

WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

Pattern Two

Sarah, Signifying Grace

Sisters Fellowship on June 14, 2025

I. One under God's ordination

- A. It is difficult to separate the accounts of Abraham and Sarah because they were one.
- B. God considers husband and wife as one (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31).
 - 1. Negative examples: Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 17-18), Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5)
 - 2. Positive examples: Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1), Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18)
- C. No doubt Sarah experienced much of what Abraham experienced:
 - 1. She left the idolatrous city of Ur and her father's house.
 - 2. She went out with Abraham, not knowing where she was going (Heb. 11:8).
 - 3. She sojourned and dwelt with Abraham in tents.
- D. God's goal was to bring both Abraham and Sarah into the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:5).

II. One under God's promise

- A. God promised to make of Abram a great nation, bless him, make his name great, and make him a blessing to all the nations and to give the land to his seed (Gen. 12:2, 7: 13:15-16; 21:12b).
- B. The problem was that Sarai was barren; she had no child (11:30).
- C. Abram built four altars along the way to Jehovah who had appeared to him and called upon the name of Jehovah (Gen. 12:7-8).
- D. Abraham and Sarah lived in tents – a testimony that they were strangers and sojourners on earth longing for a better country and eagerly waiting for a city which has foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God (Heb. 11:9-10).
- E. Abraham and Sarah were tested on their journey by famine to see if they would trust God for their daily necessities. They failed and went to Egypt, a type of the world.
- F. Abram told Sarai that since she was a beautiful woman, she would be taken, and he would be killed (Gen. 12:11-12), so he asked her to say she was his sister so he would live (12:13).
- G. Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's house until Pharaoh realized she was

Abram's wife. Then he sent them away with gifts.

- H. God sovereignly cared for them and by His keeping grace preserved Sarai and made Abram rich.
- I. They went back to Bethel, to the altar Abraham made formerly, and called on the Lord (13:3-4).

III. Learning to fellowship with God

- A. God confirmed His promises, and Abram and Sarai traveled to Hebron, a place of fellowship with God, and they built another altar there (13:14-18).
- B. Abraham fought for Lot and was met by Melchizedek (King of Salem and priest of the Most High God) with bread and wine.
- C. They began to realize that Jehovah was the Possessor of heaven and earth, and He was becoming their shield and great reward (15:1).

IV. How can the fulfillment of God's promise be realized?

- A. Because Sarai remained barren, there was no fulfillment of God's promise.
- B. Abraham wanted Jehovah to consider his servant Eliezer as the heir (15:2-3).
- C. No servant would be the heir, only one who came forth from Abraham and Sarah.
- D. In the Bible Sarah signifies grace. To fulfill God's purpose – grace is needed!
- E. Jehovah would not be satisfied with what they possessed (Eliezer) or with what they could produce apart from grace (Ishmael).
- F. Only what God works into us through His grace can bring forth Christ as the seed to fulfill God's purpose.
- G. When Abram believed God's promise, even though he had no child, God counted it as righteousness (15:6). This kind of faith is precious to God.
- H. God's covenant of promise can only be fulfilled through God's provision of grace, not through any effort of the flesh (15:9-21).

V. Sarah's suggestion for the fulfillment of God's promise

- A. Sarah is a negative example in the matter of proposing that her husband take Hagar as a concubine (Gen. 16:1-3).
- B. God repeatedly promised Abraham that he would have a seed (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:4-5), yet Sarah was not able to bear children.
- C. So, because of this, Sarah proposed to Abraham that he should go into her maid, Hagar, to have a son through her (Gen. 16:2).
- D. Sarah's proposal was accepted by Abraham, and he begot Ishmael through Hagar (Gen. 16:15).

- E. Like the first man who fell because he listened to his wife, the first called one also made a big mistake by listening to his wife.
- F. This is a warning to all women who hope in God, to not make any proposals to their husbands according to the flesh.
 1. Otherwise, they will produce “Ishmaels” out of their flesh, who will fight against the “Isaacs” born of God’s promise.
 2. This is to sow according to the flesh and to reap corruption of the flesh (Gal. 6:7-8).
- G. The principle of Ishmael is that man does things by his own strength for the accomplishment of God’s will.
- H. Are we fulfilling God’s purpose by ourselves, or by allowing Him to work through us? And are we assuming the headship or allowing Him to have the headship?

VI. God’s way

- A. Jehovah appeared to Abram at the age of 99 as the All-sufficient God.
- B. Romans 4:19 says that Abraham “considered his own body as already dead...as well as the deadening of Sarah’s womb.”
- C. Abram was charged to walk before Jehovah and be perfect, not to rely on the flesh, but to trust in God, and he would become the father of a multitude of nations (Gen 17:1-4).
- D. Only God and His grace can bring forth a multitude to fulfill God’s purpose.
- E. Jehovah changed Abraham’s name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham – father of a multitude of nations. Sarai’s name (my princess) was also changed to Sarah (mother of nations), a real transformation (17:5, 15).
- F. Abraham now was to be circumcised to put off the flesh, the old man of natural strength that produced Ishmael (17:9-11).
- G. Eliezer? God does not want him. Ishmael? God does not want him. Fleshly ability? It must be cut off. These are contrary to the accomplishing of God’s will.
- H. When God comes, grace comes to bring forth Isaac by grace for fulfillment of His purpose.
- I. Abraham was to be given a son by Sarah – by grace.
- J. The birth of Isaac testifies that believers are begotten by God’s grace in resurrection (cf. John 1:13).
- K. Ishmael, who was brought forth by the flesh, was rejected. Because Abraham offended God by producing Ishmael, he lost God’s presence for a period of thirteen years.
- L. Although both Abraham and Sarah laughed, doubting that they could

bring forth a child at the ages 100 and 90 (17:17; 18:9-15), Sarah bore a son and called his name Isaac (he laughs).

VII. A few lessons:

- A. God's appearing is the motivation and strength for our following the Lord as called ones.
- B. The Lord saves us from idolatry and oldness, but His goal is to bring us into the riches of the good land, the all-inclusive Christ realized as the all-inclusive Spirit (Gal. 3:14).
- C. Those whom God calls for His purpose often try to accomplish God's purpose with what they have or can do.
 - 1. The purpose is of God, and the person who accomplishes the purpose is God. It is God who calls, and it is also God who accomplishes in His people the purpose of His calling.
 - 2. God does not need our possessions or capabilities. He wants us to be a channel for Him to pass through.
 - 3. It is by God's visitations of grace that His purpose can be fulfilled.
 - 4. Even though we may become impatient with God's timing and are sometimes faithless, He remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13).
- D. Sarah eventually believed. "By faith also Sarah herself received power to conceive seed, even beyond the season of age, since she considered Him faithful who promised" (Heb. 11:11).
- E. Although Abraham was flawed, Sarah became a positive example in the matter of submitting to her husband.
 - 1. Sarah obeyed Abraham and subjected herself to him with a meek and quiet spirit, calling him "my lord" (Gen. 18:12; 1 Pet. 3:4, 6a).
 - 2. The holy women who hope in God and are subject to their husbands are Sarah's children (1 Pet. 3:5-6).
- F. Sarah is the mother of all New Testament believers (Gal. 4:21-31).
 - 1. Hagar is a symbol of the old covenant, from Mount Sinai, which belongs to the law and brings forth children unto slavery.
 - 2. Sarah is a symbol of the new covenant, from the Jerusalem above, which is free, and whose children enjoy all the riches of Christ in grace to make them His heirs.

(References: *Recovery Version of the Bible* with footnotes, *Life-study of Genesis; and Truth Lessons*)