, to the very place where He, Yahweh Himself, intended to offer up His only begotten Son, that both Jew and Gentile might become a multitude of nations. That through a father working through a son, there might be a Jacob multitude.

It's an absolutely marvellous story, and we come to Genesis 22!

'It came to pass (verse 1), after these things, that God did tempt (or test, as the word 'nacah' means, Strong's - 5254, to try or to prove) Abraham'. He wasn't tempting him in the sense that we would use that word; He was giving him the final test, and, of course, this is the seventh promise in this chapter, the seventh promise that Yahweh made, and it comes in the wake of him offering 7 ewe lambs. And there are at least two occasions in there where Abraham takes 7 steps, and Yahweh then steps in Himself, and 'sevens' Himself, and makes an absolutely unconditional promise to Abraham. No longer does it have any conditions attached, 'in blessing I will bless thee' (because he had given his only son). So again we've got those two levels, we've got the lower personal level of the relationship between father and son, from which we'll learn lessons, and we've got the higher, allegorical level, where we see Yahweh working through His Son.

And we read of Abraham's response in verse 1, when God says, 'Abraham', he replies, 'Behold, here I am!' Take now thy son (thy 'ben' thy family builder), thine only (cross out the word 'son' in italics, it's not there) thine only one, Isaac, whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell you of'. There are some important words, b&s and young people, in Genesis 22. Let's have a look at them:

1). We've met the first one in verse 2, where it says 'take now thy son thine only'. That word 'only' is the Hebrew word 'yachiyd', it means 'united' or 'sole' or 'singular' (Strong's - 3173). It occurs in verse 2, verse 12 and verse 16 of this chapter. Now, bearing in mind that 'yachiyd' only occurs 12 times in the Old Testament, here are the first three occurrences of those twelve. So, it's going to be a very significant word and we'll see that as we proceed. As I said, it might be a good idea perhaps, if we were to highlight the use of these words, verse 2, verse 12 and verse 16, and we'll come to them in due time. This word is used of an only and, therefore, beloved child; Jephthah's daughter was described by that word, and there are several references there that we've provided, which illustrate that point. It is used of life, in Psalm 22 and verse 20 and very significantly, of the solitary in Psalm 25 and Psalm 68, but it's only there in the Old Testament 12 times. And it's predominantly there, b&s, to speak of the only One of the Father! 'Take thine only son'.

Now a cognate word is also used in Genesis 22, it's the word 'yachad'. It means 'unitedly' or 'as one' (Strong's - 3162), it comes from the same root as 'yachiyd'. It also has three occurrences in Genesis 22. In verse 6 you'll see it there towards the end of the verse, 'they went both of them together'. Now in the Hebrew there is just one word, it's rendered in the English by the two words 'went' and 'together', went together, that's the way the translators have rendered this word 'yachad'. It's also there in verse 8 towards the end, 'so they went both of them together' or, as it could be literally rendered, 'the two of them as a unit'. The two of them as a unit, it's very important that we establish this before we proceed into this chapter.

There is one little note here though, you'll see on the transparency, (note that Strong's

says that the word 'only' in verse 12, is 'yachad', that in fact is incorrect, it is 'yachiyd' and, in fact, it is one of only two places in 30 years of using Strong's concordance that I've found him to make a mistake; he's pretty good, but that is a mistake). So there are 3 occurrences of the word 'yachiyd' and 3 occurrences of the word 'yachad', the last of those being in verse 19, 'they rose up and went together', there's our two English words, side by side this time.

2). The other important word in Genesis 22, is the word 'raah', it simply means 'to see' (Strong's - 7200), it occurs in verse 4, 8, 13 and 14. Importantly it is actually part of the name Moriah, do you see that in verse 2? 'get thee into the land of Moriah. Now Moriah consists of two words, it's a compound word, it's 'raah' and 'Yahweh', in that order! So it means 'seen of Yahweh' You take your only one, Isaac, (as if he needed to be told), 'whom thou lovest'. Why does a father love a son? Do you think Abraham would had loved his son just because he was born of the power of the Spirit? Why does a father love a thirty year old son? Isn't it telling us something? that Abraham had a relationship with his boy that was very, very special? There was a closeness there, b&s and young people, that couldn't have existed between Abraham and Ishmael, and Yahweh knew that, and because Abraham was a father in God's stead, a delegated father of the divine family, the time had come for him, to make the ultimate sacrifice. I WANT YOUR SON WHOM YOU LOVE! and get into the land where you will be seen of Yah!, Moriah! I want to see you Abraham, doing what I'm going to do in 2,000 years time, 'and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell you of'. Is there any doubt in our minds that that's Golgotha? It has to be Golgotha! you see, b&s, this is a wonderful type, a marvellous type!

