

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 25 July 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## **The Anchor of Our Soul**

### **Hebrews 6:13-20**

Four thousand years ago, God commanded a seventy-five-year-old man named Abram to leave his hometown of Ur, in the land of Chaldea, and to travel 1,100 miles to the land of Canaan, and to make it his new home. At that time, God also made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was completely of God's own initiation. Abraham had no part in drafting it, or even suggesting it. It was an *unconditional* covenant, as well. All the responsibility for the fulfilment of the covenant fell upon God. God took the initiation for the covenant, and He bore the entire burden of it. What's more, God *continued* to confirm this covenant to Abraham throughout the rest of his life, even though it *seemed* humanly impossible that the promises of that covenant could ever come true.

It is because of Abraham's extraordinary faith in the promises of this covenant that the writers of the New Testament called Abraham the "father" of all who believe on Jesus. Abraham is certainly one of the finest examples of a man who trusted God with all his heart and soul.

It is for that reason that Paul, in his letter to the **Hebrews**, used Abraham as an example. Remember, Paul was writing to Jewish Christians who were being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. These Christians needed encouragement in a big way! They needed strengthening for the "evil days" that were now upon them. It's one thing to *say* that you trust Jesus when all is going well. It's one thing to serve God when there is little cost for doing so. However, what about when your earthly possessions, your home, your family, your freedom, and your very life, are endangered because of your belief in Jesus Christ? What about when your life is crashing down around you, and it seems that God is nowhere nearby? Can a Christian, under such circumstances, continue to hold fast his profession in Jesus Christ until the end? **The answer is, "Yes, he can!"**

In the passage of **Hebrews** that we will be studying this morning, Paul gives us two reasons why a Christian can have the **"full assurance of hope unto the end."** Christian, you *need* what we are going to be studying this morning! You need to know and understand this great Hope of yours, inside and out! The Hope that we have in Christ is steadfast, immovable, and indestructible; and if you are *completely confident* that this Hope is steadfast, immovable, and indestructible, you will not waver.

The title of this message is ***The Anchor of Our Soul***.

**Read Hebrews 6:13-18.**

Why can a Christian have full assurance of hope unto the end? We can have this assurance...

## I. Because of the Father's immutable promise (vv. 13-18)

(Read verses 13-18 again.) In verse 18, Paul says that we who have fled to Jesus for refuge can have “*strong consolation*,” or “encouragement.” And what is our encouragement based upon? Paul says that it is based upon two “*immutable things*.” That word “*immutable*” means “unchangeable,” “unbending,” or “immovable.”

So, Paul says that there are two things to which you and I can cling with the utmost confidence, with the assurance that they will not fail. There are two unbending, unchangeable things upon which you and I can establish our lives. What are those two things?

To answer that question, let's go to the book of **Genesis**, and examine the covenant that God made with Abraham.

**Read Genesis 12:1-3 / 15:1-5 / 17:5-8.**

What we've just read is “The Abrahamic Covenant.” This is the covenant that God made with Abraham; and it is the “promise” that Paul is talking about in **Hebrews 6**. Let's read those verses again. (Read **Hebrews 6:13-14** again.)

There were several promises that were included in God's covenant with Abraham. Now, Paul doesn't list *all* these promises here in **Hebrews 6**: he mentions only one of them--particularly, the promise that Abraham's seed (the nation of Israel) would be greatly “multiplied.” Paul didn't need to enumerate *all* the promises of the covenant, because his Jewish readers knew them all very well. When Paul mentioned that one promise, the whole Abrahamic Covenant would have immediately come to their minds.

Now, in a few moments, we will get back to this matter of the “*two immutable things*” in which Abraham trusted. First, though, I would like to explain the Abrahamic Covenant in a nutshell, so that you can better understand the truths that we will be looking at shortly.

