



School of the Bible

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People of Faith

The purpose of these notes are to assist in developing a proper understanding of the course presented. They are not a comprehensive evaluation of the material and are intended to supplement instruction given.

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Sarah

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Sarah's achievements
3. Sarah's life story
4. Faith lessons from Sarah's life

1. Introduction:

- 'Sarai' was the wife of Abraham. According to [Genesis](#) 17:15 her name was changed to Sarah as part of a covenant with God. This was only after Hagar bore Abraham his first born son Ishmael.
- The Hebrew name *Sarah* indicates a woman of high rank and means "princess".
- Sarah is known as the half-sister of Abraham (same father; Gen 20:12), possibly the daughter of his brother Haran. Sarah is the fourth woman mentioned by name in the Bible.
- Sarah was a beautiful woman (Genesis 12:11). She was 65 when Abraham gave her to Abimelech as his 'sister' for the second time, due to her beauty and his fear of being killed.



From The Painting By Tissot

2. Sarah's achievement:

- Sarah is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. She is referred to as an example of a submissive wife, having beauty (from without, as well as, with in), doing what is right and not being fearful (1 Peter 3:1 – 6). Sarah is also mentioned alongside many great men of Faith in Hebrews 11.
- If we look at how faith is described. According to Hebrews 11:1 it is the substance of things hoped for. Sarah must have been hoping for something to be mentioned in this list. She must have received 'the evidence of things not seen'. Sarah pleased God. Hebrews 11:6 states that without faith it is impossible to please God. By faith she came to God and believed in Him and sought after him – we know this, as she was greatly rewarded due to bearing a son Isaac and ourselves bearing witness to being fellow heirs and descendants of Abraham. (Galatians 3:29)
- Hebrews 11:11
 - ¹¹ By faith Sarah a) received strength to conceive seed, and
 - b) Bore a child when she was past the age.

WHY?

1. She knew God had made a promise
2. She judged Him faithful who had promised.

- In Hebrews 11:13 it states that, ¹³ these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Sarah was lucky enough to receive the first portion of her promise – bearing a son. However, she believed, by faith that there would come a great nation, many descendants *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

3. Sarah's life story:

- Sarah's story as recorded in Genesis and the process leading up to her famous record in Hebrews 11 was not an easy one. God made many promises to Abraham, which directly involved and impacted Sarah.

- At the initial call, Genesis 12:2, God promised that He would make Abram into a great nation. Abram was 73 years old at this stage. Sarai might have been very excited with the prospect of bearing children to make this possible. Before Abram's call, Genesis 11:30 tells us that from the start Sarai was barren; she had no children.
- After separating from Lot, God confirms again with Abram that 'all the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever (Genesis 13:15). Sarai could have been encouraged once more, knowing that her husband had heard God correctly and that there was a plan for offspring.
- Once Abram had met Melchizedek, the Lord appeared to Abram in a vision. Abram courageously confronts God about being childless. Again God confirms that, 'this man (Eliezer of Damascus) will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir (Genesis 15:4). At this stage Sarai probably listened to Abram's account with half an ear, 'Yeah right! I've heard this one before!'
- A fourth time God appears to Abram, promising him, through a covenant, 'to your descendants I give this land' (Genesis 15:18). I wonder what Sarai thought of her husband by now?
 - (a) After 10 years in Canaan, Sarai decides to take matters into her own hands. According to Genesis 16:2 she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. She then realizes what trouble has been brought on herself. Gen 16:5, 6 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me." ⁶ "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.
 - (b) Despite this hasty and desperate move by Sarah, the Lord appears to Abram a fifth time, at the age of 99 years of age. 26 years after his initial call. The Lord again confirms His covenant. This time He changes Abram's name to Abraham

and gives a very specific promise to Sarai. "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." (Gen 17:15, 16)

- (c) Time passed and again Sarah disbelieved God’s promise! Abraham received 3 visitors, a sixth visitation from the Lord. The Lord specifically promised that, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son” (Genesis 18:10). Sarah did what would come naturally to anyone who had had their hopes raised one too many times. ‘So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the Lord ? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." ¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh." (Genesis 18:12 – 15).

- (d) God fulfilled His promise. ‘..the Lord was gracious to Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised’ (Genesis 21: 1). The son was called Isaac meaning ‘he laughs’. Sarah had a son and God had been faithful to His promise – she had reason to laugh and rejoice. Sarah died at the age of 127 years of age, 37 years after the birth of Isaac. She was buried in a cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 23:19).

4. Faith lessons from Sarah’s life:

- God has a plan and purpose for our lives.
Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future....

- God's timing is not our timing.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

- God's plans prevail, just trust in Him.

Philippians 1:6 ..He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- God is faithful to His promises.

Find out what the promises of God are in the scriptures and claim them by faith. Speak God's words and promises constantly over yourselves and over your families and children.

