

Laughter

Genesis 17:15—18:15

(black Bibles page 12; Children's Bibles page 31)

In our passage today we will hear laughter twice, and we will hear “No” twice.

[1] *Laughter.* Abraham and Sarah laugh at the same thing.

- Why did Abraham laugh? Don't guess, instead read carefully for clues! (17:17-18)

- Why did Sarah laugh? (18:12)

- How very human they are! Would you have laughed?

[2] “No.” Abraham and Sarah are both told “No...”

- To Sarah: “No, but you did laugh.”
 - Direct correction: not allowed in some cultures! (Zhou's Arab understanding)

- What does this tell us about God? About Sarah? About a direct correction like this? Why was it necessary?

- To Abraham: “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son...”
 - What does this tell us about God? Why is Isaac necessary? And if so, why didn't he come *earlier!*?

 - What God wanted: a miraculous fulfillment to His big promises. A man as good as dead and a post-menopausal woman will have a baby. This will not be ordinary work of man; this will be *God's* work.

To the Lord's Supper: the ultimate miraculous fulfillment to God's big promises. It took God Himself to do the complete the work of our salvation!

Community Group Discussion Questions

1. Why do people laugh? Is it always due to entertainment? Is it always associated with happiness?
2. Why did Abraham and Sarah laugh? Describe what they were thinking when they heard the promise of a baby.
3. Abraham and Sarah were both corrected with “No.” Why was this necessary? When should we correct each other? Consider 2 Timothy 3:16 and Proverbs 19:11.
4. When do you need correction? Can you receive it from others? From Scripture? Can you trust that it is for your good?

Advanced Study: Think on what Paul is saying in Romans 9:6-13, in which he quotes God's promise to Sarah to have a son. What's the point? How is election and grace shown clearly in the promise to Sarah, as opposed to any works theology?