

Christ Superior Person – Part 6

Hebrews 6:10-20

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What happens in the book of Hebrews is basically the writer is writing to Christians who are Jews, you gotta keep that in mind, and he's telling these Jewish Christians not to get discouraged in following Christ, they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ, and to not go back to Judaism. What he does to encourage them not to go back to Judaism is sets forth all the way through the book of Hebrews that Christ is superior to the old system, that Jesus is better than the prophets, He's better than Moses, He's better than the priests, so we're in the section of Hebrews where we see Christ our High Priest. When we get to Hebrews 7, we're going to stop just short of it tonight, he's going to show us that Christ is the High Priest after the order, not of Levi and Aaron, but of Melchizedek and that he has a better sanctuary that is in heaven.

Tonight we cover a section, Hebrews 5:11-6:20, the end of the chapter, that is a parenthetical section. The doctrine and the teaching has stopped, and there's a warning and an exhortation. There's a series of these warning sections, some like to call them exhortation sections, interspersed through the book. The third one is in Hebrews 5:11-6:20. It begins to warn or exhort them in Hebrews 5:11. Let's follow with me. The writer of Hebrews says, "Of whom," that "of whom" is referring to Jesus Christ, "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec," verse 10. So, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered," or understood, "seeing ye are dull of hearing." He's been talking about the priesthood of Christ. He doesn't really launch into it until Hebrews 7 and then, beginning in Hebrews 5:11, he begins to warn them and is concerned for them because they are dull of hearing, they're not receptive to the Word of God.

It's interesting. In all these warning sections, they all have to do with our relationship to the Scriptures, and I think that's interesting that if you're not right related to the Scriptures, you're not going to be going forward. If you're not rightly related to the Word of God, you're going to be going backwards rather than forward. You cannot progress in your Christian walk without the Word of God, and not just being a hearer of the Word, but you must be a doer also. We don't want to be dull to the Word, we want to hear the Word, receive the Word, we want to move forward in our relationship to the Lord through His Word.

He says, verse 12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers," but the problem is, "ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." There's the condition of these believers, verses 11-14, and the marks of maturity is that "strong meat" is for those who feed on the Word, grow in the Word, learn the deeper doctrines, grow on beyond the basics, so they have an unrestricted diet and they have

receptive discernment from the Word of God.

Without a break, in Hebrews 6:1, he says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," that is the repeated theme, that's the mantra, that's the exhortation, "Let's go on. Let's not go back," so you might say, "Don't backslide, but go forward in your walk and relationship," so there's the exhortation. "...not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God," not dealing with "Of the doctrines of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible," verses 4-6, we looked at it in depth last week, is a stern warning, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God," there's the Scriptures again, "and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away," or fall alongside, "to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

If you missed last Wednesday night, go on the website and listen to our study as we looked at the different views and ways people interpret that; but my number one point that I made was: This is not teaching that a Christian, born again individual, can lose their salvation. That would be contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. An important principle when interpreting the Bible is that clear Scriptures should always be used to interpret unclear Scriptures. You don't want to build a doctrine on obscure, unclear passage to the neglect of very clear scriptural teaching in the Bible. All through the Scriptures, I believe, we see the security of the believer, so it would be wrong to say that these are those who lose their salvation. It's possible that he's referring to those who are saved but are falling away back into Judaism, and they're not going to progress, they're not going to grow, they're not going to bear fruit, and they're going to have unfruitful lives.

Do you know that you can have a saved soul but a wasted life? You can almost use that statement to summarize this warning section. Don't have a saved soul and a wasted life—yes, you're going to heaven; yes, you have eternal life, but you'll just make it in by the skin of your teeth. You want to have a victorious entrance. You want to have rewards, and you want to bring glory to God and be a blessing to others. We're going to see that in this warning passage. He's also warning them that if you leave Christ and go back to Judaism, there's no more sacrifice for sin. It's interesting that in Judaism today, they don't have a temple, they don't have any priests, they don't have any blood sacrifices, they have no way to have access to God because Christ is the fulfillment of the old covenant and Judaism is gone. It's passed off the scene, and Christ is the fulfillment of that which was foretold in the Old Testament. So, to say that, "Well, if you don't want to be a Christian, you can be a Jew and that's a legitimate religion," Judaism without Christ is just as much a false religious system as any other false religious system.

Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Jesus Christ is the way, He's the truth, He's the - what? - life. No one comes to the Father except by Him, and actually that's the words of Jesus Himself. He wanted to make it very clear, "I'm the way, truth, life; no one comes to the Father except by Me," He said. Not, a way; not, one of many ways; but the way. If you forsake "the way," where else is

there to go but into lies and errors? There's no way there, there's no repentance, there's no fruit, there's just an empty religious system.

That thought carries on to the end of Hebrews 6, that's why I wanted to go back and read this. Don't digress, don't backslide, progress into your Christian life following the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If you fall away, then it's impossible, "...to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." He begins to illustrate this, and we did look at this last week, in verses 7-8. He says, "For the earth which drinketh in the rain," this is an illustration of what he just finished teaching, "the earth which drinketh in the rain," which is a great verse for us right now, right? Will it ever stop raining here in California? It's insane. I thank God for the rain, but, Lord, please send the sunshine. "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs," which is vegetables, fruit, "meet," food, "for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God," so the farmer dresses the field, the rain waters the field, and it brings forth fruit. The picture there is that it receives blessings from God.

Verse 7 is what you want in your life. This is an illustration from nature of what you want in your life. You want to receive the Word of God and you want your life to bring forth fruit, right? You want it to be an abundant, fruitful life. But the opposite is fruitlessness, verse 8, "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Don't use that illustration of being burned as though a believer can be thrown into hell and be damned for eternity. This is an illustration from nature that they take the thorns, the briers, and put them in a pile and burn them, so they're not worth anything. This passage is not about salvation, it's about fruitfulness and fellowship with God.

He says, verse 9, "But," and this is the key, it turns here, "beloved," so he's clearly talking to Christians, "we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Now, that's the hinge or the turning point of this warning passage. He warns them, he illustrates the need for fruitful lives, and then says, "But, beloved," believers, "we are persuaded better things of you," in other words, we're convinced you're not going to go this way, though we're warning you, "and things that accompany salvation," notice they don't accomplish salvation, they don't produce salvation, they don't merit salvation, they "accompany salvation." Truly saved individuals will produce or manifest that through fruit to some degree—some shape, some form your life will be transformed—so we want to have, "...that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." In verses 9-12, he's giving them an assurance.

We begin the new section tonight in verse 10, and I want to give it two sections, verses 10-15, and then verses 16-20. In verses 10-15, we are told that we should stand on God's promises. Now, again, it's important for you to know your Bible. If you're going to stand strong on the promises of God and claim them by faith and be patient for God to fulfill them, you need to know those promises found in the Bible, the Word of God. Let me outline this for you as we go through. Verses 10-15 is a call for us to stand on God's promises by faith and patience.

The first thing he does in verse 10 is expresses his appreciation for them. Remember, he just

got through saying, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation," so now he wants them to know that he's confident of them that they're going to move forward and produce fruit, verse 10. This is what I call appreciation, "For God is not unrighteous," the King James word translated "unrighteous" means unjust or unfair, so a clear statement that God is righteous, God is just, God is fair. He's not going "...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." I love this verse. "For 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."

There's a Scripture in the Old Testament in Malachi 3:16 where it says that the righteous get together and talk, and they are serving the Lord, and that God keeps a book of remembrance. God listens in on their conversation and keeps a little book of remembrance. Do you know that when you serve the Lord, God is writing that down, taking note of it, and He will not forget. You won't get to heaven and say, "But, Lord, remember how I did this," or "I did that," or "how I was serving You?" And He'll say, "No. Sorry about that. I never saw that, or if I did, I forgot. Do you know, the older I get, the more things I forget all the time." God's getting pretty old. He's getting a little senile, and when we get to heaven we just pray, you know, I hope He hasn't forgotten me. "Who are you? What's your name? Gabriel, can you check the books again and make sure this guy is in the book?" "I'm there, Lord. I'm there." God is not going to be unjust, He's going to be righteous to remember your service toward Him. God will not "...forget your work and labour of love."

