

You Bet I Laughed

by Donald Schmidt

3 min

Scripture reference: Genesis 18:1–15, 21:1–7

INTRO Was Sarah really all that thrilled to learn about becoming pregnant at the age of 90? One has to wonder just what her feelings were as she prepared to give birth to the child that she and Abraham named “Laughter.”

Laugh?

You bet I laughed.

A deep, disgusted,
confused, frustrated,
angry laugh,
And Abraham laughed, too,
don't forget that.

Imagine: pregnant at my age!

All those years of longing

praying

hoping

dreaming

for what? nothing!

More wandering in deserts

of barrenness

and loneliness.

More nasty remarks from the neighbors:

“Oh how sad,

there goes poor Sarah,
barren all these years.
Makes you wonder
what sin she's paying for..."

And then to be told
this appalling joke: pregnant at 90!
What could I do but laugh?
Crying's quite out of the question
with something so ludicrous as this.

But then reality—and the anger—
set in.

Why now, God?
Why after all these years?
What's the point?
I've never known you to be this cruel.

I asked,
begged—
okay, demanded sometimes,
but yearned,
longed,
pined,
cried out...
"Why didn't you hear me, God?
Why?"

And yet
after the initial shock

we thought:
 why not now?

God has always been surprising us,
shocking us,
pushing the limits just a little more each time,
inviting us to trust
in new and unusual ways.

 Was this really any different
 from all the other challenges?

I remember the night
after the messengers came.
Abraham had a little too much to drink
and crawled into my tent
rather sheepishly,
almost like a nervous youth.

He made some silly remark
about needing to sleep with me—
 how it was God's will—
and we laughed and loved into the night.

And when it all came true,
I was horrified.
 All of the joy I had once had,
the dreams of giving birth,
 gave way to deathly fear.

Yet Abraham held me close,
and we cried and questioned together,

and wondered,
and
wondered.

And no small eternity later
 Isaac was born,
and I whose dreams had all but dried up
 held that bundle of hope and promise
 to my breast.

And as I watched Abraham hold him aloft
 proud beyond words
I was overcome with joy
 and thanksgiving
for a God so full of surprises.

Laugh?
You bet I laughed.