

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

## Sunday Morning

Study 6

*By Faith Sarah...*

# Sarah

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** To portray God's faithfulness even in the midst of our doubts or questions.

## Key Verses

Hebrews 11:11-12—Main Teaching Passage

Genesis 18:1-15

Genesis 21:1-7

## Memory Verse - Mark 9:24

"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Galatians 3:6.

Start the class by having the students name some of the many miracles found in the Scripture (healing the blind, the Red Sea parting, the sun standing still, etc.)

Once you have compiled the list, ask the students which ones seem to be the most impossible. Which are the ones that, if God told you they were going to happen, you would struggle to believe that they could actually take place?

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

## BOOK

Hebrews 11:11-12 does something very unexpected; it commends Sarah for her faith. The natural reading of Genesis 18 of course shows what we would consider to be the opposite of faith. Sarah does not believe that she could bear a child. Notice however in Hebrews 11 that Sarah's faith is not based on her belief, or even on actions, but rather, "By faith Sarah *received strength*." Sarah is commended for receiving strength. The Lord was the one who made it possible for her to give birth, He gave her the strength, but she, through faith, received it. Her laughter was turned from mocking, to absolute joy. Sarah's story is important because it shows us that even when we doubt, we can still through faith honor the Lord, be strengthened by Him, and have His work accomplished in our lives. The end result, of course, is a strengthening of both Sarah and Abraham's faith. The Lord promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, He promised that Abraham and Sarah would have a son, and He fulfilled both of these promises. That gave Sarah the ability to trust that God would accomplish everything else that He promised, and strengthened her faith in Him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

## LOOK

Do you ever have trouble believing something that you read in the Bible? Sometimes the things that we find written down in Scripture are so incredible that we might doubt whether or not they actually happened. Maybe you have doubts that the things God has promised us will not actually come to pass. After all, God promised that His Son Jesus would return to the Earth and take His Church home to be with Him, and that was 2,000 years ago.

If you ever feel like that, you need to know that you are not alone. Many people have doubts. In fact, lots of people in the Bible doubted whether or not God's word was true. One of the most blatant and obvious examples is that of Sarah. God has promised Sarah that her husband would be the father of a great nation, but now decades later Sarah still had not born any children. Sarah was old, and she began to doubt. Sarah came to a point where she believed that there was absolutely no way that God's Word would come to pass. She would never have a child.

In Genesis 18, the Lord appeared to Abraham in person. He sat and ate with Abraham one evening and reminded him that his wife was going to give birth to a son. Sarah, who is eavesdropping, laughed out loud. She

# LOOK (Continued)

actually mocked the Lord, believing that it was impossible. When the Lord called her out on this, Genesis 18:15 says that Sarah was afraid. God reminded her “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” Proverbs 1:7 tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Here, I believe, Sarah began to believe. Hebrews 11 tells us that Sarah received strength to conceive and bear a child. God was able to overcome her unbelief and overwhelm Sarah with grace.

In Genesis 21, God’s Word is proven to be true. Sarah, in her old age, became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy who is named Isaac. Sarah surely remembered her interaction with God in Gen 18, and exclaimed, “God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me.” Sarah’s faith was strengthened even when she was struggling the most to believe God’s Word. Hebrews commends Sarah, that even though she had doubts, she still received the things of God and went forward with Him.

It is okay to have doubts. It is okay to not understand certain things in the Scripture. When we are struggling, when we are finding it difficult to believe, we have to remember Sarah. We can move forward with God, receiving His strength at our lowest points, just as Sarah did.

2 Corinthians 12:9 tells us that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Put aside your doubts, trust God, and see what He will do.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class memorize Mark 9:24

Spend some time taking prayer requests and praying for the individual needs of the students.

**Pray:** Thank the Lord that His word is true and that He always does what He says He will do. Ask Him to give us the same strength He gave Sarah, and to move in accordance with His will even when we are struggling or doubting.

**Parent Question:** How did God prove His faithfulness to Sarah?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Heb 11:1-2, Gen 18:1-15 & Gen 21:1-5 By David Guzik

3. (11-12) Sarah's faith and its results.

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude; innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

a. **By faith Sarah:** Sarah's faith was not perfect. She first laughed in unbelief (Genesis 18:9-15) and then she learned to laugh in faith (Genesis 21:6).

b. **Because she judged Him faithful who had promised:** Faith comes down to judging that God is faithful and able to keep His promises. It was this faith that enabled Sarah to **receive strength to conceive seed**. God gave the strength, but Sarah received it by faith.

c. **Were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude:** Because of the faith of Sarah and Abraham, thousands - millions - of descendants were born. Their faith had an impact on more lives than they ever dreamed of.

### *Genesis 18 - The Promise of Isaac Confirmed*

A. Abraham meets some very important visitors.

1. (1-5) Abraham invites the LORD and two others to a meal.

