

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"

~ All articles are written by George L. Faull, Rel. D. unless otherwise stated ~

Vol. 27 No. 1

January 2014

George L. Faull, Editor

How Old Was Isaac When He was Sacrificed as he was called "a Lad"?



In answering this question, I will not be able to be dogmatic. I will simply state some facts and draw conclusions.

FIRST - Abraham offering of his son at any age would be a traumatic event that took much faith. However, when told to do so, Abraham arose early in the morning to be obedient.

His love for a child, a boy, or a grown son would be no less difficult. I could as soon as hurt my son at ten years of age as I could if he was a grown man.

It is interesting that in **Genesis 22:2** it has the first mention of the word "love" in the Bible. "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* 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 which I will tell thee of."

SECOND – We need to remember that Isaac was conceived when Sarah was 90. She died at 127. So it could have been anywhere in these 36 years that Isaac was almost sacrificed for it was performed before she died.

Isaac was probably weaned at age 5. If so, Ishmael would have been 18 years old about that time for he was circumcised at age 13. **Genesis 17:24**

It was on the day of the weaning of Isaac when Ishmael was sent out of Abraham's house. **Genesis 21:8-9**

If so, at age 18 Ishmael was called both "a child" and "a lad" (**Genesis 21:14-21**) and soon thereafter he took a wife.

THIRD – One cannot be dogmatic about the word "lad" and we cannot base anything on the word "lad" (*naar*). Why?

- As noted above, Ishmael was called a lad about the age of 18.
- The two servants in this same chapter were called "young men."
- Joseph at 17 was called a lad (*naar*). **Genesis 37:2**
- Benjamin is called a lad and was 22. **Genesis 43:8** by Judah.

Yet in Joseph's dream, he dreamed of 11 stars or 11 brothers before he was sold. So Benjamin was already born, but we do not know his age. **Genesis 37:9-11**

Joseph was sold at age 17. **Genesis 37:2**

He stood before Pharaoh at age 30. **Genesis 41:46** He is called a *naar* at that age. **Genesis 41:12**

The first 7 years of plenty was over when Joseph was 37. **Genesis 41:53** The famine was 2 years in process when his brothers came to Egypt. **Genesis 45:6**. Joseph would be 39.

His brothers were calling Benjamin "a lad" when he was at least 22 years of age. **Genesis 39:17-22**

So we can see that the word "lad" (*naar*) is non-conclusive.

FOURTH – Isaac was not a small lad for he carried the wood for his sacrifice. **Genesis 22:6**, "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together."

That would take a lot of firewood for a burnt offering to consume a human and to carry it up a mountain would be no small feat for a boy.

FIFTH – Jewish authors have him older than a teen. Josephus says he was 25. Many Rabbi's say 36. Others, 33.

If I was guessing based on typology, I would say 33, like Jesus was when He carried His cross up that same hill. Jesus was the lamb that God provided. God, the Son provided Himself the lamb.

SIXTH – Some have suggested that Sarah's death at 127 (**Genesis 23:1**) was recorded right after Abraham took Isaac to one of the mountains, or Mount Moriah, and that it broke her heart not living to see the final outcome.

They based it upon the text where it said that Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and weep for her **Genesis 21:1-2** and after the burial sent for Isaac a wife and so Isaac was then comforted about his mother. **Genesis 24:67**, "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's *death*."

SEVENTH – So the age is not that important but the overview of the event certainly is.

Abraham is told to take his pre-named (called his name Isaac), miraculous born (he was 100, she was 90), promised child, only begotten son, whom he loved to one of the mountains on Mount Moriah to sacrifice him. He was obedient.

Two servants went with Abraham and Isaac but on the third day he saw one of the mountains on Mount Moriah.

Isaac carried his own wood. He asked his father where the lamb was. "God", Abraham said, "would provide Himself a lamb."

He began to obey God but was stopped by God. God acknowledged Abraham's faith. A ram was in the thicket of thorns that was used instead of Isaac.

Abraham found that obedient faith results in substitutionary death.

The ram was a substitute for Isaac. Isaac was obviously willing to be offered. Abraham called the mountain, "Jehovah-Jirah"; 'in the mount God will see to it'.

Amazing parallelism.

- God gave His Son on that same mountain.
- He bore His wooden cross up that same hill.
- God provided Himself a lamb.
- He, too, wore thorns as substitute on Calvary.
- Jesus died for us.
- But on the third day, He, like Isaac, was raised from death. **Hebrews 11:17-19**

What a love story it is! **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should have eternal life."