Now this word 'raah' actually also occurs in verse 14, as part of the name 'Jehovah-jireh'; now to be sure, when you look at Moriah and Jehovah-jireh (Strong's - 3070), it is very difficult to see the similarity in the English translation. But when you look the word up, what you'll find is this, that Jehovah-jireh is, in fact, the same Hebrew words that form Moriah, just around the other way, that's all! On this occasion it's Yahweh-raah and we're told what it means, at the end of verse 14 it says, 'as it is said to this day, In the mount of Yahweh it shall be seen', now in fact, that should be rendered as the RV, RSV margin, and others render it, on the Mount of Yahweh, HE will be seen. Who will be seen? Well, of course, it's obvious, isn't it? YAHWEH WILL BE SEEN. So we've got this story culminating in God making a promise in verses 15 onwards, that because Abraham had not withheld his only one, with whom he was absolutely united, God would not withhold His Son from Abraham and his seed; and, the time would come, when Yahweh would be seen upon that mountain, the hill of Golgotha, offering up His only beloved Son.

I guess most of us in this hall have often contemplated the grandeur and the beauty of this scene. I wonder whether or not we've really tried to put ourselves in the place of Abraham or Isaac? Have we? Well, let's try and do that tonight, because what we've got here is a marvellous type. I'll put that transparency there, I'm not going to go through it in detail, it's there for one simple reason, that if you're able to use your ears to listen to what I'm saying, and perhaps your eyes to look at the screen, and still be able to make

sense of all that, which is very difficult, you will be able to at least see, that as you run down those columns, we've got the column there of Abraham and Yahweh, and we've got the column of Isaac and Christ; If you run your eye down there, what, of course, most of us know, becomes powerfully obvious, that it matches exactly. That, what Abraham does with Isaac, is what Yahweh will do with His Son, even down to the detail of 3 days, in verse 4. So as we go through this remarkable story, let's just see the personal level of Abraham working with his son, and what that means for us; and there's the much higher level, of Yahweh working through His Son, which of course, Abraham and Isaac prefigured.

So we come down to verse 3. Ever thought about this? 'And Abraham rose up early in the morning', we're told in chapter 19 verse 27, and in chapter 21 verse 14, that Abraham was wont to rise up early, when God was asking him to do something; in fact, b&s and young people, he was always a man who responded immediately to what God required of him. And yet, he'd just been asked to take his only beloved son, his only one, with whom he was absolutely united, he's asked to take him and to offer him up for a burnt offering upon some mountain to the north. And he's up early! and the record of verse 3 has 7 stages all preceded by the conjunction 'and'; 'and Abraham rose up early in the morning; and saddled his ass (the symbol of Israel) and took two of his young men with him (who I believe, are there to represent Jew & Gentile) and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God told him'. Seven steps, and this is going to be the seventh promise, this is going to be the time when Yahweh 'sevens' Himself, and swears by Himself, an unconditional promise to Abraham.

'And on the third day, verse 4, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw (raah is the word), he saw the place afar off'. 'Abraham saw My day, and was glad', John 8:56. Interesting, isn't it? John 8, remember that? we were in John 8 before, 'he saw My day and he rejoiced to see My day and was glad'; he jumped for joy! There was a rejoicing in Abraham, b&s and young people; now I can imagine that maybe at times, some fathers might rejoice at the prospect of perhaps (well, it may be too tough) well, there are times when you'd gladly crown someone! I asked a brother once, 'What we were going to do with a bit of a problem we had?' and he just went, 'boom, boom!' Well, we can't do that, but sometimes that's the way you feel. He's up early, rejoicing in the prospect of what he has to do; is that possible? And as you read this story, b&s, there's no reticence in Abraham, he's not sort of staggering up the hill, he doesn't say to the young men, 'Well, I don't really want to go!'; there's none of that!

