



May 14, 2017

*“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29*

**S**cripture: Read Hebrews 11:11-12, Genesis 18:1-15

- Hebrews 11:11-12 introduces the faith of Sarah alongside the narrative of Abraham? Read Genesis 16:1-6, 17:15-21 for background on Sarah.

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- “By faith, Sarah received power to conceive” - Hebrews 11:11. Ultimately, this led to the covenant with Abraham for a great nation and many descendants, “as many as the stars” - Hebrews 11:12. See Isaiah 51:1-2, Romans 4:16-20, and Romans 9:8-9, for additional references to this faith and God’s promises.

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- Laughter appears throughout the story of Abraham and Sarah. In fact, the name ‘Isaac’ means “he laughs, he will laugh; God laughs.” See Genesis 17:17, 18:12, 18:13, 18:15, and 21:6. Identify who is laughing and why?

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## **E**quipping

- From unbelief to belief. This seems to be the progression for Sarah, judging by the narrative in Genesis compared to Hebrews. This also seems to indicate God’s mercy in allowing one to make this transition. How might Sarah have moved from unbelief to belief? Have you ever experienced a similar change of belief?

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- Perhaps the change of heart for Sarah began with the Lord’s question, “Is anything too hard for the Lord” and his divine declaration “At the appointed time ...” (Gen. 18:14). In other words, this seems to be a moment when Sarah realizes her misperception of God’s working. How do we answer the Lord’s question? With unbelief, mixed-belief, or total belief?

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- Abraham and Sarah model for us the idea of a “team of faith.” Hebrews implies that because of both Abraham and Sarah’s faith, the great nation and a great heir to the promise was born. They were far from perfect, as are we, yet their faith in God was strong, if not their understanding on how God would work. Are you encouraged in your faith with another; a team? Has God used a spouse, a friend, a brother / sister, to serve and fulfill a promise in your life?

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## *A*pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Abraham & Sarah, is there anything you want to address in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to consider the question, “is there anything too hard for the Lord?” How could you go about experiencing growth in these areas this week?

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*Lord, may we come before you with hearts filled with great faith in you and your promises. May we, with Abraham and Sarah-like faith, seek to encourage one-another in our belief. May our laughter be joyful and may we recall the great mercy and grace that you show us on a regular basis, and may we extend the same to others. Amen.*