

# SARAH'S FAITH: AN IMPOSSIBLE FAITH

## HEBREWS 11:11–12

### *Introduction*

Sarah is a dynamic example of what it is to believe the impossible. She believed the impossible; therefore, she saw God do the impossible.

- I. Her faith: a faith that believed the impossible (v. 11).
- II. Her reward: the promised son and nation (v. 12).

### **I. *Hebrews 11:11 Sarah's Faith***

Sarah's faith was a faith that believed the impossible.

**Gen 18:9-15** *“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him. “There, in the tent,” he said. Then the Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.” Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?” Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.” Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.” But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.” (cp. Gen.17:15-22)*

**Gen 21:1-5** *Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.*

**Rom 4:18-21** *Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*

**Heb 11:11-12** *By faith Abraham, even though he was past age — and Sarah herself was barren [90 years old] — was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.*

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Note two significant facts.

1. Sarah had difficulty believing God at first. When she first heard the promise of God she doubted the promise. In the Genesis account the Lord appeared and talked with Abraham right outside the door of Abraham's tent. Sarah hid in the tent with her ear up close so she could hear the conversation. When she overheard the Lord promise a child to Abraham, Sarah laughed, for she and Abraham were well past child-bearing age (cp. Gen. 18:12). They were both humanly sterile.

**Thought 1.** The promises of God do sound unbelievable. Just think how corrupt, sinful, evil, savage, violent and doomed to death the human race is. Any daily news media is filled with illustrations of man's corruption. Yet God loves the world, loves it so much that He has promised "the seed" of the Saviour to the world. Just think how unbelievable this sounds.

=> God has promised a Saviour who will bear the sins of man for him and present him to God as righteous.

=> God has promised a Saviour who will save man from the corruption and death of the world, a Saviour who can give man life — eternal life in a new heavens and earth.

2. Sarah considered the matter: who it was that was making the promise, God Himself, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. When Sarah considered this, the change in her was dramatic: if it was God who was making the promise, then God could be *counted (judged)* faithful. God always fulfils His promises. God could do it no matter how difficult the situation was...

- despite the human impossibility.
- despite the fact that all reason spoke against it.
- despite the fact that nature had to be overridden.

Sarah believed God. She switched from unbelief to belief. She trusted the promise of God. Therefore, she bore a child at the age of ninety. It was a miraculous birth, but God had promised and He fulfilled His promise.

**Thought 1.** God cannot lie; He cannot deceive people. Therefore, the promises of God — every single one of them — shall be fulfilled. But note: the promise of the seed, that is, of the Saviour, applies only to those who believe.

**Mat 19:26** *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

**Mark 9:23** *"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."*

**Mark 14:36** *"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."*

**Luke 1:37** *"For nothing is impossible with God."*

**Job 42:2** *"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted."*

**Psa 31:19** *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.*

**Psa 37:5** *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.*

**Psa 62:11** *One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong.*

**Prov 3:5** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

**Isa 26:4** *Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.*

## II. **Hebrews 11:12 Reward for Faith**

Sarah's faith was rewarded. She received the promised son and nation through her seed. This refers to two rewards:

=> the gift of *the seed Isaac* and of the nation of Israel.

=> the gift of *the seed Christ* and of the nation of believers, of the new creation of *born again* men and women, those who shall be citizens of God's new heavens and earth (See *Abraham*, Gal. 3:8, notes, Gal. 3:16; Eph. 2:11-18; 2:14-15; 3:16; 4:17-19. See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4: 1-25.)

Sarah believed the impossible, and God rewarded her faith: she *received* the impossible. Look at Israel. Israel exists today because Sarah believed the impossible promise of God. Look at the believers around the world, those who profess to be born again by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for their sins. They exist today because Sarah believed the impossible promise of God.

**John 3:3, 5-7** *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*

**2 Cor 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

**1 Pet 1:23** *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

**1 John 5:1** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

**Heb 11:6** *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

**Rom 2:28-29** *A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.*

**Gal 3:29** *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. ■*