

The Baby Named “Laughter”

It’s always exciting news when you hear someone is expecting a baby, isn’t it? Your mom and dad might come to you and say, “You are going to have a new brother or sister!” and everyone would be excited and happy because God decided to bring a new baby into your family.



But what if a gray-haired, wrinkled lady old enough to be your great-grandma, or even your great-great-grandma, came to you and said, “I’m going to have a baby”? Would you believe her? Would you laugh? There’s a story like this in the Bible about a lady named Sarai—but wait! Let me start the story from the beginning.

In Genesis, the first book in the Bible, we learn about a man named Abram who lived in the city of Haran. He was married to a beautiful lady named Sarai. When our story begins, they were old enough to be grandparents or great-grandparents, but sadly, they were not able to have children.

The Bible says that God spoke to Abram. “Go forth from your country and your kindred [or “family”] and your father’s house to the land which I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation . . . and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:2).

Abram must have wondered how God could make him a great nation. It would mean that he would have to father a child, and his child would have to have children, and they would have children, and they would have children, and on and on until there were so many people in his family that they were a whole nation. But Sarai was as old as a great-grandma, and she hadn’t had any babies. How could God fulfill His promise?

Abram believed what God said. He packed up Sarai and his nephew, Lot, and everything they owned and left home, just as God told him to. When he got to the land of Canaan, God appeared to him again. “To your descendants [your children’s children and their children] I will give this land” God told Abram. Another time, God showed Abram all the stars in the night sky and said, “Count the stars . . . so shall your descendants be.” And again, Abram believed what God said. He didn’t know how, but he believed that God would keep His promise.

Years and years passed. God visited Abram again, and changed Abram’s name to “Abraham,” which means “father of a multitude.” Once again, God promised that Abraham would have a child. God changed Sarai’s name, too, to “Sarah,” which means “princess.” And God promised that she would be the mother of a son.

Wouldn’t you think that Abraham would be quiet and respectful when God was telling him these things? The Bible says he fell on his face and laughed! Maybe he couldn’t help it when he thought of how funny it was for a lady as old as a great-great-grandma to be expecting a little baby, but he never stopped believing God. Sarah heard God say the same thing at another time and she laughed, too.

But guess what? A year later, when Sarah was ninety and Abram was 100 years old, they had a little boy. They named him “Isaac,” which means “Laughter.” Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me” (Genesis 21:6). Didn’t *you* laugh when you heard about Sarah, the old lady, having a baby?

As you would expect, everything else God promised to Abraham also came true. Abraham’s descendants became the people of Israel. And the whole world was blessed because one of Abraham’s descendants was God’s son, Jesus. Abraham trusted God and knew that everything God promised would happen, even though he died before most of it occurred.

The Bible says that because Abraham believed God, God counted him as righteous—as if he was a person who didn’t ever sin (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3). Now you and I know that Jesus, God’s Son, is the only person who never sinned and did all the good things God wanted Him to do. Every other person has disobeyed God, and Abraham was a real person just like us. But even though Abraham sinned, God didn’t count his sins against him because he believed God.

Did you know that the Bible says that you and I can be counted righteous just like Abraham? Even though we’ve all done wrong things—we’ve all sinned against God—He has promised that if we believe in the Lord we will be counted as righteous, just like Abraham, and we can live forever in heaven.

What about you? Will you believe in God? Will you trust in Christ Jesus and be declared righteous, just like Abraham?