The word "ministered" at the end of the verse is the same word that we get the word deacon, translated deacon, in the New Testament. The word means to serve. It's basically saying that you are serving, you are ministering to the saints, and you do minister. Notice, so God's going to remember your ministry. Now, he's writing to these believers that were in danger of backsliding, but then he's affirming with a confidence that they have been serving the Lord, that they will continue to serve the Lord, that they'll bring forth fruit that will accompany their salvation, so he's really affirming them. He warns them, but balances out the warning with affirmation or appreciation, you might say.

There's some lessons for us to learn here, that is, we should all be busy serving the saints, ministering to others in the church, the fellowship of the household of faith. Notice, "...ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." You have, past tense, served others, ministered; and "...ye...shew," you're going to continue to do ministry. How I thank God for those in our church that give of themselves to serve and minister to others in this fellowship. It's not just about me standing up here on Wednesdays or Sundays teaching the Bible, the Bible says that we should serve one another, we should build up one another, we should forgive one another, we should wash one another's feet. The Bible says we should bear one another's burdens.

You need to be not only coming to church—listen to me carefully—but you should be serving others in the church. It can be as simple as just praying with someone after church, encouraging someone, ministering to someone that's downcast, bearing one another's burdens,

or showing hospitality one to another. This person comes every Wednesday, and I see that they sit alone and leave alone and no one talks to them. I'm going to go over to them after service and say, "Hi," and introduce myself and reach out and get to know them and see if they don't need some encouragement. So, instead of just coming and listening (which is important to do, I commend you for that) say, "Here am I, Lord, use me. Make me a blessing, make me a blessing, may out of my life Jesus shine." This isn't the official office of a deacon, but it's believers that are serving. We have people in our church for which I am so thankful for their act of service and ministry. They don't get paid. They don't get a picture in the foyer, "Servant of the Month." They don't get any recognition, but God writes it in His book. God knows.

Another thing that I want to point out in our service to the saints, which we should all be actively doing, the motive is love. Notice he talks about, "...and labour of love," so that is our motive. We are doing it because we love Jesus. If you look at people, then sometimes you are going to be discouraged and not want to serve them. But if you look at Jesus, and you do it for Christ's sake, Paul said, "For the love of Christ constrains me." If you're going to be a missionary, you go because you love Christ, and when you love Christ, His love flows through you to others. When you come to church, if you really love Jesus, you'll love others. You can't sing songs and raise your hands and say, "I love You, Lord; I love You, Lord, but that guy sitting behind me I really don't like right now. Lord, I pray he doesn't try to talk to me after church. I hope he doesn't invite me over to his house." "I'm a Christian, but I'm not one of those loving kind. I just don't care. I don't like people. I love God, but I don't love people." That's inconsistent. They were serving others, and they were doing it out of a motivation for love. May God give us servants who love the Lord and love others and are doing it not for recognition, not for pats on the back, but because they love Jesus and they love others. What a marvelous text that is, God remembers. How marvelous that is!

Now, he admonishes them, verses 11-12; so he gives them appreciation, verse 10; then, admonition, verses 11-12. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence," again, he's referring to their service to others. By the way, he's calling them "saints," we are the believers, and he says, "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence," we want you to do that diligently, "to the full assurance of hope unto the end." One of the ways that we stay actively following Christ, strong in our walk with the Lord, is out of love serving others. One of the ways that you're in danger of backsliding is that you have no love for Christ, love for others, and you don't serve anyone else.

You know, it's not enough just to take in, you need to give out. If you just take in, you're like the Dead Sea. Do you know why the Dead Sea is the Dead Sea? Because it has an inlet but no outlet. A lot of Christians are the Dead Sea—inlet but no outlet. They're not giving out of themselves. They're not sacrificially serving others. The Sea of Galilee, the other lake north of the Dead Sea, has water rushing into it and water rushing out. It's a beautiful freshwater lake. We receive the Word, and we receive God's forgiveness and grace, and then we give it out to others in service. So, he doesn't want us to be slack toward the Word, but he wants us to be diligent, verse 11, in our service toward others and it brings, at the end of verse 11, "...full assurance of hope unto the end." In other words, it helps to give you assurance that you're

saved, that you're going to heaven, that you're a child of God. It strengthens your Christian walk. If you're discouraged tonight, you're ready to give up, get your eyes off yourself, ask God to fill you with love, and get busy ministering to others who have needs in the body of Christ or in the area around you.

