

# Bible Study Guide - Hebrews 6:13-20

Bellevue Church of Christ – Fall / Winter 2017-2018

Greater Than the Priests (4:14 to 7:28)

## The Greater Mediator (Chapters 1 to 7)

### Gen 22:16-17

"By myself I have sworn ... I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring"

-Ex 32:13

-Is 45:23

-Jer 22:5; 49:13

### Oaths

-Served a legal function and involved calling upon someone to confirm the truthfulness of an assertion.

-In the OT, people took oaths in God's name

-Gen 31:53

-Deut 6:13; 10:20

### Refuge

The followers of Christ have taken refuge from the power of sin.

-Heb 2:3-4

-Psa 143:9

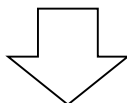
### Hope

Confidence in Christ

-Heb 3:6

-Rom 5:1-11

<sup>11</sup>And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup>so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises...



<sup>13</sup>For when God made a **promise** to **Abraham**, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he **swore by himself**, <sup>14</sup>saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you."

<sup>15</sup>And thus Abraham, having **patiently waited**, obtained the **promise**. <- Gen 21:5; Jn 8:56

<sup>16</sup>For people **swear by something greater than themselves**, and in all their disputes an **oath** is **final for confirmation**.

<sup>17</sup>So when God desired <sup>(1)</sup>to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the **unchangeable character of his purpose**, he **guaranteed it with an oath**,

Did God need to swear an oath? Why?  
Num 23:19; 1Sa 15:29; Isa 40:8

<sup>18</sup>so that by **two unchangeable things**, in which it is impossible for God to lie, <sup>(2)</sup>**we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us**.

Only place in NT where the anchor metaphor is used

<sup>19</sup>We have this as a sure and steadfast **anchor of the soul**, a **hope** that enters into the **inner place behind the curtain**,

<sup>20</sup>where Jesus has gone as a **forerunner** on our behalf, having become a **high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek**. <- Heb 5:6,10; 7:1-28

Abraham is a great example of what the author has in mind.

Though that patriarch had God's promise, he had to live for many years in patient expectation with nothing to go on except that God had promised.

-Gen 12:1-3

-Gen 15:1-21

-Acts 3:25

-Rom 4:13

-Gal 3:7-9, 15-18, 29

Why did God swear an oath?

- (1) To show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise
- (2) We...might have strong encouragement to hold fast.

Two Unchangeable Things:

- (1) God's Promise
- (2) God's Oath

"inner place behind the curtain"

-inner veil before the holy of holies (most holy place)

-Heb 9:3

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### **Hebrews Chapter 6 - Questions for Discussion**

What did God swear by in His promise to Abraham? Why? What did Abraham obtain after he “patiently endured?” (vv. 13-18)

What is the “anchor of the soul?” How does this “anchor” us? Who is the “forerunner?” What did he enter? How? (vv. 19-20)

## Teacher's Notes

### Promise Made to Abraham

#### Genesis 12:1–3 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

#### Genesis 15:1–21 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” <sup>2</sup> But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” <sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” <sup>5</sup> And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” <sup>8</sup> But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” <sup>9</sup> He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” <sup>10</sup> And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. <sup>11</sup> And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

<sup>12</sup> As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. <sup>16</sup> And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

<sup>17</sup> When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, <sup>19</sup> the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup> the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, <sup>21</sup> the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

**Acts 3:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

**Romans 4:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

**Galatians 3:7–9 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." <sup>9</sup> So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

**Galatians 3:15–18 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

**Galatians 3:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

**Swore by Himself****Genesis 22:16–17 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,

**Exodus 32:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.' "

**Isaiah 45:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> By myself I have sworn;  
from my mouth has gone out in righteousness  
a word that shall not return:  
'To me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall swear allegiance.'

**Jeremiah 22:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.

**Jeremiah 49:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> For I have sworn by myself, declares the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a horror, a taunt, a waste, and a curse, and all her cities shall be perpetual wastes."

Obtained the Promise

**Genesis 21:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

**John 8:56 (ESV)**

<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."

Oaths Sworn to God

**Genesis 31:53 (ESV)**

<sup>53</sup> The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac,

**Deuteronomy 6:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.

**Deuteronomy 10:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear.

## Unchangeable Character

### Numbers 23:19 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> God is not man, that he should lie,  
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.  
Has he said, and will he not do it?  
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

### 1 Samuel 15:29 (ESV)

<sup>29</sup> And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”

### Isaiah 40:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

## Refuge

### Hebrews 2:3–4 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

### Psalms 143:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord!  
I have fled to you for refuge.

## Hope

### Hebrews 3:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

### Romans 5:1–11 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup> More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

**HOPE.** Hope, it would seem, is a psychological necessity, if man is to envisage the future at all. Even if there are no rational grounds for it, man still continues to hope. Very naturally such hope, even when it appears to be justified, is transient and illusory; and it is remarkable how often it is qualified by poets and other writers by such epithets as 'faint', 'trembling', 'feeble', 'desperate', 'phantom'. The Bible sometimes uses hope in the conventional sense. The ploughman, for example, should plough in hope (1 Cor. 9:10), for it is the hope of reward that sweetens labour. But for the most part the hope with which the Bible is concerned is something very different; and in comparison with it other hope is scarcely recognized as hope. The majority of secular thinkers in the ancient world did not regard hope as a virtue, but merely as a temporary illusion; and Paul was giving an accurate description of pagans when he said they had no hope (Eph. 2:12; cf. 1 Thes. 4:13), the fundamental reason for this being that they were 'without God'.

