

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 11 – HEROES OF FAITH

### Lesson #8

#### **SARAH**

Heb.11:11

***“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.”***

#### **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT SARAH’S BACKGROUND?**

As Abraham’s wife, the history of Sarah is substantially that of Abraham. She came with him from Ur to Haran (Gen 11:31), from Haran to Canaan (12:5), and accompanied him in all his wanderings.

1. We are introduced to Sarai in Genesis 11:29 *“The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai.”*
2. Her names: Sarai means *“princess.”* Sarah means *“my princess.”*
3. She was beautiful. *“When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman.”* (Gen 12:14)
4. Sarai was barren – *“Now Sarai was barren; she had no children”* (Gen. 11:30) which was a social stigma.
5. She was the mother of Isaac, another hero of faith mentioned here in Hebrews 11.

#### **WHAT DO THE VARIOUS BIBLE WRITERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT SARAH?**

Sarah is not an insignificant Bible character. Sarah’s name is mentioned a total of 38 times in the Bible - 3 times in the New Testament, one time in Isaiah and 34 times in Genesis: (Gen. 11:29-30; Gen. 12:15-17; Gen. 16:1-8; Gen. 17:15-21; Gen. 18; Gen. 20:2-18; Gen. 21:1-12; Gen. 23:1-19; Gen. 24:36-27; Gen. 25:10,12; Gen. 49:31)

#### **Especially significant are the following mentions of Sarah:**

**Isaiah 51:2** - The prophet Isaiah declares Abraham and Sarah the father and mother of the Hebrew people: *“Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you.”*

**Romans 4:19** - The apostle Paul pointed out that *“the deadness of Sarah’s womb did not cause Abraham to waver in his faith.”*

**Romans 9:9** – *“For this was how the promise was stated: ‘At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.’”*

**Gal 4:21-23** – Sarah is referred to, but not by name: *“Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.”*

**I Peter 3:5-6** - Peter in his 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle, cited Sarah as an example of the holy women: *“For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves,*

*being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”*

**Hebrews 11** - The writer of Hebrews includes Sarah as one of only two women mentioned by name in the Roll Call of the faithful. It is interesting that some of the women that we would expect to find mentioned in Hebrews 11 are not mentioned, such as: Rebekah, Rachel, Esther, Ruth etc. ...Sarah, therefore, occupies a prominent place in scripture. But what about Sarah's faith?

### **WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT SARAH'S FAITH?**

#### **1. FAITH ACTS WHEN REASON FAILS.**

***“By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.”*** (Heb. 11:11)

**Gen 18:10-12** *“Then the LORD said, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.’ 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?”*

**Gen 21:1-2** *“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.”*

Sarah had faith enough to copulate with Abraham even though, physically, she was past the age when she could get pregnant. God can revive the physical as well as the spiritual. Sarah's faith triumphed over reason *“because she considered him faithful who promised.”*

#### **2. FAITH IS ASSURED BY GOD'S CHARACTER.**

***“because she judged Him faithful...”*** (Heb. 11:11) Here is the basis of her faith: the faithfulness of God! She put her faith in the Faithful One! All human probabilities were against what was predicted. There must have been simple trust in God; nothing else but faith in the Faithful God could have led her to believe that in her old age she would become a mother.

#### **3. FAITH APPROPRIATES GOD'S PROMISES.**

***“who had promised.”*** (Heb. 11:11)

Psalm 113:9 *“He makes the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD.”*

Sarah was a promise claimer and a promise clinger! Do you know how many promises are in the Bible? According to an article in Moody Monthly magazine, A man by the name of Evert E. Storms claims that he found 8,810 promises! Of these, 85% or 7,487 are given by God to mankind. Do you believe the promises of God?

It is impossible for faith to overdraw its account on God's bank of promises!

*“Standing on the promises that cannot fail,  
When the storms of doubt and fear assail,  
By the Living Word of God I shall prevail,  
Standing on the promises of God.”*

- R. Kelso Carter

**PRINCIPLE TRUTHS TO TAKE WITH US:**

- (1) Nothing is too hard for God. He specializes in doing the impossible.
- (2) It is never too late for God to work.
- (3) We are never too old to believe God and live by faith!

**EXTRA AND OPTIONAL**

**ABRAHAM AND SARAH’S LAPSES OF FAITH**

Sarah’s faith fed off of Abraham’s faith. Likewise her “faith failure” fed off of Abraham’s “faith failure.” Here we see the frailty of humans and the faithfulness of God. The Heroes of Faith mentioned in Heb. 11 were not perfect people. Nor are we!

**FAITH LAPSE #1 - Gen 12:1-4** *“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you, And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, **and Lot went with him.**”*

And Abraham had nothing but trouble with Lot! *“And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock.”* (Gen.13:6-7) Also the Sodom episode in Gen.13:12-13 and chapter 19.

**FAITH LAPSE #2** – When Abraham went down into Egypt he arranged with Sarah that she should announce herself as his sister. (Read Genesis 12:10-20)

**FAITH LAPSE #3** - Having no children of her own, Sarah gave to Abraham her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, who became the mother of Ishmael. Later she demanded that Hagar and Ishmael should be cast out of their home. (Read Gen.16:1-4; Gen. 21:9-10)

**FAITH LAPSE #4 -**

After the destruction of Sodom, Abraham moved south and remained for some time in Gerar. Here Abimelech, the Philistine king, took Sarah, whom Abraham had again announced to be his sister, into his harem, probably to ally himself with Abraham, the rich nomad prince. Warned by God in a dream, Abimelech restored Sarah to her husband.

Abraham said, *“....she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. And when God had me wander from my father’s household, I said*

to her, "This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother." (Gen.20:12-13)

**AND YET – God included both Abraham AND Sarah in the Heroes of Faith chapter!!**

**SARAH'S (and Abraham's) LAUGH - FAITH or FAITHLESSNESS???**  
**READ Genesis 17:15-17; Gen. 18:10-15 & Gen. 21:1-7**

**QUESTION:** When Sarah and Abraham laughed when God told them that they would have a son, was their laugh a laugh of joy or a laugh of unbelief?

### **SARAH'S DEATH**

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age was recorded at death. She was 127 and died at Kirjath Arba (Hebron) and was buried by Abraham in the cave of Machpelah.

*"Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan." (Gen 23:1-2)*

### **SARAH'S LEGACY**

Sarah's legacy to female *and* male believers is this: Nothing is impossible with God! Therefore, in the face impossibilities have faith in God.

***"By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."***

***"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD"***  
Hebrews 11:6

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