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."

a. **Then the LORD appeared:** Apparently, this happened a short time later. In Genesis 17:21, God said Sarah would give birth one year later, and at this time, she is not yet pregnant. So this couldn't be more than three months after the events in Genesis 17.

b. **Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees:** Here again, the LORD came to Abraham in human appearance. This is another presentation of Jesus in human form before His incarnation.

i. We can assume that this was God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, appearing to Abraham before His incarna-

tion and birth at Bethlehem. We assume this because of God the Father it says, *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him* (John 1:18), and no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1 Timothy 6:16). Therefore, if God appeared to someone in human appearance in the Old Testament (and no one has seen God the Father) it makes sense the appearance is of the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

c. **Behold, three men were standing by him:** We don't know if Abraham immediately recognized who these visitors were. Though the LORD (in the Person of Jesus Christ) appeared to Abraham twice before (Genesis 12:7, 17:1), we don't know if Jesus looked the same each time, or if Abraham could just know who this was.

d. **He ran from the tent door to meet them:** According to his godliness and the customs of that culture, Abraham offered the hospitality of his house to these travelers.

2. (6-8) Sarah and Abraham prepare a meal for their visitors.

So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

a. **Abraham hurried into the tent:** Again, to us this may seem to be overdoing it, but ancient culture had an extremely strong sense of hospitality to visitors. *And* it is also likely Abraham knew it was the LORD visiting him.

3. (9-10) God reconfirms His promise of a son.

Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)

a. **I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son:** We may wonder why God repeated the promise again, so close to the time when He said it previously. After all, it seems God was silent about the promise for more than 13 years. Now He came personally to repeat it twice in three months.

b. **Sarah your wife shall have a son:** We *need* to hear God's promises over and over again. It is a way God uses to encourage and develop our faith: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Romans 10:17).

i. Perhaps also, Abraham and Sarah needed this visit to be an encouragement for them to do what they needed to do in bringing God's promise to pass - to have sexual relations.

4. (11-12) Sarah's reaction to God's promise.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

a. **After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure?** Sarah laughed within herself at this promise. She could not believe God would literally grant this child as the result of normal sexual relations.

i. Leupold translates Genesis 18:12, "After I have become worn out, have I enjoyed sexual delight and my lord

too is an old man?" Leupold the observes, "The matter is not put very delicately by Sarah."

ii. It may be, even after the dramatic promises of Genesis 17, Abraham and Sarah had a way of "spiritualizing" God's promise, making it mean something other than what God intended. Here, God made it plain: Abraham and Sarah will have normal sexual relations and produce a baby.

iii. It is strangely characteristic of us to believe God's promise for a long, long, time, and endure through much discouragement along the way, until the promise is *almost there*, and then we find doubt. We are grateful that He is greater than our doubts.

b. **Sarah had passed the age of childbearing:** By all outward circumstance, there was good reason for Sarah to "spiritualize" the promise and laugh at its literal meaning. She **had passed the age of childbearing**, which literally seems to mean, "the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah." She had stopped menstruating and had gone through menopause.

i. Even accounting for their long lives (Abraham lived to be 175 and Sarah 127), they were both well past middle age. It would take a miracle of God for them to have literal children through normal means.

c. **Therefore Sarah laughed within herself:** Significantly, this is what Sarah (and Abraham) *most wanted all their lives*. Yet, they find it so hard to believe God's promise when He says He will grant it to them.

5. (13-15) God answers Sarah's laugh.

And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

a. **Why did Sarah laugh:** God heard Sarah's laugh even though she *laughed within herself*. There was nothing hidden before the LORD.

i. We might live very differently if we remembered that God hears and knows everything we think and say.

b. **At the appointed time I will return to you:** We might think God would say, "I gave you this promise twice and twice you laughed at it. That's it! No more promise. I'll take it to someone who will appreciate it." Instead, God responded by dealing with her sin of unbelief, but not by taking away the promise.

i. *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself* (2 Timothy 2:13).

c. **Is there anything too hard for the LORD?** Thankfully not, and God can also triumph even over our weak faith.

i. **Hard** is the same word for *wonderful* in Isaiah 9:6: *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given ... And His name will be called Wonderful*. Jesus is our "wonderful" One, and He isn't to **hard** or wonderful for God to give unto us.

d. **The LORD said to Abraham:** Significantly, God dealt with **Abraham** about this, not Sarah herself, because Abraham was the head of his home.

## ***Genesis 21 - The Birth of Isaac***

A. The birth of Isaac.

1. (1) God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Sarah.

And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.

a. **The LORD visited Sarah as He had said:** It took a long time (25 years) for this promise to come to pass, but God was faithful to His promise. God's promises never fail.

b. **As He had spoken:** The promise of a son was not fulfilled because Abraham was perfect in his obedience, but because God was faithful to His Word.

i. Some promises of God are conditional and depend on something we must do. Other promises of God are unconditional, and God will fulfill them not because of what we do, but because of who He is.

2. (2-7) The child is named Isaac.

For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him; whom Sarah bore to him; Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."

a. **Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him; whom Sarah bore to him; Isaac:** Originally, the name **Isaac** was meant as somewhat of a rebuke of the laughter of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 17:17-19 and 18:12-15), but God turned a gentle rebuke into an occasion for joy.

b. **Isaac:** Isaac became a wonderful type or picture of Jesus.

- Both were specially promised sons.
- Both were born after a period of delay.
- Both mothers were assured by God's omnipotence (Genesis 18:13-14; Luke 1:34, 37).
- Both were given names rich with meaning before they were born.
- Both births occurred at God's appointed time (Genesis 21:2; Galatians 4:4).
- Both births were miraculous.
- Both births were accompanied by joy (Genesis 21:6; Luke 1:46-47; 2:10-11).