



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

The Certainty of God's Promise – Hebrews 6:13-20

July 1, 2018

1. **Lesson Starter:**

Since the Christian Pilgrimage is made through faith and not directly by sight, the issue of assurance and encouragement are paramount. Our lesson scriptures today continue from last week's lesson with a complete undergirding of assurance to the believer.

When God makes a promise, it is not a casual word to be forgotten, but something for an eternity. Remembering that this was written at that time to those that were hard-pressed and persecuted, this was a hopeful and important message. Multiple key words are used to show the strength and eternal nature of God's promise:

- Surely (Vs 14)
- Oath (Vs 16-17)
- Final Confirmation (Vs 16)
- God desired to show convincingly (Vs 17)
- Unchangeable (Vs 18)
- Sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Vs 19)
- High priest forever (Vs 20)

Nothing can change or divert Jesus priesthood or the promise of God in whom our hope is eternally rested. As we go through the lesson today, look for the following four themes in scriptures:

- The Promise (Vs 13-17)
- Anchor of Hope (Vs 18-19)
- Forerunner being the High Priest
- Fulfillment

2. **The Appointed Day 6:13-17**

¹³ 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 People 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.

What was God doing with an oath? What was His purpose?

Had God not previously warned His people against using oaths? Had Jesus not encouraged us not to swear by anything in heaven or earth? Were we not told in the bible in numerous places that the character of a person behind the spoken word was all the trustworthiness required as opposed to colorful sayings or oaths?

Did James not warn us "But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation (James 5:12).

So what possible meaning might we find in the Oath of God? Any thoughts?

Each of the above references need to be interpreted in its own context as opposed to blanket statements. The major concern for the writer of Hebrews was to reinforce the hope and assurance of his people. How could he then better explain than by saying “God’s promise is incontrovertible. He has done everything to assure you that he will never break his promise”.

While you would think that God’s promise should never be doubted, we continue to do this each and every day. Our human nature is “**dull and dim**” and spiritually self-centered. God therefore puts every reminder before us of the permanent nature of his promise.

Genesis 22:16-17

¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Fourteen times in Hebrews, the writer speaks of God’s promise. So when God desired to show more convincingly, he interposed with an oath. It was his great desire to give man confidence in his promise.

3. Anchor of Hope 6:18-19

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 set before 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,

The reference to “anchor of the soul” is very rare and only mentioned four times in the bible. Three of them occur in Luke’s account of the storm at sea and verse 19. Early Christians used the anchor cross to signify their faith and hope.

In the catacombs under the City of Rome, where the persecuted believers worshipped, you will find the anchor sign as one of the signs on the walls indicating Christians carved their symbol of hope. The transverse bar gives the appearance of the cross.

It is also thought to have been influenced as a Christian symbol since this was the emblem of Clement, the Bishop of Rome, who according to tradition was bound to an anchor during the persecutions and cast into the sea under Emperor Trajan. Originally, the anchor symbol symbolized hope. Because of its similarity in appearance to a cross, it came to be the symbol of the hope of salvation through the cross.

It is very important to remember that for Christians, God’s hope was not one of removing the situation or condition. The hope was not one of encouragement that their situation would get better and be a bright future. Hope was defined as an object of expectation that they were anchored to an immovable object. They would not be destined to persecution and wild seas forever. They were anchored by their faith.

We are asked to anchor this hope in our hearts. It is not a vague or vapory dream. This hope is God’s work. It is freely offered to man and we are invited to anchor our souls to what God has provided.

4. Nature of the High Priest 6:20

²⁰ where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

The third symbol of our hope is seen in Jesus being the forerunner. Jesus has gone before us and set the trail and example for us. He did this all on our behalf as a free gift. Jesus has passed through the heavenly world carrying with him the anchor to which the soul of every believer is firmly fixed.

Jesus alone is the high priest, who offered himself for his people, today and forever more.

5. Group Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss verse 13 and Genesis 22:16-17 with respect to God swearing an oath on himself:
 - a. Does this do exactly what the bible in other places warns us not to do?
2. Why do you think God says in Verse 17 that he did an oath “to make the unchanging nature of his purpose” clear to his people?
 - a. Why would an oath affect man’s ability to believe or have hope?
3. How is God’s unchangeable hope supposed to affect us in our everyday lives? Do we let this eternal hope truly impact what we do and how we live our lives?
4. Discuss the “Christian Hope” in verses 18-19, does your everyday application in your life seem to take the understanding that your hope just removes the problem? How do we begin focusing on the “correct hope” which includes a focus on learning from the situation, no matter the circumstance and being in God’s plan?
5. From Verse 20, how does Jesus being our forerunner affect our ability to believe and have hope?
 - a. How is our ability to follow and believe a leader affected if they have not done or experienced what they are asking us to do?