Verse 12, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Don't separate verse 11 from verse 12. He says, "I want you to be diligent. I want you to have full assurance of the hope," notice we're going to have the word "hope" several times mentioned before we get to verse 20, the end of this warning section. That hope, of course, is the believer's hope of heaven. Whenever the Bible uses the hope for the Christian, it's not cross your fingers "hope" you get to go to heaven when you die, it's a confident, steadfast assurance. It's not like a worldly hope where you "hope it happens," but it's a confident, steadfast assurance of heaven that we'll be with Christ. He knows that we can have it, "...unto the end." So, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Let me break it down. Verse 11 starts with, "be diligent;" secondly, verse 12, "don't be slothful;" thirdly, mimic or imitate those "...who through faith and patience inherit the promises." They don't go back, they go forward, so he's encouraging them to be diligent, not to be slothful. The word "followers" in verse 12 is where we get in the Greek the word translates to where we get our word mimic or imitation. We want to mimic or imitate two things in other believers who are progressing in their walk: their faith (verse 12) and their patience; and they "...inherit the promises." This is why, if I were to title tonight's study, I would title it: Promises and Anchors. We're standing on the promises...too many Christians are just sitting on the premises instead of standing on the promises of God, and we're anchored in Christ to that sure hope of heaven.

Now, mimic, "...them who through faith and patience," circle the word "faith," and circle the word "patience," and then notice the words, "inherit the promises." God has given us exceeding great and precious promises. One of the reasons why we need to read the Bible is to find the promises of God. Now, I don't want to get sidetracked in a study of the promises of God in the Bible, but there's an old hymn that says, Every promise in the book is mine; Every chapter, every verse, every line; I'm standing on His Word divine, Every promise in the book is mine. It's a cool song, but it's not true because not every promise in the book is mine.

There are promises in the Bible that were given to Abraham. One of the biggest mistakes Christians make is finding a verse, using that little prayer card, they don't know what book of the Bible it's from, they don't know the context of where it's coming from, but they find a promise and walk around like, "Woohoo! I found a promise. This is so great!" It's like, "Well, excuse me, that one's not for you." "Yeah, but it's so good!" "Yes, but read the context." But when you find a promise that's for you, and then you find the conditions and you keep them, guess what you can do? You can take it to the bank. You can stand on it in faith. This is how we live our Christian life—by faith. Then, we are patient for God to fulfill His promise that He's made in His Word.

When we come to Hebrews 11, which is the great "Hall of Faith" of heroes of the Old

Testament, they're all illustrating this is how they lived by faith and patience. One of the greatest chapters in all the Bible, Hebrew 11, the great "Hall of Faith," all the things that they did through faith. These two elements are so important in your life as a Christian if you're going to progress: faith and patience. Now, faith involves trusting in the Lord and believing Him, then patience involves the timing of the Lord and waiting on Him. One is a trust concept, faith; the other is a timing concept.

I can't tell you how many times I'm ministering to people after church, praying with them about their problems and issues, and it seems like it always comes around to trust the Lord and wait patiently for Him to keep His promises. Usually people want something to fix it right away, some magic word, like I can wave a wand over them and everything's going to be perfect. But the Christian life has problems, the Christian life has challenges, so we need to trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and then what happens, in time He will make your path straight. So, this "patience" is literally steadfast endurance. It could be translated longsuffering. We don't like this. We want it now. We want faith to produce something right now. We don't want to wait for God's timing. He's going to illustrate it in the life of Abraham, and again, remember the water comes down, the fruit bears, and the field brings its fruit? This is the fruitful Christian life—you walk by faith, the just shall live by faith, but you also have to be patient and wait.

Did you know that God is not in a hurry? Does that surprise you? I'm in a hurry. I usually tell God what I want, when I want it, how I want it, in Jesus' name, right now. That's what God does, He laughs, because we can't boss God around and tell Him what to do. It could be that God will fulfill His promises, but He does it in His time, so we have to have patience. I love those two concepts mentioned there in verse 12, we follow, mimic those who lived by faith and had steadfast endurance.

