

- Song 108 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Jehovah Always Does What He Promises”:** (10 min.)

21:1-3, 5-7, 10-12, 14

Jehovah rewarded Abraham and Sarah for their faith by giving them a son. Later, their obedience under trial showed their remarkable faith in Jehovah’s promises for the future.

How does my obedience during trials show that I trust in Jehovah’s promises for the future? How can I strengthen my faith?

- (Genesis 21:1-3) Jehovah turned his attention to Sarah just as he had said, and Jehovah did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 So Sarah became pregnant and then bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the appointed time God had promised him. 3 Abraham named his newborn son, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.
- (Genesis 21:5-7) Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 Then Sarah said: “God has brought me laughter; everybody hearing of it will laugh with me.” 7 And she added: “Who would have said to Abraham, ‘Sarah will certainly nurse children’? Yet, I have given birth to a son for him in his old age.”
- (Genesis 21:10-12) So she said to Abraham: “Drive out this slave girl and her son, for the son of this slave girl is not going to be an heir along with my son, with Isaac!” 11 But what she said

about his son was very displeasing to Abraham. 12 Then God said to Abraham: “Do not be displeased by what Sarah is saying to you about the boy and about your slave girl. Listen to her, for what will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.

- (Genesis 21:14) So Abraham got up early in the morning and took bread and a skin bottle of water and gave it to Ha'gar. He set these on her shoulder and then sent her away along with the boy. So she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Be'er-she'ba.

Ge 21:1-3—Sarah became pregnant and bore a son (wp17.5 14-15)

(Genesis 21:1-3) 1 Jehovah turned his attention to Sarah just as he had said, and Jehovah did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 So Sarah became pregnant and then bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the appointed time God had promised him. 3 Abraham named his newborn son, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.

*** wp17 No. 5 pp. 14-15 God Called Her “Princess” ***

Was Sarah’s laughter evidence that she lacked faith? Not at all. The Bible says: “By faith also Sarah received power to conceive offspring, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who made the promise.” (Hebrews 11:11) Sarah knew Jehovah; she knew that he could fulfill any promise that he made. Who of us does not need more faith of that kind? We do well to get to know the God of the Bible better. As we do, we will see that Sarah was right to have the faith that she did. Jehovah truly is faithful and carries out his every promise—at times, he might even do so in ways that surprise us into amazed or incredulous laughter!

“LISTEN TO HER”

At 90 years of age, Sarah finally got to relish the moment she had longed for all her adult life. She bore a son to her beloved husband, now a century old! Abraham named the baby Isaac, or “Laughter,” just as God had said. We may picture Sarah’s weary but glowing smile as she explained: “God has brought me laughter; everybody hearing of it will laugh with me.” (Genesis 21:6) This miraculous gift from Jehovah surely delighted her till the end of her days. However, it also brought her great responsibilities.

When Isaac was five years old, the family held a feast to mark the occasion of the weaning of the child. But not all was well. We read that Sarah “kept noticing” a troubling pattern of behavior. Ishmael, the 19-year-old son of Hagar, kept mocking little Isaac. This was not mere playful teasing. The apostle Paul was later inspired to call Ishmael’s behavior persecution. Sarah saw this bullying for what it was: a serious threat to the well-being of her son. Sarah knew well that Isaac was more than just her son; he was assigned a key role in Jehovah’s purpose. So she mustered up courage and spoke forthrightly to Abraham. She asked him to send Hagar and Ishmael away.—Genesis 21:8-10; Galatians 4:22, 23, 29.

How did Abraham respond? We read: “What she said about his son was very displeasing to Abraham.” He was fond of Ishmael, and he could not see past his own fatherly emotions on this issue. However, Jehovah saw the matter clearly, so he intervened. We read: “Then God said to Abraham: ‘Do not be displeased by what Sarah is saying to you about the boy and about your slave girl. Listen to her, for what will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.’” Jehovah assured Abraham that Hagar and the boy would be provided for. Faithful Abraham complied.—Genesis 21:11-14.

- (Hebrews 11:11) By faith also Sarah received power to conceive offspring,

even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who made the promise.

