

God Does What He Says

International Bible Lesson

Genesis 17:15-17; 18:9-15; 21:1-7

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“And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken” (Genesis 21:1—KJV).

“The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised” (Genesis 21:1—NRSV).

If we read the entire Bible, we will discover this universal truth: “God does what He says, and God keeps His promises.” In their old age, Abraham and Sarah could not naturally conceive a child. Yet, God had promised them many years before that Sarah would be the mother of Abraham’s son. When God reaffirmed His promise to them, they were so old that Sarah laughed about the possibility of her bearing a child. In due time, God supernaturally changed them and enabled Sarah to give birth to Isaac.

Many years later, God supernaturally changed Elkanah and Hannah, and she gave birth to the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 1:19-20). In the New Testament, God supernaturally enabled Zechariah and Elizabeth to conceive a son in their old age, and Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist (Luke 1). Of course, the greatest miracle of all was the conception of Jesus the Messiah, when the Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin Mary so she conceived the Son of God (Matthew 1:18-20). The Messiah was born several generations after God had promised through the prophet Isaiah, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

If we consider the past three thousand years, we know with certainty that God kept His word to Abraham and Sarah when He promised them, “I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her” (Genesis 17:16). God has given us many precious promises in the Bible, and we can trust every word (1 Peter 1:3-4).

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Thinking Further

1. In what ways did God show His love and concern for Sarah?
2. What is the difference between laughter that expresses joy and laughter that expresses doubt? What might have been the difference between Abraham’s laughter and Sarah’s laughter?
3. Read Genesis 18:1-10. In Genesis 18:9, who do you think “They” refers to?
4. Why do you think the LORD made Abraham and Sarah keep waiting for their child to be conceived by Sarah, after telling Abraham that he would have many descendants through the birth of her son?
5. What happens to people sometimes when God does not do what they want done when they want it done?