

The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.”
(Genesis 18:10)

Faithful God, you promised Abraham and Sarah a child of their own that would make their offspring into many nations. Thank you for always making a way for your people when there seems to be no way. Help us to believe that your promises are trustworthy and true and on you we can depend. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

At a time when there was no organized worship of the Lord, God chose a man named Abraham and promised that he would be the father of a great nation. But Abraham and his wife Sarah were too old to have children. So God intervened to fulfill his own promise.

Read: Genesis 18:1-15

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

The first five books of the Bible are known as the Pentateuch. Jewish people call this section the **Torah**, meaning “teaching” or “instruction.” These books use stories to teach history and morals.

In the book of Genesis we are introduced to the first generations of the Israelites, beginning with Abraham and Sarah. Originally known as Abram and Sarai, God called this husband and wife to travel from their homeland in Mesopotamia to a new promised land in Canaan.

God promised that Abraham would be the father of many nations in faith, though it took several visits from God for Abraham to actually believe it. Religious people throughout the world — Jews, Muslims, and Christians — trace their faith ancestry back to him.

Discussion Questions

1. Who were the three strangers who stopped to visit Abraham and Sarah? How do you think Abraham and Sarah knew that these were more than ordinary men?
2. How did Abraham respond to their visit? How would you describe his attitude or emotional state? Read Hebrews 13:2. How is Abraham’s response an example to all of us?
3. What did the men say would happen to Abraham’s wife, Sarah? Why was this so amazing? Do you think you would have believed this promise?
4. How did Sarah react when she heard the news? What did the Lord say in reply?
5. When we have gone through difficulties, as Sarah did, it can be hard to believe that God has a blessing in store for us. But God’s plans for his people are good. How do we know this?
6. When a child was later born to Sarah and Abraham, they named him Isaac. How is the name Isaac a callback to this story (Genesis 21:6)?
7. Read Galatians 3:7-9, 16-22. In these verses, why does Paul hold up Abraham as an example to us as Christians? Was Abraham justified (made right with God) because he did good works and obeyed the law, or because he trusted God’s promise?
8. Who is the one “Offspring” of Abraham who fulfilled God’s promise? How has this person made *us* a part of Abraham’s family?