- Enjoy where you are now.

Philippians 4:11 ...be content whatever the circumstances.

Ruth and Naomi

Outline

1. Introduction
2. The Salvation Story
 - a. The World
 - b. The Goodness of God
 - c. Redemption
 - d. The Bride of Christ
3. Prayer for unbelievers
4. Prophetic pictures in the book of Ruth

1 Introduction

- Setting: During the time of the Judges, a period stretching from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel (\pm 400 years). A time of oppression and turmoil both politically and spiritually. God raised up judges (deliverers – not lawyers) to fight foreign oppressors and restore peace.
- Ruth is a prophetic book, rather than a book of faith, showing the redemption story.
- The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.
- Col 1:17, Heb 10:1 – The Law is a shadow of the good things that are coming.

2. The salvation story

- Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom 10:17). For people to become believers, the truth must be preached to them (Rom 10:14), so that the Word can set them free (John 8:32). We are born-again of incorruptible seed, so we cannot beg God to save the lost without the preaching of the Gospel. As we share truth, the Holy Spirit is activated in the lives of those hearing and He does the necessary work. The story of Ruth and Naomi reflects the journey that every believer takes on the road to salvation.

Chap 1: The World

- Every person starts life with a destiny in God and it is a good one. (Bethlehem, Judah)
- The world and all its offerings gets in the way (Moab, Ps 108:9, Zech 2:8-9)
- Our journey we chose affects our family
- Rom 8:13 – if you live according to the flesh you will die.
- The family is justified in their leaving (searching for food), but immorality and paganism comes with the package and they are sucked in. Heb 11:25 – there is pleasure in sin for a season
- Naomi returns to Bethlehem after she hears of the good things God is doing there.
- She returns – bankrupt, widowed and broken.

Chap 2: The Goodness of God

- Ruth happens to find herself gleaning in a field that belongs to a wealthy family member.
- This man, Boaz is a picture of Jesus.
- His kindness causes Ruth to fall in love with him, and Naomi to remember him.
- Ruth shares a communion meal with Boaz.
- Romans 2:4 – it is the goodness (kindness) of God that leads us to repentance.

What is a kinsman-redeemer?

- Deut 25:5-10 – The Levirate marriage
- Leviticus 25: 47-54

Chap 3: Redemption

- Naomi knows the Word as she is a Jew and has been brought up in the Law. She can instruct Ruth on what to do in order for her to be taken into Boaz's family.
- Naomi's faith is sparked with the knowledge of what could lie ahead.
- She tells Ruth to wash, anoint herself and change her clothing. Washing in the word, the anointing of the Holy Spirit and praise and worship are all active in the transformation of a life.
- Jam 2:17 – faith without deeds is dead. Ruth acts on the truth that is shared with her by Naomi.
- She lays herself at his feet and submits her life to him.
- The garment signifies his position, authority and standing in the community.

Chap 4: The Bride of Christ

- The union takes place and Ruth and Boaz are married.
- A new generation in the bloodline of Christ is birthed.
- Salvation can only take place once the Word has been planted in the unbeliever. Here Naomi is the one responsible for leading Ruth to truth.

3. Prayer for unbelievers

- Father, thank you that you love each one of us and that it is not your will that any should perish but that everyone should be saved. (2Pet 3:9)
- Thank you that you do not need any motivation to save our lost relatives as you have already provided a way in the giving of your son Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 1John 2:2)
- Father, I stand here as an intercessor on behalf of ****. Your Word says that faith comes by hearing your Word, so I thank you that wherever he is today, the Word of truth will come across his path. Thank you for the labourers that you send today to preach the gospel in his ears (Matt 9:38). May your Holy Spirit bring to remembrance the Word that he has

already heard as he struggles with issues today, (John 14:26) even truth that he may have heard years ago Lord. Father, I make myself available to be used as a vessel of truth in his life and a light in his darkness.

- I command the blindness and hardness of heart to be gone, in Jesus name (2 Cor 4:4).
- Thank you Lord that you work in all things for the good of those who love you and are called by you and I thank you for his salvation.
- In Jesus name Amen.

4. Prophetic pictures in the book of Ruth

- Boaz - “standing in strength” = Jesus
- Ruth = the church/gentile bride of Christ
- Threshing floor = the tribulation (separation of wheat from chaff, sheep from goats); Ruth is at his feet
- The unnamed servant (2v5) - the Holy Spirit, identifies the bride and links her to Jesus
- The first kinsman = the law (first in line, interested in property, programs and procedures but not able to cope with the people
- Naomi = Israel/the Jews, in exile until the bride is brought into union with the bridegroom (Romans 11). Boaz and Naomi only meet at the marriage feast, but she learns of his whereabouts through Ruth. Ruth learns the ways of Boaz from Naomi.