

Sarah: The Matriarch of Israel "Your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac." (Genesis 17:19)

God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." (Genesis 17:15-16) In this passage, Sarah is included in the covenant with God just as much as Abraham. In changing her name, God changes her destiny from that of a barren woman to the matriarch of Israel. They have been struggling to understand the promises that God is giving them: land, numerous descendants and blessings. At this stage in their lives, they no longer expect an offspring that was promised to them by God. Abraham's only hope for descendants now falls on Ishmael, his son with Hagar. However, the covenant is not given to Ishmael but instead is given to Sarah and Abraham. It will be her firstborn son, Isaac and not Abraham's firstborn son, Ishmael. Isaac will represent the triumph of God's power over human limitations and doubt. Yet, God does not forget Ishmael and Hagar. God will bless their descendants by making Ishmael fruitful and his descendants numerous. "He will be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation." (Genesis 17:20) In response to this covenant with Abraham, he and all members of this household are circumcised, marking them with the sign of the covenant on their bodies. Still today in the Jewish faith, a *bris mila* (circumcision ceremony) is performed when a male child is eight days old. This is the marking of the starting point of the child's spiritual journey. From womb to birth to nurture, a mother's connection with her child is a visible reflection of God's loving and tender care for His people. Is your spiritual transformation a "visible reflection" of your trust in God's promises? Our faith in the Lord is not meant to be reasonable nor does it fit into the normal scheme of life. Rather it is our ability to put our trust in what sometimes seems impossible, illogical and even humorous. –Sherrie Clutts DRE