- (Genesis 21:6) Then Sarah said: “God has brought me laughter; everybody hearing of it will laugh with me.”
- (Genesis 21:8-10) Now the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham prepared a big feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. 9 But Sarah kept noticing that the son of Ha’gar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, was mocking Isaac. 10 So she said to Abraham: “Drive out this slave girl and her son, for the son of this slave girl is not going to be an heir along with my son, with Isaac!”
- (Galatians 4:22, 23) For example, it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the servant girl and one by the free woman; 23 but the one by the servant girl was actually born through natural descent and the other by the free woman through a promise.
- (Galatians 4:29) But just as then the one born through natural descent began persecuting the one born through spirit, so also now.
- (Genesis 21:11-14) But what she said about his son was very displeasing to Abraham. 12 Then God said to Abraham: “Do not be displeased by what Sarah is saying to you about the boy and about your slave girl. Listen to her, for what will be called your offspring will be through Isaac. 13 As for the son of the slave girl, I will also make a nation out of him, because he is your offspring.” 14 So Abraham got up early in the morning and took bread and a skin bottle of water and gave it to Ha’gar. He set these on her shoulder and then sent her away along with the boy. So she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Be’er-she’ba.

Ge 21:5-7—Jehovah made the impossible a reality

(Genesis 21:5-7) 5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 Then Sarah said: “God has brought me laughter; everybody hearing of it will laugh with me.” 7 And she added: “Who would have said to Abraham, ‘Sarah will certainly nurse children’? Yet, I have given birth to a son for him in his old age.”

Ge 21:10-12, 14—Abraham and Sarah had strong faith in Jehovah’s promise regarding Isaac

(Genesis 21:10-12) 10 So she said to Abraham: “Drive out this slave girl and her son, for the son of this slave girl is not going to be an heir along with my son, with Isaac!” 11 But what she said about his son was very displeasing to Abraham. 12 Then God said to Abraham: “Do not be displeased by what Sarah is saying to you about the boy and about your slave girl. Listen to her, for what will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.

(Genesis 21:14) 14 So Abraham got up early in the morning and took bread and a skin bottle of water and gave it to Ha'gar. He set these on her shoulder and then sent her away along with the boy. So she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Be'er-she'ba.

Digging for Spiritual Gems:

Ge 20:12—How was Sarah Abraham’s sister? (wp17.3 12, ftn.)

(Genesis 20:12) 12 And besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.

*** wp17 No. 3 p. 12 “What a Beautiful Woman You Are” ***

Sarah was the half sister of Abraham. Terah was father to both of them, but they had different mothers. (Genesis 20:12) While such a marriage is improper today, it is important to keep in mind how different things were back then. Humans were closer to the perfection that Adam and Eve had enjoyed but lost. For such robust people, marriage between close relatives evidently did not present genetic dangers to offspring. Some 400 years later, though, life spans were similar to ours. At that time, the Mosaic Law outlawed all sexual unions between close relatives.—Leviticus 18:6.

- (Genesis 20:12) And besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.
- (Leviticus 18:6) “No man among you should approach any of his close relatives to have sexual relations. I am Jehovah.

Ge 21:33—How did Abraham call “on the name of Jehovah”? (w89 7/1 20 ¶9)

(Genesis 21:33) 33 After that he planted a tamarisk tree at Be'er-she'ba, and there he called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

*** w89 7/1 p. 20 par. 9 Abraham—An Example for All Who Seek God’s Friendship ***
 9 Abram responded with another act of faith. As the account says: “He built an altar there to Jehovah.” (Genesis 12:7) Likely, this included offering up an animal sacrifice, for the Hebrew word for “altar” means “place of sacrifice.” Later, Abram repeated these acts of faith in other parts of the land. In addition, he ‘called on the name of Jehovah.’ (Genesis 12:8; 13:18; 21:33) The Hebrew phrase “call on the name” also means “declare (preach) the name.” Abram’s household as well as the Canaanites must have heard him boldly declare the name of his God, Jehovah. (Genesis 14:22-24) Likewise, all who seek God’s friendship today must call upon his name in faith. This would include sharing in public preaching, “always offer[ing] to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name.”—Hebrews 13:15; Romans 10:10.