By the way, a little practical footnote, every Christian should have heroes—Christian heroes, men and women of the Bible, heroes. Just follow their example. Read Christian biography heroes, missionaries, great women and men of God that have served the Lord. Read biographies of great men and women of God. Let it shape you and mold you and influence you. I have my little list of heroes, one of them is John Wycliffe. I've been reading about John Wycliffe, and I just love the story of this "Morning Star of the Reformation." During this very dark time in the church's history, he was a man of the Bible, a man of the Word, a man who preached the Word, and God brought great revival through his life. It just so inspires me, right? I love the story of William Tyndale. I love the story of Martin Luther the great Protestant Reformer. I love to read stories about the preacher, Charles Spurgeon. I love to read about D. L. Moody. I love to read commentaries and books by Warren Wiersbe who has so impacted my life. I had the privilege of meeting him and spending time with him. I thank God for Chuck Smith and the example he gave me as a pastor of feeding the flock and teaching the Word and being a servant to others. So many times these men in my life have been models of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Someone said, "If I see farther than other people, it's only because I've stood on the shoulders

of giants." You should have heroes. Make sure your heroes aren't the Hollywood movie stars or some of the sports heroes of today. Make them men and women of God who through faith and patience...read Hebrews 11. Make them your heroes. Emulate them. Mimic them. Follow their example, that's what he's saying.

Now, it begins to apply with illustration in verse 13. What better way to illustrate this than Father Abraham? "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing," he's quoting from the Old Testament where God was telling Abraham the promises and the blessings that were his. "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured," there's the faith and patience back in verse 12, "he obtained the promise." Verses 13-15 are a little mini bio on the life of Abraham. We don't want to spend all night talking about Abraham, but read Genesis 12, 13, and 15.

Did you know that Abraham is used in the Bible as the premiere example of justification by faith alone? Now, the grace and mercy God showed to Abraham is amazing. Do you know that Abraham is the first Jew, you could say. This is a great illustration for these Hebrews, but before that he was a Canaanite, a pagan. He was living in Ur of the Chaldees, and he was in a culture that worshiped the sun, moon, and stars of the heavens, especially the moon gods. God wanted to start the line through which the Messiah would come, the Savior of the world, so God wanted to build a nation, so he started with one man. God reached down, came to Abraham, and God revealed Himself to Abraham. That just amazes me.

Can you imagine being Abraham? Everyone is worshiping the moon and sun and all these pagan gods, and God reveals Himself to Abraham, the true and living God. Abraham saying to his friends, "I don't worship the moon anymore." "You what? You don't worship the moon anymore? You crazy?" "No, I worship the true and living God, the God who made the moon and created the moon." Just the grace and mercy of God to reach down in the middle of this pagan society, Ur of the Chaldees, and pick and choose the man Abraham. Then, He gave Abraham a promise, it's called the Abrahamic covenant, that God was going to give him the whole land, that God was going to give him children, that God was giving him the Promised Seed, the Messiah, and through Him all the nations of the world would be blessed. Do you know all God's promises have been fulfilled as God promised?

Then, remember He told Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and to journey into a land that He would show him. He didn't tell him where he was going, He just said, "Pack your bags. It's time to leave." Can you imagine Abraham going to the Bank of Ur to withdraw all his money? The teller is freaking out. Abraham is a wealthy man. She runs to the manager of the bank, "Brother Abraham is here right now. He wants to take all of his money out of the bank. He's moving!" "He is?" So the manager comes out to talk to Abraham. "Abraham, what's the problem? Was one of the tellers unkind or unhelpful?" "No, no, no. They were fine." "Well, where are you moving to? Maybe we can transfer your funds to one of our sister banks. We have branches all over." Abraham said, "I don't know?" The manager said, "You don't know where you're going?" He said, "No. I don't know where. All I know is that God," he says, "What

god?" "The God that created the universe. God showed me that I'm to move and to go into a land of promise, and that God's going to give me a Promised Child who is going to be the Messiah, the chosen Seed, the Savior of the world." This is just a brief survey of the life of Abraham, by all means. The Bible says here that Abraham surely was blessed by God's promises and that he believed His promises.

