

# **Patriarchal Panic**

**When God called Abraham He set in motion His plan for worldwide redemption**

***'... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'***

**(Gen.12:3)**

***'... in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed'***

**(Gen.22:18)**

***'Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, 'but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ'***

**(Gal.3:16)**

***'And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed"'***

**(Gal.3:8)**

***'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad'***

**(John 8:56)**

***'And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification'***

**(Rom.4:22-25)**

***'...those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all'***

**(Rom.4:16)**

✓ **To Isaac:** *'...in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed'* (**Gen.26:4**)

✓ **To Jacob:** *'...in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed'* (**Gen.28:14**)

✓ **'The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'** is mentioned at least 12 times, emphasizing the covenant God made with the patriarchs to bless the nations with imputed righteousness through faith

**Many times, the promise seemed to be in danger, so the patriarchs panicked and took matters into their own hands. E.g.**

- ✓ **Abraham feared for his life because of Sarah, and hit the panic button**
- ✓ **As Abraham grew old he feared the promise would not be fulfilled and that Eliezer, his household servant, would become the heir of the promise. God reassured him by renewing the promise to him. *'And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir"'* (Gen.15:4)**

**□ As the years rolled on and the promise remained unfulfilled, Sarai proposed a plan to fulfill the promise themselves**

***'Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai'***

**(Gen.16:1-2)**

**This time they didn't consult God, and Ishmael was born as a result**

**Another 13 years went by. Now they were both beyond the age of childbearing. But God came to Abraham again and promised a miraculous birth:**

***'Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"***

**(Gen.17:15-17)**

**□ Abraham's faith was still weak and he pleads, 'Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!' (Gen.17:18)**

**God reassured him again with the promise, 'Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him"' (Gen.17:19)**

**The letter 'h' is added to both their names, corresponding to the Hebrew letter 'heh' in Yahweh, associated with the Spirit/breath/life of God. It speaks of God's ability to breathe life into any situation**

**□ In the next chapter, 3 visitors appeared to Abraham and Sarah. At first they did not realize who they were, until...**

***'Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son" (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)'***

**(Gen.18:9-10)**

***'Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"'***

**(Gen.18:12-15)**

- ✓ **When the angel of the LORD said, 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' Sarah received strength to bear, carry and nurse the child. 'By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised' (Heb.11:11)**
- ✓ **She received strength to conceive because she judged Him faithful who promised. She looked beyond the promise to the One who promised. She was changed, and never the same again**
- ✓ **Abraham too was changed, as was seen in his offering up of Isaac**

***'By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense'***

**(Heb.11:17-19)**

- ✓ **God is not in a hurry to fulfill His plans.** *'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily'* **(Isa.28:16)**
- ✓ **He has set a time,** *'But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year'* **(Gen.17:21).** *'At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son'* **(Gen.18:4).** *'For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him'* **(Gen.21:2).** *'For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry'* **(Hab.2:3).** **Gal.4:4.**

- ✓ **What God promises He enables. Their bodies were wonderfully rejuvenated – Sarah not only conceived but carried and gave birth to, and nursed, Isaac. Abraham had 6 more sons through Keturah**
- ✓ **Sarah's cynical laugh was turned into the laugh of faith. *'And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me"' (Gen.21:6). 'When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them"' (Psa.126:1-2)***

## **Isaac and Rebekah**

**□ 'Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them' (Gen.25:21-26)**

- ✓ ***'And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob' (Gen.25:28)***
- ✓ **The parents each had a favourite, but for different reasons. Rebekah believed that Jacob was the direct heir to the God's promise to Abraham**
- ✓ **But Rebekah panicked and hatched a plan**
- ✓ **In trying to work it all out through scheming, this family plunged into a bitter crisis. Husband against wife. Brother against brother. Parent against son; son against parent**
- ✓ **But God fulfilled His promise regardless of their disastrous attempts to bring it to pass through manipulation**

## Jacob

- ✓ **Jacob schemed to take both the birthright and the blessing**
- ✓ **When he fled from Esau, God appeared to him at Bethel and promised to protect him, bring him back to the land and give it to him and his descendants. But Jacob still tried to do a deal with God**
- ✓ **Twenty years later as he returned to the land he had another encounter with God in which he placed his trust in Him. God changed his name to Israel - a Prince with God**

- ✓ **The unbelief of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob is passed over in Heb.11**
- ✓ **Those who walk by faith learn not to be influenced by the mocking of others, nor to laugh at impossibilities. As with Abraham and Sarah, in one year from now things can be completely different**
- ✓ **God's promises concerning His work in us, in the Church and in the world can be trusted**
- ✓ **His people will have 'the last laugh', the laugh of faith**
- ✓ ***'...imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises' (Heb.6:12)***