

### **Item #33 – (Hebrews 11,11-12)**

This was Entry #11 in my previous website.

In Bibliography §210 I make a rather daring—some would say impossibly rash—attempt to try to come to grips with what seems to me is the underlying supposition of much if not all of Hebrews 11: that the author of Hebrews is alluding to New Testament realities in Old Testament terms, and that this attempt is hinted at in Heb 11,1-2. The article tries to make the point that the bizarre imagery of Heb 11,11 which gives to Sarah the male's power in procreation really is a hidden reference to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and has as its ultimate goal the ontological Fatherhood of God for the whole human race through Jesus his Son. We are obviously in very deep water here. And I equally obviously do not wish to hold anything which the Church would consider heretical. But nothing ventured nothing gained, provided that one keep's one's wits about one and realizes the highly tentative nature of the suggestion. (I emphasize the "highly".) But consider Heb 12,24 and the allusion to Christ's blood with reference to Abel's blood in the context of an implied prefiguring of the latter for the former, and then look at Heb 11,4. Look at Heb 11,7, the example of Noah and his fashioning of an ark, and think of how plausible this would be as a prefiguring of Christ's foundation of the Church. Heb 11,19 seems to be a use of Isaac's last-minute reprieve from death as a prefiguring of the resurrection of Jesus (cf. the first half of the verse and the reasoning attributed to Abraham). All this is the context for the really bizarre attribution of the male power of procreation to Sarah. The author of Hebrews seems to be shouting an absurdity to get our attention. The hidden reference to the mother of Jesus and to the way she conceived, and the relevance of this conception to the fatherhood of Jesus, would have been difficult if not impossible for the author of Hebrews to convey in any direct way: the fact that Nicaea I, Constantinople I, Ephesus and Chalcedon took place 250 years or more after the writing of Hebrews is no accident. What needs to be done is to see a possible New Testament valence for Enoch in Heb 11,5 and the extended treatment of Moses in Heb 11,23-28. **(23 November 2008)**

Cf. now the views of Scott Hahn with regard to the correspondence between Abraham and God the Father in Hebrews, and Isaac and Christ (Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* [The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009], [p. 122]). I would differ to the extent that Hebrews looks at Genesis 22 and the covenant there from the standpoint of Christ and his new covenant, not vice versa. **(27 September 2009)**

See my treatment of this challenge in my book *Hebrews: An Interpretation* (Gregorian & Biblical Press, Rome, 2016), pp. 233-238.  
**(9 October 2019)**