

## Genesis Chapters 15-21, selections

### Chapter 15

God came to Abram in a vision: “Don’t be afraid, Abram. I’m your shield. Your reward will be grand!” Abram said, “God, Master, what use are your gifts as long as I’m childless. You’ve given me no children, and now a slave in my household is going to get it all.” God said, “Don’t worry, he won’t be your heir; a son from your body will be your heir.”

God took him outside and said, “Count the stars—so shall your descendants be.” And Abram believed him

### Chapter 16

[Ten years later] Sarai hadn’t yet produced a child. She had an Egyptian maid named Hagar. Sarai said to Abram, “God has not seen fit to let me have a child. Sleep with my maid. Maybe I can get a family from her.” Abram agreed to do what Sarai said.

So Sarai took Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. He slept with Hagar and she got pregnant. When Hagar learned she was pregnant, she looked down on her mistress with contempt. Sarai told Abram, “It’s all your fault that I’m suffering this abuse. I put my maid in bed with you and the minute she knows she’s pregnant, she treats me like I’m nothing. Abram said, “deal with her as you please.” Sarai was abusive to Hagar and Hagar ran away into the desert alone.

God met Hagar there, blessed her and sent her back. Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore him a son, Ishmail.

### Chapter 17

[Thirteen years later] when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared and promised again to give Abram a huge family. Abram laughed, saying, “can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?” God promised that Sarai would bear a child named Isaac the very next year and an everlasting covenant would be established with him. From now on their names were to be Abraham, the father of many nations, and Sarah.

### Chapter 18

God appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He offered them hospitality—food and water and rest—and prepared a meal. One man said, “your wife Sarah will bear a child in due season.” Sarah who was inside the tent heard this and laughed. “An old woman like me? Get

pregnant? With this old man of a husband?” God asked Abraham, “why did Sarah laugh? Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? Sarah will have a son in due season.”

## **Chapter 20**

Abraham and Sarah journeyed to Gerar and resided as aliens. He told everyone “Sarah is my sister.” King Abimelech sent and took Sarah. But God came to him in a dream and said, “you are about to die because the woman you took is married.” Abimelech had not slept with her and said to God, “didn’t Abraham say, ‘she is my sister’ and she said, ‘he is my brother.’ I am innocent!” God said, “I know. Return the man’s wife and you shall live.” Abimelech went on to Abraham, “Whatever were you thinking of when you did this thing?” Abraham said, “I just assumed that there was no fear of God in this place and that they’d kill me to get my wife.” Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham, and along with her sent sheep and cattle and servants, both male and female. He said, “My land is open to you; live wherever you wish.”

## **Chapter 21**

God visited Sarah exactly as promised. She conceived and gave Abraham a son they named Isaac which means “laughter.” Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born.

Sarah said,

God has blessed me with laughter and all who get the news will laugh with me!

Whoever would have suggested to Abraham that Sarah would one day nurse a baby!

Yet here I am! I’ve given the old man a son!

## **Psalm 100**

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;

Serve the Lord with gladness and come into the divine presence with a song.

Know this: the Lord, the Lord, is God; the One made us and to whom we belong;

We are God’s people, the sheep of God’s pasture.

Enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving; go into these courts with praise;

give thanks to God and call upon the name of the Lord.

For the Lord is good, whose steadfast love is everlasting; and whose faithfulness endures from age to age.