

“All in God’s Time”

Genesis 18:1-14

When Abraham was 75 years old, the Lord promised him that he would be the father of a great nation [Gen. 12:2]. Sarah was only 66, still within the age of childbearing for people in Abraham’s day. For 24 years, the Lord had been with him, but He had not yet fulfilled His promise to give Abraham and Sarah a son. Abraham was not quite at the end of his years – he died when he was 175. But Sarah’s childbearing years had now passed.

In this 99th year of Abraham’s life, the Lord announced to him on two different occasions that Sarah would give birth to a son. The first time, Abraham laughed at the notion that Sarah would give him a son [Gen. 17:17]. He thought that it was too late for God to fulfill His promise. On the second occasion, Sarah laughed [Gen. 18:12] because she assumed that since God had not fulfilled His promise of giving her a son in the time frame that she anticipated, God was not going to fulfill His promise. She thought such a blessing to be impossible, because she was too old. She failed to understand that nothing is too difficult for the Lord.

God’s promises not being fulfilled in what certain people consider a timely manner has been a common problem for people throughout the

history of the world. In Genesis 3:15, after the Fall into sin, God promised Adam and Eve that He would send His Seed to be the Savior of the world. Adam and Eve probably thought that it was going to be one of their sons. But God had His own time frame.

God did not send His Son into the world in the time frame in which the world wanted. By the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem, most of the world had forgotten God's promise. The prophet Isaiah had foretold the manner in which Christ would come: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" [Is. 7:14]. Yet even the Jews who were familiar with the Old Testament laughed at the idea that Mary was a virgin giving birth to the Savior of the world.

Today, we are confronted with the same dilemma as Abraham, Sarah, and the people of Jesus' day. Christ has promised that He will return in all His glory and give to us the gift of eternal life. However, Jesus has not returned in the time frame that the people of the world would like. Ever since the Lord ascended into heaven, Christians have been anxiously waiting for his return.

In the days of the apostles many thought that He would return in their lifetime. But He didn't. Christians throughout the ages have seen signs that we must be near the end and that Christ must come in their lifetime. But He didn't – not yet.

We all remember the crazies leading up to the year 2000 who predicted the end of the world, who knew that finally the Lord would come.

But He didn't.

Now the world looks at God's Word and those who believe it and laughs, just as Sarah did. We are waiting and waiting for a overdue sign from God, so says the world around us. For many people in the world, our faith is a joke. Why do we ruin a good morning's sleep or a free evening and go to church? Why do we offer our time, talents, and possessions to a God we have never seen?

We do this because, as Abraham found in the 100th year of His life, God fulfills His promises. God has given us the promise of eternal life. Christ is returning. But because of our sinful nature, we grow impatient. Doubts creep in. We get embarrassed by the laughter that we hear around us.

The world laughs at us for believing that God created the heavens and the earth, rather than buying into the theory of evolution which is scientifically impossible to prove or to justify for that matter – don't get me started. The world laughs at us for believing that Christ rose from the dead – even though there is a mountain of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth – again, don't get me started. It is absolutely provable through the science of history.

And through that very provable event, the death and resurrection from the grave of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, and we have the promise of our resurrection from our grave. The world mocks us and laughs at us for waiting patiently for Christ's return. Just remember what the Word of God

says about the fools who say there is no God, those who mock and scoff have a very different future than you and I. Don't hate them. Pray for them.

If you ever begin to have any doubts about whether or not Christ is really going to return again, remember the doubts that Abraham and Sarah had the year before Isaac was born. Remember the doubts that the Jewish people had at the time Jesus was born. And remember that God does not do things in the time frame in which we would always like Him to do them.

God has a plan for this world. From the days of Adam and Eve, people have been trying to figure out that plan. Many people have predicted the date on which Christ would come, and they have all been wrong. Jesus said that He will come as a thief in the night when we least expect it, so we must always be prepared and not give up hope.

We tend to be impatient people, but we have a very patient God. He has set the time for His return, and we can see that He is very consistent in how He deals with His people. God always fulfills His promises. However, He does not do things in the time frame that the impatient people of this world would like.

Christ is returning. God will fulfill His promise. Do not be intimidated by those outside the church who laugh at what we believe. The truth of the Gospel has always been ridiculed by the world. Have faith. Have confidence in what God has promised you. And know that nothing is too difficult for the Lord. Amen.