



Joe McDonald Ministry

*Isaiah 6:8*

***The Evangelism Trail – August 2020***

We had a wonderful trip to North Carolina to have a little fun and meet with ministry friends and partners this month. We caught up with the founders of Forgiven Ministry, Jack and Scottie Barnes seen here with Patti and me. We stopped by their headquarter in Taylorsville, NC to meet and discuss current events and pick up some supplies to use with men and women ministry. I was blessed to serve on their Board for many years.

Jack and I were talking about his correspondence with inmates in different states where they hold their “One Day with God” events. He gave me two of the bible studies, approved by most prisons to bring home with me.



When I got home, I had a letter from an inmate in a distant state asking for some form of bible study for him that I could sign him up for. And not only that, his girlfriend is locked up and he wanted something he could sign her up to have while she does her time, too! What a blessing to be able to send something out right away that will bring them God’s Word right to



their prison cells. Thank you, Jack, for the great ministry materials.

We had the chance while there to catch up with Gerry and Dawn Gardner pictured below. We did prison ministry together for many years in their home state of Michigan. They have been faithful to all the Forgiven Ministry “One Day with God” events, usually 10-12 are held each year there. Right now, the prisons in Michigan, like most states are all on lock down and the inmates cannot have company or any type of programs. Please pray they will allow visits and programming again, soon!



We also met friends with Forgiven Ministry that we did many events together in Texas and NC in years past. What a blessing to spend time with these front-line workers as we shared memories and future ministry plans (once the prisons open and programs can restart.)

We had the opportunity to visit our youngest son, his wife and three children while on the way to NC for these meetings. That was a blessing to spend time with them over a meal. Though short, it was still a wonderful chance to catch-up. One of our twin daughters, Army husband and two kids are back in Alabama for the first time in over 20 years. We look forward to having all our family back in Alabama at the same time once again, even though two are 4 hours away. Beats an airplane ride any day.



Joe and Patti.

We thank God for each of you and pray you are well, healthy, and happy. Please pray for our leaders to have wisdom to get us back to normal as soon as possible. Pray for the kids that are getting to go to school and for the ones that are not being allowed back in school yet. Pray for the working families that they can pull this off and events allow them to re-open schools and the kids can get the kind of learning environment they need. And pray for a football season!

We are ready for all parades with “The Gospel Parade” float. It is a powerful, easy, and colorful way to present the Gospel and quite the attention getter with the art, music, flags, and spiritual handouts. Let us hear from you.

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*a Ministry of Evangelism, Encouragement and Education*

## SARAH LAUGHED

Genesis 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, after I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

So, what shall we take from this “physiologically incomprehensible” forecast from the angel visitors? Abraham had been promised to be the Father of Many Nations by God. Here we have the inside view of Sarah as she overheard the



conversation of her husband and his heavenly messengers, one of which, I believe was Jesus, but that’s for another day. She laughed within herself, scripture says. As a woman, I can see where she was coming from. Her husband was 99 years old and she was not too far behind, probably 90 or 91, according to historic accounts. The problem here is Sarah’s unwillingness to believe God, hence, the laugh.

The visitors knew that Sarah had laughed and stated (vs 14) “Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

She had been desperately barren for all of her marriage, which had, I’m sure caused much distress in her younger years, but as time went on and (verse 11) “It ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.” She was laughing because it was scientifically “impossible” for her to conceive.

This story takes a sad twist. Because Sarah didn’t believe God, she decided to take matters into her own hands. Do we ever do that? I know I do. She decided to give her handmaid, Hagar, to her husband to have a child for her. God allowed this younger handmaid to have a son, Ishmael, and their fate did not fare well. Jealousy and unkindness came into play and they were banished from their home, causing God to intervene to protect them. As God is not surprised about any of this, it turns out that Ishmael fathered the Arab nation, as it is written, Abraham fathered “Many Nations.”

In Genesis 21:1, God’s promise to Sarah was fulfilled, “And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.”

Whatever happened in Sarah’s spiritual life, I don’t begin to speculate, however, I’m sure she was amazed and delighted in God’s provision for her to have her longed-for child. She bore a son, Isaac. In 21:6, Sarah said, “God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.”

My take-away from this timeless story is to trust God, no matter how long it takes for His promises to be produced in our lives. When unbelief comes in, rebuke it as temptation to trust your own judgement. And finally, nothing is impossible with God.

Just remember, Sarah laughed.

Patti McDonald  
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“Mother of Nations” \*art by Veronica Sosa McDonald

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