

## **"A Child of Promise"**

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I hope if you remember our little talk together a few weeks ago about "the Parables of Jesus," and that these are to be found all through the Old as well as the New Testament. Of the one of which we are going to talk to-day, the Apostle Paul especially tells us: "Which things are an allegory."

You have heard, have you not, the story of Abraham,—how God called him out from the heathen country where he had been born and brought up, and promised to lead him to a better country. God blessed him and gave him great flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, many servants, and great riches.

But there was one thing that Abram (as he was then called) and Sarai his wife, would rather have had than all these. God had not given them any children, and this was a great disappointment and grief to them. Yet God had promised Abraham that his seed, or descendants, should be "as the dust of the earth,"—as numerous as the grains of sand that make up the dust of the ground.

One night when God was talking with his friend, Abram said to him, "What wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" This seems to have been a gentle reminder to the Lord of His promise not yet fulfilled.

Then God "brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be. And Abram believed God."

Yet the years passed, and the promised child was not given, and Abram and Sarai were so old that they began to give up hope.

At last one day when Abram was ninety-nine years old, long past time when fathers and mothers usually have little children of their own, God appeared to Abram again and said:

"Thou shalt be the father of a multitude." "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee."

"As for Sarah thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be." Sarah means "a princess," and the reason why God gave her this name was; "She shall be a mother of nations; kings of people's shall be of her."

Long afterwards when Paul was writing a letter to the Romans, he reminded them of this promise of God to Abraham and Sarah, and said that God "calleth the things that be not as though they were."

So when Abraham and Sarah had no children and no hope of ever having any, God called Abraham "the father of a multitude," and Sarah, "the mother of nations and of kings." If any man had done this it would have been a lie, but God can call anything just what He wishes it to be, and there is power in the Word that He speaks to make it just what He says.

Abraham knew the Lord, he knew that he is the Truth, and cannot lie; and so when God called him "the father of a multitude," he rejoiced that he was to become so, and his faith made the promise of God a reality to him. We are told that he "against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, so shall thy seed be." He was "strong in faith." Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and trusts only in that Word.

So Abraham did not think of himself, nor of his wife, and of their great age, and how unlikely, or even impossible, it was that they should have a son, but "looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief."

God's word is "Spirit and life;" it created all things in the beginning, and as Abraham and Sarah forgot themselves and thought of and looked to God's word and promise, by the power of the Spirit that worked through the Word, the long-promised, long-expected son was born. When the fulness of God's time was come, Isaac, "the child of promise," was "born of the Spirit."

Next week we will tell you of another "child of promise" of whose birth the birth of Isaac was the type or shadow, and through whom we too may be "born of the Spirit," and so become, like Him "the children of promise."