

Descriptions and Examples of Persevering Faith: 11:1 – 12:3

Creation through Noah: 11:3 – 7

The Faith of Abraham and His Heirs (11:8 – 22)

Abraham (vv. 8 – 10)

Sarah (vv. 11 – 12)

AW Pink on Sarah's Faith:

1. The Impediments to Her Faith: barrenness, old age, unbelief
2. The Effect of Her Faith: "she received strength to conceive"
3. The Constancy of Her Faith: she trusted God unto an actual birth of the child
4. The Foundation of Her Faith: the veracity of the Divine Promiser
5. The Fruit of Her Faith: numerous posterity which issued from her son Isaac

"Through faith also Sarah herself..."

"also" emphasizes that women are also included in the blessings and privileges of grace because "in the spiritual sphere all inequalities disappear" (Galatians 3:28) [Pink] while maintaining *the role distinctions* between male and female in creation order (see 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12; Ephesians 5:22).

"also" indicates that, though she was a woman, Sarah exercised the same faith as had Abraham. Sarah, too, obeyed God, followed Abraham out of Chaldea, sojourned with him, lived in tents with him.

"herself" is emphatic. It was not her husband's faith, but by her own faith she received strength, a faith she herself exercised in spite of the formidable obstacles to such faith, not least of which is her laughing at the word of the Lord which said, "Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (Genesis 18:9-15). Pink notes that Sarah's "laughter came from weakness, not from scorn." What woman, long passed the age of child-bearing, would not laugh at the thought?

"...she received strength to conceive seed..."

Pink: "Sarah's dead womb was *supernaturally* vivified." (italics mine)

Genesis 18:11 – "it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women"

"Sarah was barren" – Genesis 11:30

"Sarah, Abraham's wife, bare him no children" – Genesis 16:1

Genesis 18:10 – "I will certainly return to thee according to the time of life"

Genesis 21:1 – "And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken."

Two applications of *"received strength"*

- Physical strength to conceive and bear the child to term
- Spiritual strength to overcome the tests and temptations of the flesh

This spiritual strength is the strength of the Lord who indwells the believer by his Holy Spirit

"And was delivered of a child..."

Here is the constancy and perseverance of Sarah's faith. She trusted God through to the end, which is a recurring theme of the letter to the Hebrews (3:6; 3:14; 4:14; 10:23; 6:11)

"True faith not only appropriates God's promise, but continues resting on the same until that which is believed is actually accomplished." [Pink]

"Because she judged him faithful who had promised."

Faith is not occupied with self, but with God. Both Abraham and Sarah looked away from themselves to God.

"Abraham **considered not his own body**" – Romans 4:19

Faith enabled Sarah to view difficulties and hindrances through the clear light of God's promises.

Faith rests not only on the promises of God, but on "him who had promised." Sarah judged GOD to be faithful. Her faith went beyond the promise to the One who had made the promise. It is the man whose mind is stayed upon God himself who is kept in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3).

"When Sarah took her thoughts off all secondary causes and fixed them on God himself, then the difficulties no longer disturbed her; her heart was at rest in God." [Pink]