- (Genesis 12:7) Jehovah then appeared to A’bram and said: “To your offspring I am going to give this land.” So he built an altar there to Jehovah, who had appeared to him.
- (Genesis 12:8) Later he moved from there to the mountainous region east of Beth’el and pitched his tent with Beth’el on the west and A’i on the east. There he built an altar to Jehovah and began to call on the name of Jehovah.
- (Genesis 13:18) So A’bram continued to live in tents. Later he came and dwelled among the big trees of Mam’re, which are in Heb’ron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.
- (Genesis 21:33) After that he planted a tamarisk tree at Be’er-she’ba, and there he called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

- (Genesis 14:22-24) But A’bram said to the king of Sod’om: “I raise my hand in an oath to Jehovah the Most High God, Maker of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take anything that is yours, from a thread to a sandal lace, so that you may not say, ‘I made A’bram rich.’ 24 I will take nothing except what the young men have already eaten. As for the share of the men who went with me, A’ner, Esh’col, and Mam’re—let them take their share.”
- (Hebrews 13:15) Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that make public declaration to his name.
- (Romans 10:10) For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

Bible Reading:) Ge 20:1-18 (th study 5)

(4 min. or less) •

(Genesis 20:1-18) 20 Now Abraham moved his camp from there to the land of the Neg'eb and began dwelling between Ka'desh and Shur. While he was residing at Ge'rar, 2 Abraham repeated concerning his wife Sarah: "She is my sister." So A·bim'e·lech king of Ge'rar sent for Sarah and took her. 3 Afterward, God came by night to A·bim'e·lech in a dream and said to him: "Here you are as good as dead because of the woman whom you have taken, since she is married and belongs to another man." 4 However, A·bim'e·lech had not gone near her. So he said: "Jehovah, will you kill a nation that is really innocent? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and did she too not say, 'He is my brother'? I did this with an honest heart and innocent hands." 6 Then the true God said to him in the dream: "I know that you did this with an honest heart, so I held you back from sinning against me. That is why I did not allow you to touch her. 7 Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will make supplication for you and you will keep living. But if you are not returning her, know that you will surely die, you and all who are yours."

8 A·bim'e·lech got up early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things, and they became very frightened. 9 Then A·bim'e·lech called Abraham and said to him: "What have you done to us? What sin have I committed against you that you would bring upon me and my kingdom such a great sin? What you have done to me was not right." 10 And A·bim'e·lech went on to say to Abraham: "What were your intentions when you did this thing?" 11 Abraham said: "It was because I said to myself, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' 12 And besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. 13 So when God caused me to wander from the house of my father, I said to her: 'Let this be how you show loyal love to me:

Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'"

14 A·bim'e·lech then took sheep and cattle and male and female servants and gave them to Abraham, and he returned his wife Sarah to him. 15 A·bim'e·lech also said: "Here my land is available to you. Dwell wherever you please." 16 And to Sarah he said: "Here I give 1,000 pieces of silver to your brother. It is a sign of your innocence to all who are with you and before everybody, and you are cleared of reproach." 17 And Abraham began to make supplication to the true God, and God healed A·bim'e·lech and his wife and his slave girls, and they began having children; 18 for Jehovah had made all the women of the house of A·bim'e·lech barren because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

• **Second Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video. Then ask the audience the following questions: How did the publisher make clear the practical value of the scripture? How was this a good example of following up on interest shown?**

How did the publisher make clear the practical value of the scripture?

How was this a good example of following up on interest shown?

• **Second Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (th study 4)**

○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What blessings will people enjoy in the future that God promises?

Scripture: Isa 65:21-23

- (Isaiah 65:21-23) 21 They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. 22 They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full. 23 They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their descendants with them.

Link: What role will God’s Son play in bringing about these blessings?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

• **bhs 35 ¶20**

*** bhs chap. 3 pp. 35-36 par. 20 What Is God’s Purpose for Humans? ***

20 The whole earth will become a paradise. People will have beautiful houses and gardens. (Read Isaiah 65:21-24; Revelation 11:18.) The whole earth will be as beautiful as the garden of Eden was. Jehovah will always give us everything that we need. The Bible says about him: “You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”—Psalm 145:16.

Bible Study: (5 min. or less) bhs 35 ¶19-20 (th study 3)

*** bhs chap. 3 pp. 35-36 pars. 19-20 What Is God’s Purpose for Humans? ***

19. Why can we be sure that there will be plenty of food in God’s new world?

19 There will be plenty of food. “There will be an abundance of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains it will overflow.” (Psalm 72:16) Jehovah, “our God, will bless us,” and “the earth will give its produce.”—Psalm 67:6.

- (Psalm 72:16) There will be an abundance of grain on the earth; On the top of the mountains it will overflow. His fruit will flourish as in Leb'a-non, And in the cities people will blossom like the vegetation of the earth.
- (Psalm 67:6) The earth will give its produce; God, our God, will bless us.

