

Isaac: Type and Shadow of Jesus Christ

Scriptural passages compare Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac to God’s offering of His beloved son, Jesus. Paul wrote, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. 11:17–19;

see also Gal. 3:16; Heb. 1:16). The just-cited passage explains that Abraham believed that if he sacrificed his son God would raise him from the dead, “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.”

There are a number of striking and significant parallels between Isaac and Jesus that demonstrate that Isaac was a type of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, as listed in the accompanying chart.

Topic	Isaac	Jesus Christ
Prophecy of Birth	Isaac’s birth was prophesied (Gen. 17:16).	Christ’s birth was prophesied (Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:31).
Miraculous Birth	Isaac was born of aged parents (Gen. 17:17; 18:10–15; 21:1–2).	Christ was miraculously born of a virgin (Luke 1:30–35).
The Son	Genesis 22:1–13 emphasizes that Isaac is a son, calling him “son” eight times and “only son” twice (although Abraham and Hagar already had Ishmael).	Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14, 18). Both Isaac and Jesus are called “son of promise” (Gal. 4:22–26; Acts 13:32–33).
Burnt Offering	Genesis 22:2–13 uses the expression “burnt offering” six times in referring to the type of sacrifice Isaac was to become.	The burnt offerings of the Old Testament looked forward to Jesus’s sacrifice.
Submission	Isaac willingly submitted to the sacrifice (Gen. 22:6–9).	Jesus Christ willingly submitted to the sacrifice (Luke 22:42).
Carrying of Wood	Isaac bore the wood for his sacrifice (Gen. 22:6).	Christ carried the cross to His sacrifice (John 19:17).

Topic	Isaac	Jesus Christ
Binding	Abraham bound Isaac to the altar (Gen. 22:9).	Jesus was bound before he was “delivered . . . to Pontius Pilate the governor” (Matt. 27:2).
Substitute Sacrifice	God provided a lamb as a substitute sacrifice for Isaac (Gen. 22:7–8, 13).	Christ the Lamb is the substitute sacrifice for all of us.
Moriah	Isaac traveled to the land of Moriah for sacrifice (Gen. 22:2), the very site where Solomon would build his temple (2 Chr. 3:1) and where thousands of sacrifices would be offered for several centuries.	Christ was crucified on Moriah at Golgotha, a short distance north of the temple altar (John 19:17–18; cf. Lev. 10:10–11).