Verse 5, 'Abraham said to his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you'. That's why he's rejoicing because he knows that if he has to offer up Isaac, and he is going to offer him up, God will raise him from the dead. And in Hebrews chapter 11, of course, Paul tells us that; he said, 'Abraham received Isaac in a figure', he was raised from the dead as far as he was concerned; Isaac was dead for three days, from the moment that God said, you take Isaac and offer him up, he was dead! not literally, but he was dead, because Abraham was determined to offer him up. And he received him in a figure, and there are 7 more

steps here in verses 5 and 6. I and the lad will go yonder and worship (strange kind of worship, isn't it? but it tells us something about Isaac and about Abraham; they knew how to worship together). Take thy son whom thou lovest! (Brethren, how do you feel, the older ones amongst us, how do you feel when you look at your children, offering up genuine prayer maybe for a meal or whatever it is, but you see them, conscious of their God, offering up genuine prayer and thanks, without having to be prodded? Perhaps they've followed the example of their parents, but I don't know any greater delight (the one thing that Margaret and I thrill in, in our children, is those times, and I guess they're not frequent but they're frequent enough to give joy, when the children of their own volition will say something that is sensible and right about the things of the truth, and about their own conviction in it and in their God). It's like the apostle John says, 'I've got no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth', if there's one thing we all want, b&s, those of us who are parents, is for our children to take hold of the truth with both hands and to love it for what it is, and to live it! There's no greater joy than that!) and Abraham and Isaac were used to worshipping together. 'I and the lad will go yonder and worship', they'd done it before, 'and will come again to you', absolute confidence in the resurrection from the dead!

'And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son' (he's carrying his own cross); 'and he took the fire in his hand' (the father controls the sacrifice) 'and the knife; and they went both of them together (they went unitedly as one). 'And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said, (and here's the first occurrence of this form of words in our bibles; it's reserved for Genesis 22, you'd have thought you would have heard these words before, wouldn't you? but it's the first time you hear them! they're from the mouth of this young man, this steady young man, who knows where he's going, who loves his God and his father, and probably loved his God because he loved his father!) And he says, 'My father' (first time in your bible) Resonant words aren't they? my father, and he said, here am I, my son. And he said, 'You've got the fire, I've got the wood, where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' Fair enough question, isn't it? 'And Abraham said, My son, God will see for Himself, THE lamb'. Now I've given you the way it should be rendered. The word 'provide' is the Hebrew word 'raah' the word that is part of the name 'Moriah', and part of the name 'Jehovah-jireh'; it's the same word used in verse 13, 'Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked' ('raah' - he saw). Now obviously, that word by extension can go on to mean, 'to provide', that is, if I see a need in you, I can (hopefully) provide, so it does have that idea in extension, but b&s, I prefer to translate it, as the other occurrences of the word have been translated in this chapter. GOD WILL SEE FOR HIMSELF THE LAMB (the article is there).

And do you know what? that was good enough for Isaac. Now listen, young people, you put yourself in Isaac's shoes; all of you have got dads, haven't you? (none of us would be here without dads) your dad is taking you up to the top of a hill and the implements of sacrifice are very evident; you'd be a dumbo not to know what was going to happen, especially when you'd asked him, 'hey, dad, where's the sacrifice?' and your dad says, 'don't you worry about that, boy, God will see for Himself the lamb'. Ah! Isaac must have known that he was the sacrifice, what would you do, lads? come on, what would you do? You're in your mid 20's or early 30's maybe, you're unmarried, your life is before

you, you're a very young man by today's standards (Isaac lived to 180, so, as a 30 year old man he's like a teenager of today, you know, they can bound over all sorts of high fences and they can do all kinds of things; Abraham is probably 130 years of age, and he's one of them that has to park near the hall. He couldn't catch you in a fit, could he?) if it came to a contest, running down the hill, it would be no contest; most of us would have said, 'I see!' See you later, and swish! and we're gone! Wouldn't we? now be honest with yourself; next Saturday your dad takes you out and he's got a gun in his hand, right on, we're going to finish the job! but you're the target. Be honest with yourself, what would you do if you didn't have a very close relationship with your father, and if you were not totally confident in him, and in His God, and if you were not obedient to your parents, and if you did not honour your father and your mother? What would you do?

This is what Isaac did! Verse 8, at the end of the verse, 'So they went both of them together'. NO WORDS SPOKEN FROM NOW ON! there's not one word that comes from the mouth of Isaac, as he goes up to the top of that little mountain, Golgotha; and they get there and Abraham perceives, as it says in verse 9, 'They came to the place that God told them off, and Abraham built an altar there', plenty of time, you know, Abraham's getting started and he's putting the stones on the altar, plenty of time for Isaac to say, well, now's the time to go! swish! but he stands there and watches it; he laid the wood in order and bound Isaac' (he said to him, Isaac come here and lie down here, lad, that's it, thank you. Now I'll tie your hands and arms and legs and whatever'). Not one word! 'As a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth'. 'And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the voice came from heaven, Abraham, Abraham,' (and the knife was held in mid air) Here am I. He said, (verse 12), Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only one (yachiyd) from Me'.