In Genesis 15, Abraham had the promises of God. He's dwelling in the land, but what God had promised was not yet fulfilled. From God making the promise to Abraham until God giving him the promised seed, Isaac, through Sarah, his beloved wife, was 25 years, 25 years! Abraham's getting a little bit discouraged and God said, "Abraham, I'm your shield; I'm your exceeding great reward." Abraham basically says, "Oh, big deal. I don't have any kids. I'm getting up in years, I don't have any kids, what good does it do?" And God said, "Abraham, come on out of your tent for a minute. Look up into the sky." Abraham looked up into the sky, saw all the stars, and Abraham is about 70 years old, a little over 70 years old, and He said, "That's how many kids you're going to have." Now, that would've caused you a heart attack at age 70! I've gotta put a room addition on the tent to handle this. God said, "I'm going to give you that many—as the number of the stars are in the heaven and the sand which are on the seashore—that's how many kids you're going to have."

Do you know what Abraham did? It says he believed what God had promised. Isn't that awesome? Do you know what God did? God imputed—this is the doctrine of imputation starting all the way back in the Old Testament—to him righteousness. That's exactly how you and I are saved today. God makes a promise, "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more," we believe His promise, and God justifies us or declares us righteous. That's the basis for God saving sinners. It's not the keeping of the law, but the believing of God's provision and promises in His Word. This whole section on Abraham is amazing.

In Romans 4:11, Abraham is called "the father of all them that believe," so we follow the same example of Abraham. That's why when you get to Hebrews 11, again, Abraham is one of the examples of faith, and the principle of Christian living is faith, not that we do good works to merit salvation which is found in Judaism. The illustration there of Abraham is so very important.

The practical application for us is that God makes us a promise, we believe His promise, and we patiently wait for Him to fulfill it. Now, I realize he didn't perfectly wait, he got impatient and was influenced by his wife to take Hagar, his handmaid, and he had Ishmael. That was not the fulfillment of the promise. God finally brought Isaac, the fulfillment of that promise, so we need to believe God's promises. You might have problems, difficulties, and hardships in your life right now, but the thing to do is to get into God's Word, find a promise, believe it by faith, and then patiently wait for God to fulfill and keep His promise.

Now, in verses 16-20 we see that we have an anchor of hope in Jesus Christ. First of all, it's a sure promise, verses 16-18, "For men verily swear by the greater," now, he just finished talking about Abraham and God making a promise to Abraham and that you can bank on God's

promises, that He will keep His word, “For men verily swear by the greater,” when you make an oath or swear, you swear by God and you swear by the Bible. When you go into a courtroom, you put your hand on the Bible and you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God; so “men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.” When there’s an oath and a confirmation, it ends the discussion. It’s certain.

“Wherein God,” he relates it now to God, “willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,” in other words, it won’t change. What God says He will do, He will do. “...confirmed it by an oath,” so God makes a promise, 1) telling him what He will do, 2) and then God swears by Himself because there is no one greater than God, “I will do it.” Those two things we can, rest assured, it will come to pass; and it’s immutable because guess what? God is immutable, which means does not change.

Have you ever had anybody make you a promise and then change their mind? This week I had to call a friend and apologize that I promised him something that I couldn’t do. Wouldn’t it be a bummer if God called us like that? “Hi, John, this is God. I know I promised to forgive your sins, but I just can’t do that.” “What?” I know I promised to take you to heaven, I know you’ve read John 14, but...I’m preparing a place, but that doesn’t include you.” “What?!” Aren’t you glad God is immutable and God doesn’t change? Everything changes but God. He’s unchanging. He’s eternal. He’s immutable. God gives a promise and makes an oath, and He swears by Himself.

Notice verse 18, “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie,” you ought to underline that statement in your Bible. It is impossible for God to lie. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not,”—what?—“perish, but have,”—what?—“everlasting life.” It is impossible for God to lie. Isn’t that awesome? When we believe God’s promise of the provision of salvation in Christ, we will not perish but we will have everlasting life. “...it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation,” verse 18, “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us,” so verses 16 to the first part of 18 is a sure promise; the end of verse 18 is a safe refuge.

Now, that picture at the end of verse 18, “...have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us,” is an image from the Old Testament in what they had what was called the cities of refuge. They had several cities laid out. I think they had three on the east side and three on the west side of the Jordan. If you accidentally killed somebody, it was an accident, and their family wanted to take vengeance and kill you, you were able to run to this “city of refuge.” If you could get through the gate and safely get into the city, you were protected from the “avenger of blood.” If you stayed there, you were safe until the high priest died. Then, when they got a new high priest, you could come out and would not be held responsible for that accidental death.

