

birth of Isaac. In Genesis 17:17 you have the account in which God promised Abraham that he would have a son. And he says that Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said in his heart, “Shall a son be born to one that is a hundred years old and shall Sarah that is ninety years old bare?” He says there is a parallel to this in the J document, in the next chapter. There in 18:12 you read, “And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, ‘After I am withered shall I have pleasure? My lord being old also?’ And the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why then did Sarah laugh, saying, shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ” You see how laughing is mentioned in what they considered to be part of a P document in Genesis 17, and in what they considered to be part of the J document in Genesis 18. And then in Genesis 21, you have a part of the E document. In verse 6 you read, “And Sarah said, ‘God hath prepared laughter for me. Everyone that heareth shall laugh with me.’ ” That was right after the account of the birth of Isaac. The previous four verses are given to the P document, but that verse is given to the Jehovah document, or to the Elohist document. And so Addis has a footnote on page 217 of his second volume of this place in the P document. And in that footnote he says, “Laugh – the term Isaac” (in Hebrew Isaac means “he laughed”).

Abraham wondered at the mighty promise of God. We might say he was incredulous. And Sarah was incredulous. But after the child was born, Sarah laughed with joy. So you see the problem. Why was Isaac named Isaac? Was it because Sarah laughed out of incredulity as the verse says in the J document? Or because she laughed out of joy as the verse says which they give to the E document, or because Abraham laughed out of wonder as the verse says which they give to the P document? Is there actually any contradiction between them? Why did they call the child “he laughed?” Was it not a natural term because laughter seems to have been connected in so many ways with the account? It seemed absolutely impossible to have a child at their age. They laughed at the impossibility of it. Or at the wonder that God would do such a tremendous thing, and then when the child was born, they laughed again out of joy so they called his name Isaac. There are supposedly three accounts of the naming of Isaac, though only one of them actually says he was called Isaac. But they say there are three accounts of why he was called Isaac. Are there three accounts? Or it