There are several parts to God's covenant with Abraham. First, God promised Abraham **that he would have a son**. Secondly, He promised that through that son, **he would become the father of a great nation**. Thirdly, God promised that this great nation would one day **inherit the land of Canaan**, and that it would be theirs forever. Fourthly, God promised to **bless those who bless Abraham's descendants**, and to curse those who curse his descendants. Finally, God promised Abraham that through his seed, **all nations of the earth would be blessed**.

Now, let's park on that last point for a moment. How is it possible that *all nations of the earth* would be blessed in Abraham? Was God saying that *Israel* would, *as a nation*, bring blessing to all mankind? If such be the case, how and when has this promise been fulfilled?

Well, one could argue that the Jews have blessed mankind with many great innovations in technology, medicine, industry, finance, agriculture, and many other areas; and, in a sense, this would be true. Many of the greatest scientists and innovators in history were Jews. There is

no art or science in which the Jews do not excel and dominate. Because they are the descendants of Abraham, God had given them an extra measure of brilliance and innovation.

How about in the *spiritual* sense? Has Israel, as a nation, brought blessing to all mankind spiritually? Again, in a limited sense, yes. In **Romans 3**, Paul asked, “*What advantage then hath the Jew?*” He then answered his own question by saying, “*Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God.*” In other words, God made Israel the custodians and caretakers of His Word, and His laws. Through Israel, God gave the world the Scriptures. Every book of the Old Testament (except **Job**) was written by a Jew; and every book of the New Testament (except **Luke** and **Acts**) was written by a Jew.

However, can it truly be said that Israel, *as a nation*, has brought spiritual blessing to *all mankind*? In the centuries before Christ, Israel repeatedly sank down into pagan idol worship, and thus blasphemed God’s name before their Gentile neighbours. How was *that* a blessing to mankind? At this present hour, many prominent Jewish people throughout the world are vehemently atheistic, and are doing their part to undermine the very Scriptures that their godly ancestors wrote. Many Jews in the entertainment industry are, through the movies that they are helping to produce, spreading moral perversion and witchcraft throughout the world; and many Jews in the financial and political worlds are using their wealth and power to help build the tyrannical, one-world, antichrist government that is forming before our very eyes. Most of Israel is in apostasy, and needs to repent! In light of all this, can it truly be said that Israel, *as a nation*, is being a spiritual blessing to all mankind? Sadly, they are not.

How, then, has this prophecy been fulfilled? Paul answers this question for us in **Galatians 3**.

### **Read Galatians 3:13-16.**

In **verse 16**, Paul is making a very important point. He points out that when God spoke of Abraham’s “*seed*,” He used the *singular* word “*seed*,” and not the *plural* word “*seeds*.” Now, the singular word “*seed*” *can* refer to a multitude of people. God does use the word “*seed*” in this way when He says that Abraham’s seed would be “*as the stars in the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.*” However, the word “*seed*” can also refer to a **single individual**. In **Genesis 22**, God clearly used the word “*seed*” to refer to a *single man* when He told Abraham, “*Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.*”

The point that Paul is making is clear: there is only *one particular* descendant of Abraham who could bring blessing upon *all* mankind: and that Person is Jesus Christ! By His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ has purchased our salvation, and has made it possible for *all mankind* to be saved, and reconciled to God!

Now, please hang onto that thought, because it is going to become very important in just a few moments. For now, though, let’s get back to the main point that Paul is making in **Hebrews 6**. Paul is talking about the truthfulness and credibility of God’s promise to Abraham. How could Abraham be *sure* that God’s promise to Him was true? How could he be sure that God would really do what He had said He would do (especially when it seemed impossible)?

Well, first of all, Abraham could be sure of these things **because God had promised them**. That, in itself, should be confirmation enough, because Jehovah is the God who cannot lie. Even if God had made the promise only *once*, it would have been enough. Yet, God *didn't* make the promise only once: He repeated it *multiple* times. Over a period of 25 years, God constantly reassured Abraham that although he and his wife Sarah were too old to have children, He would, in His own good time, enable Sarai to have a son; and He promised that from that son, He would raise up a great nation. Then, after Isaac's birth, God continued to reassure Abraham that all the other promises of the covenant would, indeed, come to pass.

