

The Faith of Our Mother Sarah

by Hannah Gardner

Gen. 11:30 is the first mention we have of Sarah's barrenness. Immediately after giving her name as Abram's wife, the scripture says she "was barren; she had no child". She had always been barren, and she was barren still. This is similar to what was said of Sampson' mother, she was "barren, and bare not". Sarah must have felt her barrenness keenly, as it was a great reproach in her day to not bear a child, and perhaps she cherished great hopes that someday her womb would be healed and a child given to her, as she was in her younger, child-bearing age years. It would appear though, that her hope was taken away as the years rolled by and she grew old. Certainly she had heard of the promise of God to her husband of a child, but it was not to her specifically (prior to Gen. 17). Thus she may have assumed that the Lord meant to pass her by and turned to other means (as when she gave Hagar to Abraham), seeing that the promise was to Abraham, and that she was what was hindering it from being fulfilled. She was the barren one. And certainly it would seem that all hope she once cherished was utterly taken away by the time we see her in chapters 17-18, at ninety years old, it having ceased to be with her after the manner of women. She was barren, she had always been barren, but now her case is past hope. Even a fruitful womb would not bear at this age, much less one that had never borne. Her womb was the most barren, the most dead, of any of the barren women we see in Scripture. There was no hope. It is at this time that God comes to Abraham again, and for the first time mentions Sarah by name, saying, "And I will bless her... yea, I will bless her..." (Gen17:16)! Now that hope is past, God speaks. If ever it would have been a miracle, a hard thing to believe the word of God, it is now. Even Abraham, who readily believed God when the promise was first given to himself in chapter 15, falls upon his face and laughs in disbelief. His own body is dead by now; still, it would not be the greatest miracle for him to bear, considering that he had already borne a son, but for Sarah to bear?! This is too great even for Abraham to believe. But God immediately confirms the word to his doubting heart, and he rises to obey the commandments given him. It is unknown if he said anything to Sarah at this time, but it would appear that the first she hears of it is in the following chapter, when Abraham is visited by the Lord again, and Sarah, inside her tent, overheard the promise. Her response is the same as her husbands at the first; she laughs in disbelief, and the Lord immediately rebukes her for her lack of faith, saying, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?". We see in Hebrews 11 that "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised". The Lord had to reprove Sarah for her faithlessness, because she had to have faith in order for this promise to come to pass. It wasn't just Abraham's faith; Sarah's faith needed to meet his faith for this miracle to take place. Through FAITH Sarah HERSELF received strength to conceive, BECAUSE she judged God faithful. Out of the depths of her barrenness, she repented of her unbelief and judged God faithful. If ever she shouldn't believe by the eyes of sight, it is now, but she follows the faith of her husband, and believes God, and thus the promise comes. Oh, praise God for such a blessed ensample of faith in our mother! May we be daughters of Sarah, not only in our subjection to, and reverence of, our husbands, but in our faith! If we were daughters of Sarah, we would do the works of Sarah, we would lay hold of the faith of Sarah! May we believe the promises of God to us, believe him for the IMPOSSIBLE in the face of all our own barrenness and weakness and deadness, and may we by faith see those promises fulfilled!