

A Promise to Sarah

***Key Verse: “Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.”
—Genesis 21:2***

***Selected Scripture:
Genesis 17:15-17;
18:9-15; 21:1-7***

IN TODAY’S LESSON, WE

see that Sarah indeed gave birth to a promised son. “Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.” (Gen. 21:3) Prior to this momentous event, when Abraham and Sarah were already well advanced in age, God gave this promise: “I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her,

and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.” God also told Abraham that her name would be changed: “Thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.” (chap. 17:15,16) This was fitting since Sarah means princess—that is, a mother of royalty. It was in this sense that Paul spoke allegorically of Sarah, referring to her as “the mother of us all.”—Gal. 4:26

Abraham’s initial reaction to the news concerning the birth of a son in their old age was one of disbelief to the extent that he “fell upon his face, and laughed.” (Gen. 17:17) However, God responded by repeating his promise: “Sarah . . . shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”—vs. 19

Sarah, and the promise made by God concerning her,

is mentioned in Hebrews 11:11,12: "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him [God] faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." We understand from this passage that Abraham, at the age of 100, and his wife Sarah, being 90, and well past child bearing age, received this promised son as if he was "born from the dead." "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."—Mark 10:27

Sarah had been barren during her entire marriage to Abraham until the birth of Isaac. This illustrates the fact that God's covenant, originally given to Abraham, was barren for nearly two thousand years, until the time of Jesus, the spiritual seed of promise. God assured Sarah and Abraham, however, of the coming birth of a son through the words of three men who came to visit them at their tent in the plains of Mamre. These men were actually angels, and after asking Abraham, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" proclaimed, "Thy wife shall have a son." Sarah overheard what they said, and being doubtful of their words "laughed within herself." (Gen. 18:1-15) Nevertheless, the promise was affirmed by these angels as being God's Word, and that it would surely come to pass in his due time.

While the events of our lesson had much significance to Abraham and Sarah, they were a picture of greater things. Continuing the allegory spoken of earlier in this lesson, Paul says, "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." (Gal. 4:27) God's covenant for the eventual blessing of all mankind was barren for many years, but began to be fulfilled by Jesus through the work of his First Advent.—Luke 2:10-14 ■