Where there is a belief in the living God, who acts and intervenes in human life and who can be trusted to implement his promises, hope in the specifically biblical sense becomes possible. Such hope is not a matter of temperament, nor is it conditioned by prevailing circumstances or any human possibilities. It does not depend upon what a man possesses, upon what he may be able to do for himself, nor upon what any other human being may do for him. There was, for example, nothing in the situation in which Abraham found himself to justify his hope that Sarah would give birth to a son, but because he believed in God, he could 'in hope' believe 'against hope' (Rom. 4:18). Biblical hope is inseparable therefore from faith in God. Because of what God has done in the past, particularly in preparing for the coming of Christ, and because of what God has done and is now doing through Christ, the Christian dares to expect future blessings at present invisible (2 Cor. 1:10). The goodness of God is for him never exhausted. The best is still to be. His hope is increased as he reflects on the activities of God in the Scriptures (Rom. 12:12; 15:4). Christ in him is the hope of future glory (Col. 1:27). His final salvation rests on such hope (Rom. 8:24); and this hope of salvation is a 'helmet', an essential part of his defensive armour in the struggle against evil (1 Thes. 5:8). Hope, to be sure, is not a kite at the mercy of the changing winds, but 'a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul', penetrating deep into the invisible eternal world (Heb. 6:19). Because of his faith the Christian has an assurance that the things he hopes for are real (Heb. 11:1); and his hope never disappoints him (Rom. 5:5).

There are no explicit references to hope in the teaching of Jesus. He teaches his disciples, however, not to be anxious about the future, because that future is in the hands of a loving Father. He also leads them to expect that after his resurrection renewed spiritual power will be available for them, enabling them to do even greater works than he did, to overcome sin and death, and to look forward to sharing his own eternal glory. The resurrection of Jesus revitalized their hope. It was the mightiest act of God wrought in history. Before it 'panic, despair flee away'. Christian faith is essentially faith in God who raised Jesus from the dead (1 Pet. 1:21). This

God towards whom the Christian directs his faith is called 'the God of hope', who can fill the believer with joy and peace, and enable him to abound in hope (Rom. 15:13). Because of the resurrection, the Christian is saved from the miserable condition of having his hope in Christ limited to this world only (1 Cor. 15:19). Christ Jesus is his Hope for time and eternity (1 Tim. 1:1). His call to be Christ's disciple carries with it the hope of finally sharing his glory (Eph. 1:18). His hope is laid up for him in heaven (Col. 1:5) and will be realized when his Lord is revealed (1 Pet. 1:13).

The existence of this hope makes it impossible for the Christian to be satisfied with transient joys (Heb. 13:14); it also acts as a stimulus to purity of life (1 Jn. 3:2–3) and enables him to suffer cheerfully. It is noticeable how often hope is associated in the NT with 'patience' or 'steadfastness'. This virtue is vastly different from Stoic endurance, precisely because it is bound up with a hope unknown to the Stoic (see 1 Thes. 1:3; Rom. 5:3–5).

In the light of what has been said it is not surprising that hope should so often be mentioned as a concomitant of faith. The heroes of faith in Heb. 11 are also beacons of hope. What is perhaps more remarkable is the frequent association of hope with love as well as with faith. This threefold combination of faith, hope and love is found in 1 Thes. 1:3; 5:8; Gal. 5:5–6; 1 Cor. 13:13; Heb. 6:10–12; 1 Pet. 1:21–22. By its connection with love, Christian hope is freed from all selfishness. The Christian does not hope for blessings for himself which he does not desire others to share. When he loves his fellow-men he hopes that they will be the recipients of the good things that he knows God longs to give them. Paul gave evidence of his hope just as much as his love and his faith when he returned the runaway slave Onesimus to his master Philemon. Faith, hope and love are thus inseparable. Hope cannot exist apart from faith, and love cannot be exercised without hope. These three are the things that abide (1 Cor. 13:13) and together they comprise the Christian way of life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. E. J. Bicknell, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, WC, 1932; RB 61, 1954, pp. 481–532; J-J. von Allmen, *Vocabulary of the Bible*, 1958; R. Bultmann, K. H. Rengstorf, *TDNT* 2, pp. 517–535; E. Hoffmann, *NIDNTT* 2, pp. 238–246. R. V. G. TASKER.<sup>1</sup>

## Inner Veil

### Hebrews 9:1–10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. <sup>2</sup> For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup> Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup> having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. <sup>5</sup> Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

<sup>6</sup> These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, <sup>7</sup> but into the second only the high priest goes,

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<sup>1</sup> Tasker, R. V. G. (1996). Hope. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer & D. J. Wiseman, Ed.) (3rd ed.) (479–480). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.<sup>8</sup> By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing<sup>9</sup> (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,<sup>10</sup> but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

## Melchizedek

### Hebrews 5:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,  
after the order of Melchizedek.”

### Hebrews 5:10 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

### Hebrews 7:1–28 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,<sup>2</sup> and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.<sup>3</sup> He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

<sup>4</sup> See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils!<sup>5</sup> And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham.<sup>6</sup> But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.<sup>7</sup> It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.<sup>8</sup> In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.<sup>9</sup> One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,<sup>10</sup> for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

<sup>11</sup> Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?<sup>12</sup> For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.<sup>13</sup> For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another

tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. <sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

<sup>15</sup> This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup> who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup> For it is witnessed of him,

“You are a priest forever,  
after the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>18</sup> For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup> (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

<sup>20</sup> And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, <sup>21</sup> but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
‘You are a priest forever.’ ”

<sup>22</sup> This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

<sup>23</sup> The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, <sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. <sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. <sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. <sup>28</sup> For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.