Genesis 17:15-16 “And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And 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.”

In the verses prior to these a lot has taken place. In this chapter alone Abram’s named is changed to Abraham (17:5) and the covenant involving circumcision is established (17:9-12). Going backwards, in chapter 16, through Sarai’s intervention, Hagar gave birth to Ishmael to produce a supposed heir for Abram. Eventually she fled from her mistress (16:6-8).

Arriving at today’s lesson, it is time for Sarai’s part of the blessing to be initiated. First, God also changes her name. She was once known as Sarai, but now she shall be called Sarah. Both names mean princess.

“And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her.” God’s blessing for Sarah was going to reap rewards for both her and Abraham. God was going to bless her by allowing her to conceive and bear a child. She was once known as barren. Barrenness could feel like a curse to a woman during this era because of her inability to have a child. Sometimes they were made to feel lesser the woman because of barrenness. Hannah experienced provocation at the hand of another woman because she couldn’t have children, 1 Sam. 1:6. If God blessed Sarah in this manner it would be a great relief to her personally.

But the blessing was not just for her but for her husband also. Abraham, this verse states, would receive a “son” through Sarah. Abraham already had one son (Gen. 16), but this son was not a part of the promise that God wanted to fulfill
through him. But when Sarah gives birth it will be the start of a beautiful plan that God plays out through the pages of history all the way until our Savior arrives on the scene.

“She shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.” Not only was she going to have a child, but the promise is from that one seed a multitude would be brought forth. Extraordinary! That is a promise that only God can make and deliver on. Not only is God promising a legacy through her, but a legacy of where “kings of people shall be of her.” Awesome!

**Genesis 17:17** “Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?”

Was Abraham experiencing a moment of doubt? Was he looking at the impossibility if him still fathering a child by human standards? Did he doubt what God, the Creator of all, could do in Sarah’s body? In Genesis 15:6 it said, “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” But in the following verses (not in today’s lesson) Abraham prayed for Ismael to be blessed. God answered that prayer with His previous promise, “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed . . . and I will establish my covenant with him,” (Gen. 17:19). God reaffirmed that no matter the reasons Abraham thinks it may be impossible for Sarah to conceive and give birth, He had a greater agenda in mind. He specializes in the impossible.

**Genesis 18:9** “And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.”

Between the previous verses and this one God left off speaking to Abraham and then Abraham performed the circumcision that God required as proof of the covenant. At the beginning of chapter 18 Abraham becomes host to three heavenly visitors. This is the “they” that is referred to in this verse.

“Tents” were used in the nomadic lifestyle that Abraham lived. Abraham didn’t have a home of brick and mortar. He was a traveler, a man who moved when God led him, therefore his dwelling place had to be as portable as he was. He also
had a large amount of livestock that had to be grazed and fed where they could find pasture. His lifestyle can be compared to that of a Bedouin.

**Genesis 18:10** “And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.”

The “they” in the previous verse here turns to “he,” meaning a singular person is now speaking directly to Abraham Himself. This “he” was the Lord God Almighty Himself who appeared to Abraham in the form of a man. He said, “I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.” Don’t you love it when God gets specific about the blessings in what He is getting ready to do? God lays out His plan, His agenda, and He tells Abraham directly how it is all going to play out.

“According to the time of life” can be interpreted as the time it takes to conceive and bear a child to full term. For most women there is approximately 40 weeks between conception and the time of birth. God promised He would come back at that time and Sarah will already be cradling her babe in her arms. Amazing!

“Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.” Sarah herself was probably a little more than curious at the visitors who seem to come from nowhere but had a lot of grand ideas. So, she listened in on the conversation between her husband and these visitors.

**Genesis 18:11-12** “Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

“Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age.” Here is a repeat of the obvious. Whereas some may say, “I get it, they were old,” the Bible reaffirms to us over and over again what a miraculous thing this was that God was doing in their lives. God was going to do something that had never been done before. He was taking a woman’s body who “it ceased to be . . . after the manner of women,” and cause it to reproduce as if she was in the prime of her life. God was
using something that to the natural eye appeared to be “waxed old” and cause it to act young with life. The whole idea seemed impossible to Sarah causing a reaction to “laugh within herself.”

Genesis 18:13-15 “And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.”

God heard Sarah’s reaction. Though her laugh wasn’t audible to Abraham’s ears, He that knows the hearts of men heard the inner laugh and questioned Abraham about his wife’s response, “Wherefore did Sarah laugh?” People laugh for all kinds of reasons: for joy, wonderment and just being downright giddy about life. But, people also laugh sarcastically from disbelief over a preposterous idea. In her inner questioning Sarah revealed that she didn’t believe that such a thing could happen to her, “Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?”

God response was, “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” Really think about this for a minute. Here, Sarah is questioning the validity of God being able to do something amazing in her life. In last week’s lesson, God shared with Abraham His vision for his and his family’s future. Surely, God was going to follow through on His promise but it had to start somewhere. Why doesn’t Sarah believe that God is able to do a wondrous thing through her? How many of us laugh and sneer at the possibility that God wants to do something amazing through us? Is it really too hard for God? The answer is, NO!

The same God that hung all those stars that He admonished Abraham to try to count is the same God that made the promise. The same God that made the first man Adam out of the dust of the ground is the same God that made the promise. Sarah’s condition may have seemed impossible to her but she wasn’t the one who was performing the miracle. She was merely a vessel that God wanted to use to bring forth something great. Yet, she laughed. “Is any thing too hard for God?”
Sarah out and out denied that she laughed because she was “afraid.” What made her afraid? Did the revealing of her heart and mind by this unknown visitor strike a chord of fear in her? Who wouldn’t tremble at the idea of what’s going on in the inner man being revealed and unmasked? She denied but God called her out, “Nay; but thou didst laugh.”

Genesis 21:1-2 “And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.”

God always follows through on His promises to His people. God can be trusted at all times. Proverbs 30:5 says, “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.”

God did “as he had said . . . as he had spoken.” God’s word will do what it set out to do and accomplish all that it was purposed for; and it will not return to Him void, Is. 55:11. God promised Abraham that He would return and when He did what He spoke over their lives will already be accomplished.

Not only was God’s word accomplished but it happened when He designed for it to happen; on His timetable “at the set time.” Sarah’s body was old, nobody disputes that, but God allowed her a pleasure she thought she would never feel a child conceived in her womb. And, God gave her body, with its advanced age, strength to push forth and birth a healthy baby boy.

Genesis 21:3-5 “And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.”

Let’s go through this check lists of all that God completed and brought to pass:

1. “Sarah bare to him” – God said in Genesis 17:19, “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son.”
2. Called his name “Isaac” – Again, in Genesis 17:19, God said, “You shall call his name Isaac.”
3. “Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God commanded him” – God said in Genesis 17:12, “He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child.”

4. “And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him” – At God’s promise, Abraham questioned, “Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old?” Here in this portion of our lesson God answered that question with an astounding, YES!

God did everything He said He would right down to every last detail. Our God is a promise keeper and He never fails!

**Genesis 21:6-7** “And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.”

“God hath made me to laugh.” At the first, Sarah laughed from disbelief at the promise of God. Now, she laughs in utter joy of the miraculous that He has done in her life. God took an impossible situation to literally birth forth a promise. This astounded Sarah. Even as she gave her own child “suck” she must have felt nothing but wonder over God’s greatness in her life. Had she had a child at a normal age, her story would not impact history the way it has. God held out in His perfect timing and today we read of the wonderful things He does. He specializes in the impossible and in the process will put a smile on your face 😊!