

## My Thoughts For Sunday, 22 March 2015

### Women of the Bible—Part 4—Sarai, A Mother in Her Silver Years of Life

Most of us are at least familiar with the Word of God pertaining to Abram and his wife Sarai. They were a relatively young couple brought up in Ur of the Chaldeans. They had recently set out to journey to Canaan and made it as far as Haran where they settled for a time. *“Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.”* (Genesis 11:31)

While in Haran, Abram received that well known call from God to pack up everything he owned and move to some mysterious place that God would direct him to. This is when God made His first promise to Abram to make a great nation out of his descendants. *“The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”* (Genesis 12:1-3)

As far as we know from Scripture, with no questions asked, Abram did exactly that. He packed up, bag and baggage, and set out for parts unknown. We always refer to that amazing faith that Abram showed but I think we sometimes overlook the hardships they encountered, especially for Sarai, his relatively young wife who was barren How did this promise come across to her, the promise of descendants when she did not even have a child. Here they were on the road to who knew where with a promise that seemed, at the time, to have no possibility of fulfillment. Think for a moment of the hardship she must have encountered. Here she was, wife of a favored man of God, on a journey of unknown destination, barren, and with her husband looking forward to the promise of uncountable descendants. Obviously she loved her husband and had to have a fair amount of faith on her own in order to put up with the ridicule and snide remarks that might have been forthcoming from her traveling companions, the other women, mothers, on the journey.

How must Sarai have felt when Abram passed her off as his sister, out of fear for their safety, when the Pharaoh of Egypt took a liking to her? Later, when Sarai was about seventy five and still barren, she decided to take matters into her own hand, helping God with His promise. She gave her handmaiden, Hagar, to Abram, as was the custom, to bear a child for them to fulfill the promise of an heir. This did not bode well for her either, for as soon as Hagar was with child, she lorded it over Sarai and made her life more miserable. *“He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, “ ‘You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me.’ ‘Your slave is in your hands,’ Abram said. ‘Do with her whatever you think best.’ Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from*

her.””(Genesis 16:4-6) Poor Sarai: It must have seemed to her that she was a complete failure. Nothing she ever did turned out right. She was still without child and it looked like that was not going to change.

Once more we see, in the sixteenth chapter of Genesis, how God again stepped in to make things right out of the impetuous decisions made by His children. We never seem to get it right—“God is in control, He will fulfill His promises in His timetable” Here in this chapter we see that God returned to Abram and re-affirmed His promise of many years ago. Abram was now ninety-nine years and Sarai would be about ninety when God told Abram that he and Sarai were going to get a name change; they would now be called Abraham and Sarah. The Lord appeared to Abraham again and spoke of God’s promise in more definite terms... *”I will return in one year and Sarah will have a son.”* Sarah, although the dutiful and loving wife and believer in her God, laughed to herself and said... *“After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?”* (Genesis 18:10-12) Reading on in Genesis we see the promise fulfilled, Sarah did have the promised son.

There are many lessons to be learned by us from the lives of Abraham and Sarah; lessons about belief, trust, patience and the great, honest, undeserved love our God has for us. How many times have we read of the many promises God has given us and been impatient to receive instant fulfillment? How many times have we doubted that these promises are even for us? How often do we turn our backs on that unbelievable, un-deserved love of God for us and go our own way? How often do we try to take credit for our accomplishments rather than give the credit to God where it is due?

It would do us well to seriously take the time to reread the account of Abraham and Sarah and really understand the years that passed in their lives, the hardships they must have encountered and the great faith they had to have had, to trust in that far off promise that only now we can look at in full perspective. I sincerely pray that all of us may come to realize that God is in control. God does love us. Realize that if God promised it, we can “take it to the bank.” It is a sure thing and will be completed as promised at the best time in our lives, determined by the God who knows us best. Be patient. Trust the Lord. Love the Lord and be loved by Him. *“Be still and know that I am God.”* (Psalm 46:10)