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Your Wife Sarah Will Bear You a Son, and You Will Call Him Isaac

17: 15-22

Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac DIG: In what special way did God let Sarai know that she was still an important part of His promise? How does Avraham respond initially?

REFLECT: From what trouble would you like to be rescued? When was the last time the Lord overruled your mistake and brought blessing out of trouble?



ADONAI had brought **Abraham and Sarai** to the end of **themselves** to show **them** that **His** promises rested on **Him** and on **Him** alone. Most of **God's** communication had been with **Abraham**, but **his wife** would not be ignored. It seems that **the LORD** wasn't through with **Sarai** yet. **She** was part of **His** plan right from the start. **God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai or my princess; her name will be Sarah or the**

princess” (17:15).

Elohim said: **I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her.** For the first time, it was announced that **Sarah** was to be the mother of **the son** of promise. **I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her (17:16).** As the **mother of nations** it would be entirely proper for **her** to be called *the princess*. **The rabbis teach that she gave birth and rose up from her child without pain.** Three **nations** did come from **her**, Judah, Isra’el, and Edom. **God** had promised **Abraham** that **he** would be **the father of many nations, and kings will come from him (17:5-6);** now those same promises were made to **Sarah** (art by Sarah Beth Baca: see more information on Links and Resources).

All the mothers of the nation of **Isra’el** were not able to conceive and have children naturally. All were barren. **Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel,** and **Hannah** all had to have a miracle to give birth to **their** children. But why? **ADONAI** wanted to be clearly seen in the births of the major historical heroes in the path to our salvation. Of course, the most out of the ordinary was the birth of **Yeshua** our **Messiah** that is not a birth given by a barren woman, but a birth given by a woman who knew no man!

Up to this point in his life, **Abraham** had an amazing knowledge of **his God**. This can be seen by the different names that **he** used in referring to **Him - God (Elohim), LORD (YHVH), The Almighty (El Shaddai), and the Most High God (El Elyon)**. Each different name represents a large degree of knowledge about **the Person**, but also the nature of **God**. But **Elohim** was not willing to let **Abraham** remain even at that significant depth of knowledge. Consequently, **El Elyon** had wonderful lessons planned for both **Abraham** and **his wife**. I am referring to lessons on **God’s** supernatural abilities, **His** grace, **His** justice, and yes, even **His** sense of humor.

Abraham fell face down when **he** heard the incredible announcement and **laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old (he would be a hundred when the child was born)? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety” (17:17)? They** were both well past childbearing years. **Abraham’s laugh** was not a **laugh** of unbelief, but of faith which **he**, while taking **God** at **His** word, considers it almost too good to be true.²⁹² **The rabbis teach that Abraham laughed with joy, whereas Sarah’s laughter (18:12) was in derision; therefore, God was angry with Sarah but not so with Abraham.**

But there was still a shadow hanging over the scene. **Abraham** loved **his** growing **son Ishmael** and **he** pleaded with **the LORD**, “**If only Ishmael might live under Your blessing**” (17:18)! After all, the boy’s name meant *God hears*. But not even **Abraham’s** intense appeal could stand before the purposes of **God**. Earlier **Abraham** was prepared to suggest that **his** servant Eliezer serve as a surrogate son and be **his** heir. Now **he** is suggesting that **Ishmael** be **his** heir. **God** had spoken **to Abraham** and it was a possibility that **he** did not mention the birth of the coming **son** to **Sarah**. **She** had been through enough. Why raise **her** hopes that the sorrow and shame of childlessness might end at this late date in **her** life? **God** knew better than **Abraham** and gave **His** answer at once: **Yes, He** would bless **Ishmael**, **but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac**.

Let’s not lose the full impact of this. Picture one-hundred-year-old **Abraham** learning that **his** ninety-year-old **wife** will have **a baby**. Then imagine the head of gray hair falling on the floor of **his** tent **laughing** hysterically at what **the LORD** had told **him**. I think **ADONAI** was having a lot of fun with **His** aged **friend**. This seems especially evident since the Bible doesn’t show any sense of rebuke coming from **YHVH**. In fact, **God** seems to play right along with this moment of divine humor and tells **Abraham** in so many words, “**Your laughed?! OK, Sarah will have a son and you will name him he laughs** (The English translation for the name **Isaac**)! **I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him (17:19)**. **God** is very clear in this passage that **Isaac** will be **the son** of promise, not **Ishmael**. I am of the opinion that **Abraham** thought many, many times, “I made a mistake in taking Hagar.” You see, that was a sin that not only plagued **him**, but there has also been trouble in the Land from the beginning because of it. Don’t tell me that sin is a little thing or that sin is something you can get by with. **Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7)**.²⁹³

Even though **he** would not be the **son** of promise, **Ishmael** would not be forgotten. For **God** said that **he** would have many **descendants** also: **I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers**. And we see the great Arab population today. **He will be the father of twelve rulers (25:12-18), and I will make him into a great nation (17:20)**. **He** would receive promises, but **he** would not be the **son** of promise.

Because Muslims twist the Bible to suit their own purposes, today they teach, “The first Muslim on earth was not Muhammad but **Abraham** who submitted totally to Allah. Their belief is that Islam, as a way of life, had been revealed to other prophets



like Adam and Noah prior to **Abraham**.” They teach that because **Abraham** was born in Ur of the Chaldeans, in Mesopotamia that is now part of Iraq, he was really an Arab. But however confused the Muslims are, **God** is very clear. **He** says: **But My covenant I will establish with Isaac** (Hebrew: **Yitz’chak**) **whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year (17:21)**. This would give **Abraham** time to heal from **his** circumcision before **Sarah** would become pregnant. During this three-month period, the stories of **Sodom and Gomorrah**, and **Abraham and Abimelech** will take place in **Chapters 18 to 20**.

When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him (17:22). **God** had made up **His** mind about this and **Abraham** was not going to change it. **ADONAI** was going to hear and answer other prayers of **Abraham**, but this issue was closed. **Isaac**, not **Ishmael**, would be the **son** of promise.

Thus **the LORD** overrides the mistakes of **His** children, and in loving fellowship and tender mercy, brings blessing out of trouble.