

## A STUDY OF HEBREWS

### *The Self-Attesting God and Christian Hope - Chapter 6:13-20*

#### I. Review

##### A. Jesus Christ is the greatest and final Prophet and enthroned Son of God.

1. Therefore we must pay closest attention to His Gospel, lest we drift from it or fail to realize His sympathy with us as a human being. (1:1-2:18)

##### B. Jesus Christ is infinitely greater than Moses since He is the Son over God's church and the Giver of eternal, not just temporal, rest.

1. Therefore we must persevere in faith lest we fail to reach the true heavenly rest, just as many Israelites failed to reach the rest of Canaan. (3:1-4:13)

##### C. Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest, called by God, and sympathetic to us all since He was truly and painfully tempted.

1. Therefore we who have profound needs must fly to God's throne of grace, freely opened because of Christ's heavenly intercession for us. (4:14-5:10)

**Author's Last Point Before Beginning His Detour:** *And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,* <sup>10</sup> *being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.* (Heb 5:9-10)

##### D. The Author's Detour Before Continuing on with Melchizedek:

1. Rebuke for their dullness: "... it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.." (Heb 5:11)
2. A warning against apostasy: "For it is impossible, in the case of those [who] have fallen away, to restore them again..." (Heb 6:4-6)
3. Hope for their perseverance: "yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things-things that belong to salvation. <sup>10</sup> For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. <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. (Heb 6:9-11)

#### II. Text: Hebrews 6:13-20 – A Divine Detour Detailing the Devastation of Disbelief and Disobedience

*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. <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 to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, <sup>18</sup> so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. <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 6:13-20)

1. What is an oath (e.g., in a courtroom)? Upon whom or what are oaths made? Why are oaths necessary?

2. What makes God's swearing an oath so stunning? By whom does God swear an oath? Why?

*"There is nothing amiss in God's bearing witness to himself. For who else would be capable of bearing witness to him?... God alone therefore is the strongest security first for himself, and in the next place for his deeds also, so that he naturally swore by himself when giving assurance regarding himself, a thing impossible for anyone else."*

- Philo of Alexandria on Gen 22:17

3. According to Hebrews, what was the substance of God's oath (v. 14)? What was going on when God swore this oath to Abraham?

*And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." <sup>15</sup> And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven <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, <sup>18</sup> and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." (Gen 22:13-18)*

4. Did Abraham believe God's promise before or after the oath was given?

**Paul's commentary on Abe's faith:** *"In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, 'So shall your offspring be.' ...No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised." (Rom 4:18, 20-21)*

5. If the oath confirmed Abraham in his faith, what does the oath do for ours (vv. 17-18)?

*And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:29)*

*"They are sluggish who, impatient of labors and the long delays of the promised blessings, cease from doing good or prefer to follow present pleasures and are opposed to those who persevere...But those who are patient are not broken by any delay, are not diverted by any blandishments, are not cast down by any adversities, from the hope of those blessings, and they bear all things and do all things for the sake of him who solely by his goodness promises such good things to those who have faith and hope in him. And lest those who trust and hope should ever relax their faith and patience and become less confident, he swore by himself, so that they might have absolute certainty regarding the promise and as they persevere further might no more doubt those blessings that if they were a present possession." - Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (c. 1455 - 1536)*