Abraham could be sure of God's promises for the simple fact that **God promised them**. However, this is not the only assurance. God gave Abraham a *double* assurance. What was the second assurance? The second assurance is that **God confirmed His promise with an oath**. This happened on one particular occasion. Let's look closely at this oath.

### **Read Genesis 22:15-18.**

When men make contracts, it is customary for them to swear by some kind of *higher power* that they will keep their word. **Legally**, things are not binding if there be no invocation of a higher power. Even if there be no "religious" wording in a contract, people still have to swear under the **power of some kind of judicial authority**. In effect, they are swearing by **the state**, which has the power to penalize them if they do not keep their word. In a **court of law**, one might swear upon **the Bible**. In **marriage**, the man and woman **vow before God**. In so doing, they are invoking the name of *God*, and attaching His holy character to their promise. By the way, this is why we should be *very* careful of how we use God's name! God does not take it lightly when His holy name is used to confirm a lie, or to confirm foolishness--such as when people say, "I swear to God," and then follow it up with some silly or false statement. God takes oaths--even rash and poorly considered oaths--very seriously.

So, then, when God confirmed *His* covenant with Abraham by an oath, by whom did *He* swear? By Himself! By whom *else* could He swear? There is no higher power than He! There is no one holier than He!

The reality is that there was no *need* for God to swear by Himself. Swearing by Himself didn't really make His promise more reliable, because He is God! As God, he cannot lie. His holy, righteous character is its own proof. Why, then, *did* God swear by Himself? Because He was condescending to human custom, so that Abraham, as a man, could have even more assurance that His promise was true.

When men make contracts with each other, an "***oath of confirmation***" is, as Paul said, "***the end of all strife***." In other words, an oath is necessary to settle a matter, and to make it official. The parties must stake their integrity on a higher power, by which they are willing to be judged if they do not fulfil their promise. If, then, an oath were what men required in a covenant, then God was willing to condescend to man's level, and to swear by an oath; and since there was no higher power than Himself, He swore by Himself.

God's Word, all by itself, is certain enough. Nothing can be added to it to make it more sure. Nonetheless, God showed His grace even more abundantly to Abraham by swearing an oath of

confirmation—just so that Abraham could be doubly sure. God was telling Abraham as emphatically as possible, “Abraham, you can trust me! I am Almighty God. I am backing up my promise to you with the invocation of my *own name*. My name carries with it the full weight of my own truthful character. My name has proven itself without fail since the beginning of the world. Abraham, you can be sure that I *will not lie to you*.”

Why was Abraham’s faith so strong? **Because he had the utmost confidence that God’s Word was trustworthy.** The promise that God had given him, and the double confirmation that He had given by way of an oath, was enough for Abraham. For twenty-five long years, Abraham believed God’s promise that he would have a son, even though he and his wife were old, and well past child-bearing age. Because Abraham was convinced of the immutability of God’s Word, he patiently endured.

Well, guess what? We who know Jesus Christ as Saviour can patiently endure and trust God, as well. We, too, can have the **“full assurance of hope unto the end,”** and continue to serve God faithfully. No matter how bleak our circumstances may be, and no matter how much it may *appear* that God is not nearby, we can be sure that He *is* with us, and *in* us. We can be sure that He has *not* forsaken us; that He has *saved* us, and given us the sure hope of heaven; and that He can and will empower us to live for Him until we draw our last breath on this earth. How can we be sure all this? Because we have the same two immutable things in which to place our hope. First, **we have the promise that God made to Abraham.** Secondly, **we have the oath of confirmation,** which God sealed by swearing by His own name. **(Read verses 17 and 18 again.)**

Now, maybe you’re thinking, “Wait a minute, Pastor. I understand that God keeps His promises; but what does God’s promise to *Abraham* have to do with *us*?” Actually, it has *everything* to do with us! Remember, what did God promise Abraham? On the one hand, God promised Abraham that he would make of him a great nation, and that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. That was the *physical* part of the covenant, which applied to the Jewish people. However, there was also a *spiritual* side to it. God promised Abraham that in his seed, **all nations of the earth** would be blessed: and in **Galatians 3**, Paul says that *Jesus Christ* is that Seed. Jesus Christ is the one member of the *Jewish* family who would bring the blessing of salvation to the entire *human* family!

