

God's promises to Abraham and Sarah

Genesis 16:1–17:22; 18:1–15; 21:1–7

Abram and Sarai knew that children are a blessing from God. God had promised many children to Abram, but years passed and he and Sarai did not have any children. Sarai decided that Hagar, her slave, would have children for her. So when baby Ishmael was born, he had two mothers. Hagar was his birth mother. Sarai was his other mother.

God said to Hagar, "I will bless Ishmael. He will have many children. His children, grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren will be a great nation."

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him and gave him a new name. Abram became Abraham, the father of many. God also said that Sarai would now be called Sarah. Again, God promised that Abraham and Sarah would have many children.

At about that time, three visitors came walking by the tents of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham invited them to stay for some bread and meat. The visitors brought a message from God. They said, "Sarah is going to have a baby." Sarah laughed at that idea. She was far too old to have a baby. God asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

It came to pass just as the three visitors had said. Sarah gave birth to a son in her old age. Abraham and Sarah named him Isaac, which means laughter.

Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears this story will laugh with me." Baby Isaac blessed many people with joy and laughter.

Ishmael and Isaac were signs of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah.

Wonder: Imagine having three messengers bring you good news from God.