*Godly Women Series 2019 Part 2*

Sarah: God Changed Her Name

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday February 17th, 2019

Text: Gen. 17:15-22

# **Intro**

1. There are examples both good and bad in the Scriptures.
2. Men and women alike can provide us with sources of strength and inspiration.
   1. Eve is an example of moving past sin and giving God the glory in our lives, as well as serving as a warning to avoid sin!
3. Godly role models are greatly needed in our society!
4. Gen. 17:15-22
   1. Gen. 17:5: God changed Abram’s name to Abraham.
      1. Abram: *Heb. 'abrâm (H87)* = “High father; or, Exalted father”
      2. Abraham: *Heb. 'abrâhâm (H85)* = “Father of many nations, or multitudes”
   2. God not only changed Abram’s name, He also changed his wife’s name! (Gen. 17:15-16)
      1. Sarai: *Heb. śâray (H8297)* = From: 8269; 8323; “Princess” or female leader, often used for nobles. Also has connotation of “self-made” or “to act” as leader.
      2. Sarah: *Heb. śârâh (H8283)* = From: 8282; “Princess;” Female noble: “Lady,” “Princess,” “Queen.”
   3. Sarah is known as a great and godly woman, a “mother of nations,” truly a “Princess!”
      1. Much information is given about her in the O.T.
      2. Many references to her are made in the N.T.
5. God changed her name, showing His regard for her, and has revealed through the Scriptures He wants her held up as a godly role model!
6. **Conflict of Good and Evil**
7. Sarah was a good, godly woman – however, she did have her weaknesses (as do we all)!
8. She cooperated with her husband in lying about their relationship:
   1. She was Abraham’s half-sister, but more importantly, she was his wife! (Gen. 20:12)
   2. In Egypt they told Pharoah she was his sister and brought plagues upon Egypt because Pharoah had taken her into his house *(Gen. 12:10-20).*
   3. In Gerar the lie was repeated to King Abimelech, who also took her into his house. God threatened to destroy him and his people on account of her in a dream *(Gen. 20:1-18).*
9. She sought to *“help”* God keep His promise *(Gen. 16:1-7: She gave Hagar to Abram to have the promised son).*
10. Out of jealousy she sent Hagar and her son Ishmael away *(Gen. 16:6; 21:9-21: Although God told Abraham to listen to her wishes).*
11. She lied to the Lord about laughing that she would bear a son (Gen. 18:9-15: It seemed impossible!)
12. Despite her weaknesses, the good in her life must have outweighed the negative for she is considered highly regarded by the N.T. writers as an example of faith and a role model for wives! *(I Pet. 3:3-6)*
13. We all have a conflict between good and evil within ourselves (Rom. 7:21-23), and Sarah is an example of one who overcame the weaknesses to the glory of God!

### **Lasting Beauty**

1. Sarah was a physically beautiful woman, one that age seemed not to diminish.
   1. Gen. 12:11-15: Sarah was 10 years younger than Abram (Gen. 17:17) so was about 65 years old here in Egypt, and because of her beauty, they lied to Pharoah. The Egyptians were indeed taken in by her beauty.
   2. Gen. 20:2: Sarah would be 90 years old here as it falls within the year before Isaac was born (Gen. 17:17, 21; 21:1). Abimelech the king of Gerar took her into his house. Highly sought after for her beauty! (Because of it Abraham feared for his life – 20:11-13)
2. Problems with *just* physical beauty (That is, physical beauty *only)*
   1. “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” and the criteria has changed throughout the years: features, figure, hair color, etc. *(Not going to appeal to everyone)*
   2. We can misjudge a person solely based upon looks – I Sam. 16:7: God looks at the heart.
   3. Added responsibility to be appealing inside and out! – Prov. 11:22
      1. The snout is as unattractive as the ring is lovely. A lovely woman who lacks discretion also combines two opposites—physical attractiveness and moral deficiency.
   4. Physical beauty diminishes with age – Prov. 31:30: “Beauty is passing” (NKJV); “fleeting” (NIV).
   5. Death destroys – Gen. 23:1-4: Death separates and destroys the beautiful (Abraham wanted to bury his dead out of his sight).
3. God’s description of a beautiful woman is what’s inside – Prov. 31:30: It takes a godly woman to be truly beautiful, and praised by the Lord! (God changed Sarai’s name to Sarah! – Gen. 17:15-16)
4. Sarah’s inner beauty of character outlasts her physical beauty in that she is a godly role model and an example of faithfulness still today!

