

## “JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO...” SERIES

### PROMISES, PROMISES

#### HEBREWS 6:9-20

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*Hebrews 6:9-20 9But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*

*10For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

*11And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:*

*12That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

*13For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*

*15And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*

*16For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

*17Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

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*19Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (ESV)*

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#### Introduction

It is hard for me to believe, but on August 14, we will have been at Keys Valley Baptist Church for four years. It has been a great pleasure for Linda and me to serve here.

When we moved to Harker Heights, we bought a house and here are the documents that we had to sign in order to purchase our home. (Show binder with stack of documents)

This is the stack of paperwork that we signed for the last automobile we financed. (Hold up contract)

I even had a three page “Pastor-Church Covenant Agreement” that was signed between the Chairman of the Pastor Search Committee and me.

Throughout my life I have promised and been promised things that have worked out exactly as the verbal agreement was stated. However, I have also promised and been promised things that never came to fruition.

Today’s message concerns the promises of God.

### God Knows Your Work and Labor of Love – 9-12

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*9Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things— things that belong to salvation. 10For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. 11And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

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*Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved* – As it is immature and fruitless to stay only on the elementary doctrines of Christ, the writer counters that he considers the readers to be “beloved” and to move on to maturity and producing fruit fit for the harvest

*...we feel sure of better things* – the writer and his companions are confident of better things ahead for the Hebrews as they mature.

*...things that belong to salvation* – At the point of salvation, many things “kicked in” that were alien before salvation. For example: I was Regenerated, Justified, Sanctified, Redeemed, and Atoned.

*For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do* – The writer of the book of Hebrews ensures the readers that God knows of their work (service or ministry) and their love for the saints. These are some of the “*better things that belong to salvation.*”

*11And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* – As we have seen in the latter part of the fifth chapter and the first verses in the sixth, the writer is urging the readers to move away from being “dull of hearing and being immature” to being “teachers and mature in the Lord.”

The onus falls to the believer act and must do his part. We must not be “sluggish” which is the same Greek word used for “dull” in Heb. 5:11. As the half brother of Jesus put it, “...*be ye doers of the word; and not hearers only, deceiving your own.*” (James 1:22). Each and every believer has the same promises from God. The result of living the Christian life is determined by the faith and actions of the believer himself.

### God is the Covenant Keeper – 13-18

*13For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” 15And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. 16For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. 17So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.*

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*13For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.”* – We know the story of Abraham very well. While Abram was marrying Sarai and beginning his life with her, God met him and made conditional promises to him. We call those promises the “Abrahamic Covenant.”

*1Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

*15And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise* – Notice the words “*patiently waited*” or as the KJV says, “*patiently endured*”. Abraham’s actions are the opposite of being slothful. Abraham trusted the promises of God and it was counted unto him as “righteousness.”

*James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

The covenant was not instantly concluded. Abram had to follow the leadership of God the rest of his life. He moved from place to place as God directed and trusted the LORD unconditionally. Abraham would not see the fulfillment of God's covenant, but the promise would be through his lineage, beginning with his son Isaac. (Genesis 22:16-17).

*16For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation 17So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath – Men have always sought a way of solidifying an agreement in the strongest terms. Men have given an oath, “a solemn appeal to a deity, or to some revered person or thing, to witness one's determination to speak the truth, to keep a promise.”<sup>1</sup>*

God not only gave Abraham a promise, but He also confirmed that promise with an oath. When a witness takes an oath in court, he is confronted with the words “so help me God.” We call on the greater to witness for the lesser. None is greater than God, so He swore by Himself!

But God did not do this only for Abraham. He has also given His promise and oath to “the heirs of promise” (Heb. 6:17). Abraham and his descendants are the first of these heirs (see Heb. 11:9), but all believers are included as “Abraham's [spiritual] seed” (Gal. 3:29). So our assurance of salvation is guaranteed by God's promise and God's oath, “two immutable [unchangeable] things” (Heb. 6:18). We have “strong consolation” (or “great encouragement”) concerning the hope set before us!<sup>2</sup>

*18so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, – “two unchangeable things” would be God's promise and His oath and because God cannot lie, the promise and His oath are the most sure.*

The author places the term translated “impossible” (adynaton) first in the passage for emphasis. He uses this word at three other points in Hebrews proclaiming it is “impossible for God to lie” (6:18), “...it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (10:14, and “...without faith it is impossible to please him” (11:6). The term clearly implies that something cannot happen.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 298). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Guthrie, G. H. (1998). *The NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews*. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervon p. 218.

*...we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us* – the writer uses an interesting phrase here, “fled for refuge.” The reader of this epistle would easily associate it with the history of God’s chosen people. God established “cities of refuge” (Numbers 35:9ff; Joshua 20). When the dividing of the Land of Promise by Joshua, God told him to appoint six cities that would be a “safe haven” from a “revenger of blood”, for anyone that had accidentally killed someone. Three of these cities were on the east side of the Jordan River and three were on the west side. While the person was in the city of refuge, their case would be looked into and a determination would be rendered, whether it was manslaughter or murder. If the ruling came back that it was manslaughter, then that person could live safely in the city until the high priest died and the revenger of blood could not avenge themselves upon the slayer. At that time they could return to their home.

### Comfort in the Presence of God – 19-20

*19We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*

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These two verses are packed with wonderful symbolism. First the *anchor*. We all know the purpose of an anchor. An anchor can come in many forms and be made of different materials. It is to securely hold a ship from drifting, even in the worst seas, when it is not underway. There are permanent and temporary anchors (an example of a permanent anchor would be the USS Alabama is permanently moored in Mobile, AL).

Secondly he refers to “*...the inner place behind the curtain.*” Of course this is a reference to the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle or Temple where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. The Holy of Holies was only visited once a year by the High Priest. It is between the cherubim on the Mercy Seat where God would dwell with His people.

Thirdly, the writer informs his readers that Jesus *as the forerunner on our behalf*, has made His way to the Holy of Holies, heaven, to await the believers. A forerunner is not only someone that runs before another, but he may also be a guide or one that shows the way. Jesus, as our forerunner, is our guide and He will show all believers the way. It is here that Jesus will perform all the duties of the High Priest forever.

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Lastly, Jesus is referred to as “*a high priest after the order of Melchizedec.*” Remember that Melchizedec was the King of Salem and high priest. The writer refers to Melchisedec nine times in his letter. So this Melchizedec is very important as a central message to the Hebrews. We will get a closer look at this King and high priest in the next chapter.

### Conclusion

The main truth of this chapter is that

Believers must go on to maturity, and most importantly, God has made it possible for us to do so.

If we start to *drift from the Word* (Heb. 2:1–4), then we will also start to *doubt the Word* (Heb. 3:7–4:13).

Before long, we will get *dull toward the Word* (Heb. 5:11–6:20) and become lazy believers.

The best way to keep from drifting is—*to lay hold of the anchor!*

Anchored heavenward! How much more secure can you be?<sup>4</sup>

We have fled to Jesus Christ, and He is our eternal refuge. As our High Priest, He will never die (Heb. 7:23–25); and we have eternal salvation. No avenger can touch us, because He has already died and arisen from the dead.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning, I showed you three stacks of contractual promises. God has a full list of promises to mankind. These promises are detailed and specific. For the believer = a rewarded eternal life with Jesus

For the unbeliever = eternal punishment

All of the promises of God are bound together and you can have a copy of them today for your review...they are called the B I B L E!

*Bob Crowder*

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<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 299). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 298). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.