

Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?

Genesis 18.1-15

In Genesis 17 God stuns Abraham with news that his wife Sarah is going to give birth at the age of 90! Abraham doesn't tell Sarah this news, but God will. He visits them, and repeats the promise. Sarah laughs – like Abraham did; but is anything too hard for the Lord?

A Special Visit: Fellowship between the Lord and Abraham (1-8)

God came to visit Abraham: He desires intimate fellowship with us.

Abraham humbly and sacrificially gave himself to care for his guests.

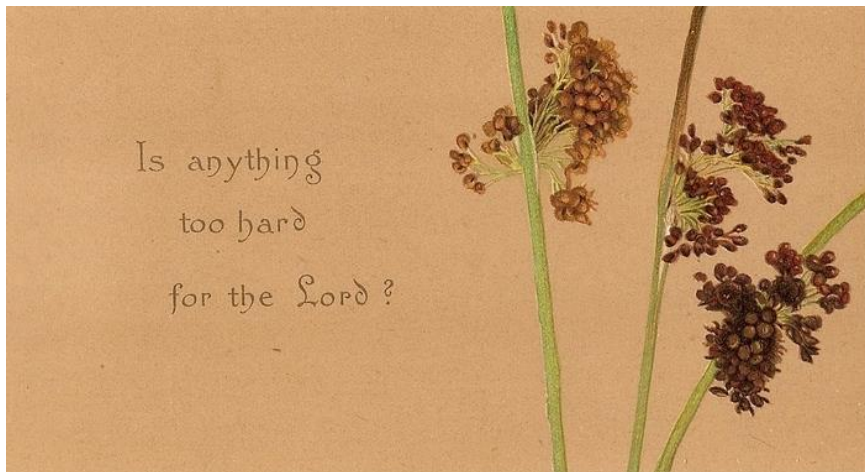
Intimate fellowship with God involves meals – now and in the future.

An Incredible Promise: Power beyond our comprehension (9-15)

God's promise seems incredible: Sarah laughs.

Impossible, you say? Is anything too hard for the Lord?

God preserves the laugh: Human incredulity exalts the Lord's provision.



Digging Deeper

1. Genesis 18 opens with the statement that ‘the Lord appeared to Abraham,’ but Abraham probably didn’t realize this at first. He is enjoying his midday siesta when he suddenly becomes aware of the three men standing in front of him. Who were these men (for two of them, see Gen.19.1)?
2. Why do you think the Lord came to Abraham? He has already promised Abraham a son by Sarah, so repeating and affirming that promise alone does not explain God’s action. We are told that it was *the heat of the day*, when travelers most needed the kind of care Abraham graciously provided (contrast this with the time of day God came to Adam and Eve in Eden (Gen.3.8). What does Abraham’s response to three strangers show? What is significant about God eating a meal with Abraham? What in our Christian experience compares with this?
3. Beginning in verse 9, the narrative reveals the reason for God’s visit. Why do you think He asked where Sarah was? (Didn’t He know?) While the Lord (and two angels) are sitting and talking with Abraham, the Lord’s words are directed to Sarah. No one knows for sure, of course, but considering Abraham’s response to God’s promise (17.17), might not God have enjoyed stunning Sarah with this news as well? (How do you think you would’ve reacted if you were Sarah?)
4. God omnisciently knows what Sarah said to herself (her secret thoughts), and rhetorically asks why she laughed. Can you see how the Lord is making this into a *teaching moment*? What is the expected answer to the question in v14?
5. The narrative ends in v15 with Sarah denying that she laughed. Have you ever doubted the Lord? What promises of God might we struggle at times to believe? Notably, God doesn’t let Sarah ‘off the hook’: He replies, “No, but you did laugh.” What is the value (for Abraham and Sarah, and for us) in *remembering* that laugh? What does it remind us *never to doubt*?