20. How do we know that the earth will become a paradise?

20 The whole earth will become a paradise. People will have beautiful houses and gardens. (Read Isaiah 65:21-24; Revelation 11:18.) The whole earth will be as beautiful as the garden of Eden was. Jehovah will always give us everything that we need. The Bible says about him: “You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”—Psalm 145:16.

- (Isaiah 65:21-24) They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. 22 They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full. 23 They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their

descendants with them. 24 Even before they call out, I will answer; While they are yet speaking, I will hear.

- (Revelation 11:18) But the nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time came for the dead to be judged and to reward your slaves the prophets and the holy ones and those fearing your name, the small and the great, and to bring to ruin those ruining the earth.”
- (Psalm 145:16) You open your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 111

• **Annual Service Report: (15 min.)** Talk by an elder. After reading the announcement from the branch office regarding the annual service report, interview publishers, selected in advance, who had encouraging experiences in the ministry during the past year.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

CHAPTER 105

A Fig Tree Is Used to Teach a Lesson About Faith

(Matthew 21:19-27) He caught sight of a fig tree by the road and went to it, but he found nothing on it except leaves, and he said to it: “Let no fruit come from you ever again.” And the fig tree withered instantly. 20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed and said: “How is it that the fig tree withered instantly?” 21 In answer Jesus said to them: “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what I did to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. 22 And all the things you ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive.” 23 After he went into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him while he was teaching and said: “By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?” 24 In reply Jesus said to them: “I will also ask you one thing. If you tell me, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The baptism by John, from what source was it? From heaven or from men?” But they began to reason among themselves, saying: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we have the crowd to fear, for they all regard John as a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus: “We do not know.” He, in turn, said to them: “Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things.

(Mark 11:19-33) When it became late in the day, they went out of the city. 20 But when they were passing by early in the morning, they saw the fig tree already withered from its roots. 21 Peter, remembering it, said to him: “Rabbi, see! the fig tree that you cursed has withered.” 22 In reply Jesus said to them: “Have faith in God. 23 Truly I say to you that whoever tells this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but has

faith that what he says is going to happen, he will have it happen. 24 This is why I tell you, all the things you pray and ask for, have faith that you have received them, and you will have them. 25 And when you stand praying, forgive whatever you have against anyone, so that your Father who is in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses.” 26 — 27 They came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came 28 and said to him: “By what authority do you do these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things?” 29 Jesus said to them: “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 Was the baptism by John from heaven or from men? Answer me.” 31 So they began to reason among themselves, saying: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ 32 But dare we say, ‘From men?’” They were in fear of the crowd, for these all held that John had really been a prophet. 33 So they answered Jesus: “We do not know.” Jesus said to them: “Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things.”

(Luke 20:1-8) On one of the days while he was teaching the people in the temple and declaring the good news, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came 2 and said to him: “Tell us, by what authority do you do these things? Or who gave you this authority?” 3 He replied to them: “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: 4 Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?” 5 Then they drew conclusions among themselves, saying: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ 6 But if we say, ‘From men,’ the people one and all will stone us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” 7 So they replied that they did not know its source. 8 Jesus said to them: “Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things.”

(Mark 11:21) Peter, remembering it, said to him: “Rabbi, see! the fig tree that you cursed has withered.”

Paragraph 4 on Page 244

(Matthew 21:21, 22) In answer Jesus said to them: “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what I did to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. 22 And all the things you ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive.”

(Matthew 17:20) He said to them: “Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Paragraph 5 on Page 244

(Mark 11:24) This is why I tell you, all the things you pray and ask for, have faith that you have received them, and you will have them.

Paragraph 7 on Page 244

(Mark 11:28) and said to him: “By what authority do you do these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things?”

Paragraph 8 on Page 244

(Mark 11:29-32) Jesus said to them: “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 Was the baptism by John from heaven or from men? Answer me.” 31 So they began to reason among themselves, saying: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ 32 But dare we say, ‘From men?’” They were in fear of the crowd, for these all held that John had really been a prophet.

Paragraph 9 on Page 244

(Mark 11:33) So they answered Jesus: “We do not know.” Jesus said to them: “Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things.”

◇Why is Nisan 11 significant?

◇Jesus teaches what lessons with the fig tree that he caused to wither?

◇How does Jesus confound those who ask by what authority he does things?

- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
 - Song 119 and Prayer