

Hebrews

Chapter 6:13-20

September 3, 1995

- **Hebrews Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Christ is greater than the prophets and the angels.
- Chapter 2 Christ's message is greater than the angel's.
- Chapter 3 Christ is greater than Moses.
- Chapter 4 Christ is greater than Joshua and His rest is superior.
- Chapter 5 Christ's High Priesthood is greater than the Aaronic Priesthood.
- Chapter 6 God's faithfulness is confirmed by an oath.

- **Introduction & Review**

After a sharp rebuke for spiritual laziness and a warning to those who would fall away to a system that is about to be judged, the author moves on to assure them of the confidence that we have in the promises of God. He continues to defend that the things of old point to the things of the new and that God's promises are sure and steadfast. Before returning to the topic of Melchizedek, he reminds them of the manner in which God made His promises.

- **Exposition**

Hebrews 6:13-20

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.

- The author moves on to give them the reason for not being sluggish or falling away to the former things. The reason he states is because God has made a promise to Abraham. What does God's promise to a nomad thousands of years earlier have to do with their behavior at that moment?-everything!
- If we return back to Genesis 22 we can see where God tested the faith of Abraham. Here at this pivotal point in human history, God then made a promise to Abraham that he would inherit the world. His descendants would be an innumerable host. We know that we who are of the faith of Abraham are the fulfillment of that promise to him. It is such a sad thing that we don't grasp this more fully than we do. The fact that God has made this promise to bless the world through Abraham's seed is meant to be our grounds of confidence. If I am truly among the elect, I can rejoice with confidence that I will inherit the blessings of the promise made to Abraham. If by my behavior (for example falling away to the shadow things of Judaism) I prove that I am not of the house of Christ then I cannot appropriate these blessings to me and I have no grounds of confidence.
- How sure is the promise? God swore by Himself that the things He said to Abraham were true. There was nothing greater that God could swear by other than Himself. His faithfulness to fulfill this promise is as sure as He is God. Faithfulness is not just a character trait-it is *who God is*. He *is* faithfulness.

17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

- Why did God make this promise? Why did He confirm it with an oath? Why didn't He just not tell Abraham but make sure that things still turned out the way He wanted? The reason is that He wanted those who are inheriting the promises to have a strong consolation. So that we would be encouraged and live lives of confidence grounded in God's faithfulness, He made this promise and confirmed it with an oath.

- God gave the promise to Abraham. Just the fact that God has spoken and declared that He would do something is grounds enough. But God wanted our hope so secure that He even confirmed it with an oath so that we would have two things (His word and His oath) which are unchangeable (not just hard to change, but impossible) as our grounds of confidence. We then have no excuse for wavering at the promises of God. If we are in the faith, we do not need to give a moment's consideration as to whether we will inherit the blessing God has promised to Abraham.
- Somewhat indirectly, we gain some understanding of oaths and how they are to be used. We know that Christ discourages oaths and seems to prohibit oaths altogether. But we see Paul swearing in Romans 1:9, 2 Corinthians 1:23, Gal 1:20 and Christ also allowed Himself to be under an imprecatory oath in Matthew 26:63. And in the verses here we seem to have a general understanding of how oaths are taken. In general, it appears that we should at a minimum never take an oath lightly. It should be used for solemn purposes (e.g. testifying, marriage) and done before God as witness and not by foolish things like the gold on the temple. In addition, our disposition should be that we desire our reputation to be people whose word does not need an oath-just as God's didn't.

19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NKJV)

- This is his concluding encouragement with regard to their holding steadfast to the things they have become partakers in until the end. This is meant to be a tremendous encouragement to those who are the true elect and a stern warning to those who have tasted of these good things yet abandoned them later by returning to the types and shadows.
- The author mixes his metaphors here by using a nautical illusion of an anchor and a vision of our High Priest entering the Most Holy place to make atonement for the elect. At the time of Christ, there was a common practice of a small pilot boat coming out to sea to greet a larger boat to get its anchor. The Pilot boat would then take the anchor into the harbor and drop it in a safe place. The larger boat could then safely follow its anchor into the harbor. This is a wonderful metaphor for what Christ has done for us. He has gone before and secured our souls by passing through to the most Holy place. We follow Him into that place and are comforted by how firmly we are anchored there.