B&S and young people, if Abraham had had a choice, he would have been the one on the altar; he would have died for his son, there is not one single parent in this room, if given the choice, if the authorities came in here tonight and said, 'Listen, here, all of you who are parents, we want one of your children and they're going to die, but we will take substitutes!' Every single parent in this room would offer themselves before they offered their child. Isn't that true? Of course, it's true! So Abraham was asked to make the ultimate sacrifice; you could not make a greater sacrifice than this! And that's why the last occurrence of the word 'yachiyd' in the Old Testament is in Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10, you have a look at it with me. 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications:(it's all about the day to come, b&s and young people when Israel will stare at their Messiah, and one shall ask what are these wounds in thy hands? and He shall say, these are the wounds that I got in the house of my friends). 'And they shall look upon Me', (I want you to notice the language), 'they shall look upon Me says Yahweh, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his 'yachiyd' his only one, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his firstborn'. They shall look upon Me? Who died? when Christ died on the cross? Well, of course, it was the Son, but b&s,



Yahweh felt the same way about that as Abraham felt toward Isaac; when they pierced His Son, they pierced Him! If it had been possible, it would have been another way, but it wasn't possible; had to be that way!

And just as Abraham could not have made any greater sacrifice, b&s and young people, God could make no greater sacrifice than to give His only One, with whom He had a perfectly, beautiful and wonderful relationship, whom He loved! and yet He was willing to send Him to the cross that we might have life! Isn't that a marvellous way to use that word 'yachiyd' for its final occurrence in the Old Testament?

Back in Genesis 22, as we round off our session for this evening, we come to this quite remarkable event, we read in verse 13, 'And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket', and here we have, b&s, Yahweh telling him that that sacrifice that he had made that day, had always been in the divine program. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world had always been there; Yahweh was ready, because behind Abraham, that is behind him in history so to speak, there was a Ram, the Head of the flock, the strength of the flock, the chief of the flock, a mature Lamb, the male Lamb, that Yahweh had reserved for this purpose, was ready to be sacrificed! He was caught in a thicket, the word 'caught' (Strong's - 270) having the idea of being 'seized or entangled' as the Interlinear Bible says, He was taken hold of by the entanglement of the predicament of mankind, and the only way that the Ram could be released from the thicket of His entanglement was by sacrifice. Now that word 'thicket' (Strong's - 5442) 'cebak' means a cox or a thicket, of course, it reminds us of the thorns and the thistles that were to be part of the curse of human nature. B&S, there are those who think, and I think that they are correct, that there is some way in which that word 'cebak' in the Hebrew is semantically linked with the Arabic word which the Lord Jesus Christ used when He quoted Psalm 22 verse 1: 'My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me' in the Hebrew is 'asab-feni'; when it comes from His mouth it is, sebak theni' and 'sebak' is the Aramaic word for 'forsake', or 'to loosen', it sounds very similar to the Hebrew word 'cebak', thicket. So here was One who's entangled in the affairs of mankind, in the predicament of men, by his horns, and the horn grows out of the head and is the symbol of power. And there resides this One's power, b&s, there was the source of His victory. There was a mind locked together with His God, in the closest of all relationships, and the only way He could be released from the predicament in which He was found, was to be sacrificed. And that's why God says, verse 16, 'By Myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh, for because thou hast done this thing and has not withheld thy son, thine only one, I won't withhold My Son from you'. That's what He's saying, and He will be victorious as the next verses go on to say, and then we come to verse 19.

'So Abraham returned unto his young men (Jew and Gentile), and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba'. Did you read that verse carefully? (I know it's late at night) so Abraham returned unto his young men; Where's Isaac? Can you see him there? He's not mentioned! but why would you mention him? He's not separate from his father! as Jew and Gentile were when this story was played out; and the record says, 'they went together to Beer-sheba', to the

well of the seven, where Abraham had made his covenant with Gentiles. You see, this is what it's telling us, b&s and young people, that there is an enormous power in father and son working together as one! when a son responds to the example and the education and the teaching of a father, you don't need to mention them separately. When the son comes to the meeting with the father, they come as one; they don't need to have separate rooms in the house to which the parents can't enter; they don't need to be chastised all the time for doing stupid and foolish things, they've learnt the simple lesson, that if you really want to come to respect your God and to love Him with all your heart and soul and strength, when you can learn, that is, when you're very young, when you can't really see God, because you haven't got the capacity at that point, you can obey and honour and respect your parents which the world simply does not do. Let's hope it can be said of everyone of our young people here, that in relation to their parents, that they went both of them together!