In other words, when God made this promise to Abraham, and confirmed it with an oath, He wasn’t making it only to the Jewish people: He was making it to *all* people, whether Jew or Gentile, who would place their faith in God’s promise of a Redeemer. Those who lived before Christ looked *forward* to His coming. Those who have lived since the time of Christ look *backward* to His coming. However, we are all saved by placing our faith in those same **“two immutable things.”** Those **“two immutable things”** are God’s promise of salvation through the Seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the double oath that God gave to confirm that promise.

**Read Galatians 3:6-9, 29.**

Now, let’s go back to **Hebrews 6**, and read **verse 18** again. **(Read Hebrews 6:18.)** In this verse, Paul says that those of us who are saved have fled for **“refuge”** to the **“hope”** that is

**“set before us.”** Brethren, Jesus Christ *is* our Hope who is set before us! Those who flee for refuge flee to *Him*. Now, that’s a powerful analogy, isn’t it? I think we all can conjure up a mental image of some kind of fortress or stronghold, where a person can run for safety. Actually, though, Paul is referring to a very specific idea from the Old Testament. You see, in Old Testament Israel, God established six **“cities of refuge”** in various parts of the land. These **“cities of refuge”** were cities where those who had killed a person accidentally could live safely, after it had been proven, before a judge, that the victim’s death was accidental. As long as they were inside the city of refuge, they were safe. Any family member of the deceased, who might have motive to avenge the blood of his relative, was not allowed into that city. The person who had accidentally committed manslaughter was to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the current high priest; and then, he was permitted to go back to his home. Until then, he was safe in the city of refuge. (You can read about this in **Numbers 35.**)

Do you see where this analogy is going? Those who are saved are *in Jesus Christ*. Countless times throughout the New Testament, Christians are said to be “in Christ,” or “in Him.” This means that we are safe from God’s eternal judgment. We cannot be touched by the second death. We will never experience the Lake of Fire. We are eternally safe, because we have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ.

Now, this brings us to the second reason why a Christian can have **“full assurance of hope unto the end.”** We can have full assurance of hope until the end...

## II. Because of the Son’s immutable priesthood (vv. 19-20)

Abraham trusted in two immutable things: **God’s promise of the blessing of salvation**, and **God’s oath of confirmation by His own name**. Abraham was fully confident that one of his descendants would bring the blessing of salvation upon all mankind. By the way, I believe that Abraham had a good idea of how this would all play out. There was a reason why God had commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. God was giving him an illustration of what was going to happen in the future. He was showing Abraham that the Son of God would become a Man, and would offer up His life as the Substitute for our sins, and would rise again! I believe that Abraham had a good grasp of this truth. God gave Abraham that powerful object lesson on Mount Moriah in order to illustrate this truth to him.

However, Abraham never *saw* the fulfilment of the promise of redemption. The only part of God’s promise that Abraham ever saw was the birth of his son Isaac. Every other part of God’s covenant promise lay off in the future; and he had to accept it by faith. **We, on the other hand, have seen its fulfilment!** Not only do we have God’s promise, but we have seen the fulfilment of that Promise: and it is embodied in the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ!

**(Read Hebrews 6:19-20 again.)** Isn’t this a powerful picture? Paul calls Jesus Christ the **“anchor of our soul.”** This is a profound picture; and it conveys a couple ideas.

First of all, an anchor is unbending. It is firm. It cannot be broken or twisted out of shape. That is what Jesus, *our* Hope, is like! He came to earth to purchase our salvation; and He accomplished that purpose. He did not retreat or falter. He carried out His Father’s mission all the way to the cross; and when that was accomplished, He did not fail to rise from the dead.

