

58-06-02.wpd --An Anchor for the Soul
 promise, oath, hope, God's character, eternity
 Hebrews 6:13-20

The hope of our eternal destiny is anchored in the character of God.

INTRODUCTION: (text as Scripture reading)

--God is against profanity, but He's not against swearing. [children make promises with: "Cross my heart and hope to die!"; courtrooms ask: "Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"; a common cliché: "I swear on a stack of Bibles, I'm telling the truth!"]

--Swearing an *oath* appeals to a higher authority as a *witness* that the word of the one making the oath is *trustworthy*. God knows humans and wants us to trust Him, so when He began making promises about His plan for human salvation, He used an oath: **v.13-17**, *When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.*

--God can do whatever He wants without telling us anything about it, but He's not like that. He communicated #1, a *promise of salvation*, and #2, an *oath to confirm it*; **v.18** tells us why: *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. Our hope in God is not wishful thinking, but an expectation, because... HOM.idea.*

I. The Hope Offered to Us (v.18b)

A. What have we "*fled*" (in order "*to take hold of*" this "*hope*")?

1. We have *fled guilt* for sins committed...

- a. The wrong way to flee is as Adam did after sinning. God asked, "Where are you?" -- Gen 3:10, He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (Guilt leads to fear and to a desire to *cover up* or *hide*, either in bushes or in *excuses*)
- b. The right way to flee is to run, not to the bushes, but nakedly and openly to God, not hiding sin with excuses, but uncovering it by confession-- Prov 28:13, He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
- c. Our *hope for mercy* is solidly connected to the One who took

our guilt and paid for our sin on the Cross, so that, as it says in 1 John 1:7-9, ...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (So many "if's" involved in this passage, because it's up to us whether or not we "*take hold of*" this "*hope*.")

2. We have *fled* a false view of the world...

- a. Materialistic philosophy says, "*There is no God. This world is all there is. This life is all we get.*" (Such thinking is misnamed *humanism*, because it offers neither hope nor meaning for humanity. It sounds intelligent, but "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Psa 14:1a), and they are aptly described by Rom 1:22, Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.
- b. The Apostle Paul concedes that the materialists would be right, if this life is it-- 1 Cor 15:32b, If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." BUT the resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaims a true human hope and a true humanism: It says that death won't succeed in tossing out our individual human lives to decay into oblivion on the scrap-pile of time.
- c. When we "*take hold of*" this "*hope*," we flee a bankrupt view of the world for a divinely humanistic worldview, and we become heirs of the promise made originally to Abraham-- Eph 2:12-13, remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

TRANS: God promised on oath a plan of salvation. He kept His word. That promise and oath still stand, because **the hope of our eternal destiny is anchored in the character of God**-- **v.19-20**, *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. [An ship's anchor is useless unless it is used to moor the ship. Ships can run aground, if the anchor is not employed. But for it to work, the anchor must drop where it can lodge on the sea bottom.] So it is for our hope to be "*firm and secure*." Our **text** points to where we drop our anchor of hope. It's into the character of Christ, who is...*

II. The High Priest Who Offered Himself for Us

- A. What's "*behind the curtain*"? [The veil inside the OT Tabernacle separating the Holy Place from the Holiest of Holies, where God's presence dwelt among the Israelites in the wilderness. Only the High Priest could go behind it yearly on the Day of Atonement.]
1. This pictures our goal in this life and the next: a holy, eternal relationship with the Eternal Holy God.
 2. Christ achieved that goal for us on the Cross (it was symbolically demonstrated by what happened in the moments preceding His actual death-- Mat 27:51 (NKJV), Then, behold, the veil [curtain] of the temple was torn in two from **top to bottom**; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split ("**top to bottom**" because salvation's work came by grace from Heaven to Earth, not the other way around, as some believe who trust in good works rather than the Cross of Christ.)
- B. Jesus alone is our Human Anchor "*behind the curtain*" inside the Holiest of Holies, mooring our souls in the loving heart of God. (Faith is the chain attaching us to that Anchor.) ["The Solid Rock"-- vs.2&3, "When darkness veils His lovely face, / I rest on His unchanging grace. / In every high and stormy gale, / My **anchor** holds within the **veil**. // His **oath**, His **covenant**, His blood, / Support me in the whelming flood. / When all around my soul gives way, / He then is all my **Hope** and Stay."]
- C. How long will Christ's ministry for us last? Forever! That was in the job description when Christ took the assignment in Heaven. (Humanity is lost without a continuing High Priest, and unlike other leaders and teachers and rulers, "*He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek*" --His ministry for us never ends!)

CONCLUSION:

--This is the loving, caring, gracious character of the God of Scripture. **The hope of our eternal destiny is anchored firmly and securely in His divine character.** That greatly encourages the expectancy of Christian believers, and it encourages the commitment of those who have not yet trusted Him for the salvation provided in Christ. There is no other hope for humanity like this one, which is rooted entirely in the character of the God who created us. Nothing is more certain! "*Cast all your cares on God;*" said Alfred Lord Tennyson, "*that anchor holds.*"

Heb 6:13-20 (NIV), When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, {14} saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." {15} And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. {16} Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. {17} Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. {18} God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. {19} We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, {20} where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.