

God's Fulfilling Word
Genesis 21:1-7

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Main idea: God's Word assures, gladdens, and strengthens His people as they live by faith in Christ.

Introduction: Who would have said?

1. God's Word assures us of everything it says. God puts the reliability of His Word front and center in this passage. It is *as He had said* that Yahweh visit's Sarah (v1a). It is *as He had spoken* that Yahweh does for Sarah (v1b). It is *at the set time of which God had spoken* that Sarah bears a son (v2). It is *as God has commanded him* that Abraham circumcises Isaac (v4). And, in fact, we know that Isaac is "Isaac" because God commanded them to give him this name in 17:9.
 - a. He will do everything that He says
 - b. We must do everything that He commands
2. God's Word gladdens us. The verb translated "said" in v7 is not ordinarily used in telling history, like the ones in v1-2. It is almost always found in poetry, suggesting that Sarah is singing a joyous song of "Isaac" (literally, "laughter"!). The fact of the matter is that what God promises is to do infinite good to sinners, opposite what they deserve or are able, for the sake of His promise, and that Christ whom He has promised. As these promises come true, we are made to laugh with joy.
 - a. First by faith
 - b. Even in trouble
 - c. Finally by sight
3. God's Word strengthens us
 - a. A visible Word—"Circumcised" and "said." The verb translated "said" in v7 also shares the consonants of the root for the word "circumcised" in v4, so that the play on words here is strong. The Lord's promise—He is the One who "said" to Abraham that Sarah would have a child—had been set before Abraham in his own circumcision, and its fulfillment has been seen now in Isaac's.
 - b. To overcome our weakness in receiving the audible Word.
 - i. cf. Gen 15, covenant an answer to "how shall I know" of v8. Gen 17, circumcision identified with that covenant.
 - ii. In connection with His covenant, God gave Abraham a physical sign that would direct him to look to God's promise as his only hope for himself, and also as his only hope for his children. When God brings true part of what the sign shows, He also has that sign put upon Isaac—a sign for which Abraham now has an increased appreciation. Baptism and the Supper do this for us today. They remind us that it is for Christ's sake, and by Christ's life and power, that God has done us the good that we have received thus far. And that His future goodness to us rests securely upon that very same Christ.

Conclusion: the Lord not only does what He plans to do, but He tells us about it—in Word and in sacrament—so that we will walk with Him in confidence, joy, and strength.