Jesus is here declared to be our “city of refuge.” The “cities of refuge” in the Old Testament are a picture of Christ. So, we are guilty sinners, fleeing, running, and we hide in this “refuge” which is Jesus Christ who brings us safety. In verse 19, now you have a sure anchor. So, we have a

“refuge” and we have “an anchor.”

Notice “the hope” he’ll mention again there in verse 18. We had “hope” mentioned in verse 11, now we have “hope” mentioned again in verse 18. He says, “...who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us,” this is the hope of heaven. Then, he describes this hope is sure because it’s anchored in Christ, “...within the veil.” “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,” so in verse 18 we have a refuge to flee to for safety; in verse 19, we have an anchor that secures us and our hope in heaven. “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,” again, take note of those words, “sure and stedfast,” “and which entereth into that within the veil.”

Isn’t it interesting that this passage, and the reason I went back to Hebrews 5:11, that we find so many people think teaches that you can lose your salvation, ends by teaching that we have an anchor and a refuge and a sure, stedfast hope. It teaches the opposite of what many people conclude is taught in that passage, so the passage ends with assurance that we have an anchor for the soul, that’s Jesus Christ, who has gone “within the veil.” Notice it says there, verse 20, “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,” which is Hebrews 7.

Here we’ve been going about three or four weeks waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting to get to Hebrews 7 on Melchizedek, where it gets back into the teaching and the doctrine of Christ superior to the old covenant, He has a superior priesthood. We’ll get that next Wednesday night in Hebrews 7.

Notice we have a refuge, which speaks of our safety and security; we also have an anchor, verse 19. I’ll never forget the first night I ever spent on a boat, a 25-ft fishing boat, in the ocean overnight. We spent three nights out there, but the first night...I’d never been on a boat, spent the night. I’d been on a boat, usually for a couple of hours and get off the boat and back on land, but we went out into the ocean. We went up the California coast, and about Point Conception we found this cove. We anchored for the night, but the storm came in that night and beat the boat all night long. We were barbecuing on the boat, and it was beautiful, warm, and we’re eating barbecued lobster and steak. I said, “This is awesome!” We went to bed that night and WHAMMO! At about midnight or one o’clock a big storm came, and the boat just jostled and went here and there and knocked around. I couldn’t sleep for the rest of the night; but I was so thankful, in the dark of night out in the ocean, that we had an anchor, and that anchor held.

Do you know that you’re going to be beat and jostled and buffeted by storms of life but you have an anchor? And, guess where that anchor is? It’s Jesus, and guess where He is? In heaven. He uses the imagery here of, “within the veil.” That picture is that of the tabernacle in the Old Testament which had the holy place and then it had the holy of holies. Then, beyond the veil, the holy of holies, the priest could go only once a year, and no one could proceed through that veil. Jesus Christ has gone through the veil in heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and there He’s anchored us to our hope which is heaven. It’s a picture of the security of

the believer, his anchor holds sure.

I heard the story of a little boy that was flying a kite. The kite went higher and higher and higher and then disappeared through the clouds. You could see the string going up into the sky, but it went into the clouds, and you couldn't see the kite. A man walked along and said, "Hey, what're you doing there?" He said, "I'm flying my kite." The man said, "Well, I don't see a kite." The little boy said, "I don't see a kite, either." He said, "How do you know it's a kite?" "Because I feel the tug on the string." That's a picture of what Jesus has done for us going to heaven with an anchor. We don't see Him. We don't see heaven. We don't see our eternal destiny, but we feel the tug of heaven in our hearts. Every once in a while we feel that little bit of a pull and know that He's up there. I know that that's my home.

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Not only do we run to Christ for refuge, but we also have an "anchor of the soul" that's gone "...within the veil," fastened there in heaven and one day we will be brought safely to that port when Christ comes for us in the rapture of the church.

The world around us may buffet us, the devil may attack us, we're safe in our "city of refuge," Christ, and we're secure because we're anchored in Jesus Christ. He's called in verse 20, "the forerunner," He's gone before us; so He died, buried, rose, ascended, He's in heaven, and He's waiting to come back to take us to heaven. He's the anchor of our soul. Amen?