

# Sarah: Hoping Against Hope

John MacArthur, Chapter 2

## Review

1. How would you describe Sarah to a friend who had never heard about her or read her story in the Bible? Choose several words and elaborate upon them if necessary.

Identify a few of Sarah's weaknesses?

Identify a few of Sarah's strengths?

2. When she was a young woman, Sarai (Sarah) followed her husband and father-in-law to Haran—a move that completely uprooted her from a highly advanced and sophisticated culture. Then, at age sixty-five, her husband was called to a land neither of them had ever seen. What was Sarah's response to leaving Haran for this unknown "land of promise"?
3. From the time she was sixty-five until she died, Sarah lived a nomadic life moving from place to place and living in tents. This life was in sharp contrast to the urban environment in which she once had lived. Identify at least three things that made a nomadic life bearable for Sarah.
4. Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar were each guilty-in different ways-of sin, and in relation to the conception of Ishmael, they each reaped bitter fruit as a result of their sin. Identify the sin of each person and the fruit that resulted.
  - Abraham
  - Sarah
  - Hagar

5. In what ways were the name changes for Abram and Sarai-to Abraham and Sarah-significant in helping them continue to believe in the fulfillment of God's promises?

## **Bible Connections**

6. Read Genesis 17:15. Sarai's name was not changed to Sarah until she was ninety years old. How does age impact a woman's ability or desire to change?

What is required for change to be embraced by a woman even in her middle-aged or older years?

7. Read Hebrews 11:11. Sarah is one of only two women mentioned among the "heroes of the faith." The Bible says she "judged Him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). In your own words, describe what that phrase means to you.

What are the implications of this phrase in light of your past experience and your hopes for the future?

8. Read Genesis 29:23-31; 2 Samuel 5:13; and 1 Kings 11:1-4. Also read Matthew 19:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 7:2. Respond to this statement: "no good has ever come from any violation of the 'one-flesh' principle of monogamy."

9. Read Genesis 16:6-13. In what ways did God extend mercy to Hagar?

10. Read Genesis 17:1. Prior to God changing the names of Abraham and Sarah, why did God reveal Himself to Abraham with a new name-El *Shaddai*, meaning "Almighty God"?

11. Read Genesis 21:6. Why do you believe Sarah named her son Isaac, which meant "laughter"? What was at the core of the humor Sarah saw in the way

God had dealt with her?

12. Read Galatians 4:24-30. What did Paul teach to the Galatians using the examples of Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael?
  
13. Read 1 Peter 3:4-6. While Abraham is depicted in the New Testament as the spiritual father of all who believe (Rom. 4:9-11 and Gal. 3:7), Sarah is pictured as the spiritual matriarch and the ancient epitome of all faithful women. In your own words, describe the faithfulness of Sarah.