

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XIII

October 31, 2004

No. 44

Hope Against Hope

Jerry Fite

I imagine being ninety nine years old, and hearing you will have a son with your wife who is eighty nine years of age. No, it will not be via adoption, but your own wife will conceive seed from you and you will have a son. Incredible as the message might seem, this is the message Abraham heard: “*And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. As I will bless her and moreover I will give thee a son of her...*” (Genesis 17:15-16).

Even in Biblical times when people were living longer, both Abraham and Sarah considered themselves to be old (Gen. 17:17, 18:12), and Sarah being barren all through her productive child bearing years (Gen. 11:30, 16:1) had now “ceased to be... after the manner of women” (Gen. 18:11).

Paul characterizes Abraham’s response to the message he and Sarah will have a son as “*Who in hope believed against hope...and without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead*

(he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; yet looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:18-21).

Abraham looked at circumstances that naturally would discourage hope, with hope because of his trust in God who had promised Him a son of Sarah. Thus “*in hope*” he “*believed against hope*”.

God has made all of us a promise that many mock today: The Lord will come again bringing an end to this world, and usher the redeemed to heaven where they will be with the Lord forever (2 Peter 3, I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Mockers, focusing attention on the fact that things on earth have been rocking along for over 1,970 years without the Lord coming, say “Where is the promise of His coming”? In our limited view of time, it might not appear that things are going to end on earth with such drama as the Lord returning. This is when we can demonstrate the hope and faith that

Abraham had when he heard what many would say could not occur. We can “*in hope believe against hope*” and waver not through unbelief, but wax “*strong through faith giving glory to God, and be fully assured that what He had promised, he was able to perform*”.

Have you given up on someone who, by their past actions, seem to make it impossible to believe that they will ever become a Christian and be saved? At one time this might have been said about the prodigal son who gladly pursued his profligate life (Luke 15:11-13). But the prodigal “came to himself” (Luke 15:17), while experiencing the reality of sin’s wages. And he humbly came back to the Father, once dead in sin but now alive (Luke 15:32).

Trusting in the drawing power of the Gospel message of love (Romans 1:16, 5: 8-11), knowing that Our God can save even the chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:15), we should not give up on our loved ones who might one day come to themselves. In hope believe against hope.