### **Example of Faithfulness**

1. I Pet. 3:3-6: She had the proper relationship to her husband!
   1. She is a role model for ladies today! A mother of godly wives (I Peter 3:6)
   2. She is given as an example of one who was not merely attractive on the outside but one who possessed beauty of character which was “very precious in the sight of God” (3:4).
   3. Hers is an “adornment” every woman (especially wives) may practice – I Pet. 3:5
   4. Calling Abraham “lord” goes against human wisdom of today, but shows her willingness to submit to him, which is the proper marriage relationship as seen in the analogy of the church-Christ relationship *(Eph. 5:23-32).* Lord = *kurios (G2962): Supreme Authority.*
   5. This inner quality of beauty is given as characteristic of God’s ideal woman – Prov. 31:30
2. Heb. 11:11-12: She is an example of faith!
   1. One of two women listed in the “Hall of Faith” (other is Rahab – 11:31).
   2. She was past the age of child-bearing *(Rom. 4:19: “deadness of her womb”)*, and though she laughed *(Gen. 18:12),* she had faith it would be done!
   3. To Abram and Sarai God promised the impossible and they had strength of faith (that overcame their weaknesses) to believe and trust in God’s promises (Rom. 4:19-22).
3. Gen. 17:16: By her faith, she indeed became a “mother of nations!”
   1. The mother of fleshly Israel – Gen. 21:1-3; Rom. 9:8-9
   2. The mother of spiritual Israel – Gal. 4:22-31 (4:26, 31: Sarah is the “mother” of all saints!)
   3. Through her seed came the Messiah, in Whom it was fulfilled that all the nations of the earth would be blessed! (Gen. 12:3) – While Eve was mother of all the living (Gen. 3:20), Sarah became the mother of nations, of all saints, and godly wives!
4. God changed her name (Sarah = “Queen”), so it is fitting she would be the “mother of nations,” and a godly example of faithfulness!

# **Conclusion**

1. Biblical names are significant, and have meaning:
   1. They are sometimes prophetic (Is. 7:14; Mt. 1:23: Immanuel = “God with us”)
   2. They are often indicative of character (Gen. 25:26: Jacob = “Heel catcher,” “Usurper”).
   3. Sarai means: “Princess” but in the sense of one who is “self-made” or “acting” as a ruler.
   4. Sarah means: “Princess” or “Queen.” She became the “mother of nations” and of saints!
2. Women have always influenced men, for good *(Ruth, Esther)* and bad *(Eve, Jezebel).*
3. Godly women have influenced godly men and unbelieving men alike!
   1. Ruth on the people of Bethel and on Boaz.
   2. Abigail on her servants and on David
   3. Esther on her Gentile husband the King of Persia *(Xerxes I – 486-465 BC).*
   4. I Pet. 3:1-2: Peter says godly wives may save the soul of their unbelieving husbands!
4. Sarah stands as an example of godliness, and one who overcame her weaknesses so that they did not define her, but instead, she is remembered for her faith and virtue!
5. Do you live your life governed by your weaknesses? (Will you be remembered for your faults?)
6. Do you live your life learning from your mistakes, and strengthening your faith? (Will you be remembered for your faith and godly character?) – Be a godly role model!
7. If you are not a Christian, you are not serving God but yourself. Repent and be baptized!
8. If a Christian in error, repent and be renewed!
9. Whatever your requests may be, come forward ***NOW***and let them be known while we stand and sing!