

Sariah

Sariah’s perseverance through
incredible hardship is a testament
to her great faith.

By Heather B. Moore

For Sariah, and for some others, following a prophet is not always the easiest path. But as Sariah’s experience attests, the Lord’s hand is loving and tender, even in the most trying and difficult moments of our lives.

A Goodly Mother

Our first introduction to Sariah comes in the very first verse of the Book of Mormon when Nephi acknowledges that he was “born of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1).

Sariah’s days in Jerusalem were perhaps more comfortable than they were for most people. Her husband, Lehi, had “gold and silver, and all manner of riches” (1 Nephi 3:16). When Lehi was commanded by the Lord to leave Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 2:1–3), Sariah chose to leave these comforts and take her children—over whom we can imagine she felt protective—into the dangerous wilderness.

Trials in the Wilderness

With her material wealth left behind, Sariah’s devotion to her husband and her trust in his ability to receive revelation were severely tested. She underwent a particularly challenging trial of faith at the valley of Lemuel, where her husband, Lehi, received the revelation for their sons to return to Jerusalem to retrieve the brass plates (see 1 Nephi 3:4).

Sariah knew this would be no easy task, since she was no stranger to the perils of desert travel. Her sons might run into

hostile tribesmen.¹ They’d be exposed to the harsh elements. And even if they safely reached Jerusalem, they could potentially become targets of those who had sought “to take away [Lehi’s] life” (1 Nephi 2:1).

It was during the distressing days that followed, as Sariah waited for her sons’ return, that her confidence faltered. Fearing that her sons had died, she “complained against [Lehi]” and called him “a visionary man; saying: Behold thou hast led us forth from the land of our inheritance, and my sons are no more, and we perish in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 5:2).

When her sons returned, safe and alive, it’s no wonder that Sariah’s “joy was full” and that she “was comforted” (1 Nephi 5:7).

Fortified in Her Faith

Humbled perhaps by her momentary doubts, Sariah shared her newly strengthened testimony: “Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea, and I also know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons, and delivered them out of the hands of Laban, and given them power whereby they could accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded them” (1 Nephi 5:8).

But hardships continued. Starvation was a grave possibility as the family navigated the barren wastelands and relied

on the Liahona to guide them to “the more fertile parts of the wilderness” (1 Nephi 16:16). For Sariah and Lehi to bring two more sons into the world during their travails was no small matter either (see 1 Nephi 18:7). Plus, there were grandchildren born on the journey (see 1 Nephi 17:1) and all the challenges that come with providing for young children and an expanding family.

In addition to these and other physical challenges, Sariah endured what many mothers fear: deep conflict within her family. Her eldest sons continually abused their younger brother Nephi and even attempted to kill him more than once (see 1 Nephi 3:28–29; 7:16; 16:37; 17:48; 18:11).

When Ishmael died, mourning turned to bitterness, and Sariah’s eldest sons plotted with Ishmael’s sons against Lehi and Nephi. It was the power of the Lord’s voice that stopped the plan. (See 1 Nephi 16:34–39.)

Yet, Sariah appears to have persevered, relying on her

expression of faith in the valley of Lemuel to sustain her during many days of darkness.

An Example of Perseverance

Although Sariah’s challenges were difficult and at times even devastating, through her diligence she witnessed the Lord’s eternal love and compassion. Her family was fed when hungry. Her sons’ and husband’s lives were spared multiple times. The family was guided to the promised land to begin anew. And today, her testimony blesses the lives of countless men, women, and children. As we look to the Lord as Sariah did and take upon us Christ’s yoke, we’ve been promised that our burdens will be light and that we’ll likewise “find rest unto [our] souls” (Matthew 11:29). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (1988), 241–43.