If Christ *had* failed to rise from the dead, we would have no hope; but, of course, that would have been impossible, because He is the “God who cannot lie.” On the third day, He walked out of the tomb, and thus conquered death and hell. Jesus Christ is our Anchor, because He is steadfast and firm. He cannot be broken!

However, that is only half of the picture. Remember, an anchor is good only if it be securely fastened. If it be fastened to sand or mire, it will not hold, and the vessel will be lost to the waves. However, if it be fastened to *solid rock*, the vessel is secure.

Well, guess where *our* Anchor, the Lord Jesus Christ, is fastened? **He is fastened in Heaven, on the very throne of God!** His placement there ensures that those “vessels” who have made Him their Anchor *will* be pulled to safety, to God’s heavenly home!

In Old Testament times, the high priest, on the Day of Atonement, made the journey from the altar of sacrifice, into the Temple, through the veil, into the Holy of Holies, and right up to the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Likewise, Jesus Christ, our *true* High Priest, has made the journey from the *true* place of sacrifice (on Mount Calvary), into the Heavenly Temple, past the “veil” that divides the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, and into the very throne room of God. He is able to do this because He is our *eternal* High Priest. A priest after the order of Aaron could not have done this, because all the descendants of Aaron were sinners, just like everyone else. (Plus, when they died, they stayed dead!) But not the Lord Jesus Christ! He is a priest after the *true* high priestly order--the Order of Melchisedec. (He is the only one who occupies that office, because He is the only one who *could* occupy it.) As our true and eternal High Priest, He has sat down on the “Mercy Seat” itself (the very throne of God); and He is still seated there to this very day. He is, therefore, our “*forerunner*” to that Heavenly Temple! Because *He* has gone before us into the heavenly throne room, we who are saved are guaranteed to follow Him there one day. **Christ, our Anchor, is seated on His Father’s throne; and He will not be moved!** On that future Resurrection Day, the “cable,” which connects us to Him, will be drawn in; and we will meet Him on the golden shore.

**Conclusion:** Are *you* fastened to the Anchor of Jesus Christ? If you are trusting in your own righteousness to get you to the heavenly shore, you are *not* fastened to that Anchor; and you *will not* make it. God will not accept your good works. If you are fastened to religion and churchgoing, you will *not* make it, no matter how many services you attend. The Bible says, “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.**” If, however, if you have placed your complete trust in Jesus Christ, you are safe forevermore! *He* is the Refuge to whom you must flee. *He* is the Anchor to whom you must be fastened. *He* is the Forerunner who has gone before you into the heavenly Temple!

My friend, if you have not truly placed your trust in Jesus, please let go of your pride and self-righteousness, and place your trust in Him! If you are saved, then this message is for you, also. Your soul is already fastened to Jesus Christ. You were fastened to Him on the day when you asked Him to save you; and you are still fastened to Him. He *will not* let you go. So, stop doubting! Stop wavering! Stop being tossed to and fro with doubts and temptations! Do not lose sight of your Anchor. He is in Heaven, on the throne of God, where He is interceding to the Father for you. He has all the power, wisdom, and might that you need to live a steadfast, immovable, unwavering life of service to God!

I will close this message with one final thought. In **verse 15**, Paul says that after Abraham “***had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.***” Abraham didn’t obtain the promise *because* He patiently endured; rather, he patiently endured *because He had obtained the promise!* In his lifetime on earth, Abraham never actually *saw* that promise fulfilled. He never actually *beheld* the incarnate Son of God in his lifetime. However, *by faith*, he saw Him afar off, and embraced Him. Well, guess what? We have never seen Him, either! Christ was on this earth 2,000 years ago, and He has now passed into the heavenlies. However, you, too, can “embrace” Him *by faith*, just as Abraham did! Christian, keep trusting confidently in Him from day to day, and you will endure for God!