

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 16

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight as we step back into our study of Hebrews we are again coming back to Hebrews 6 and as we have looked at the writer is addressing the Hebrew believers in this section. He has called them to build upon the basic principles of Christ and to press on to spiritual maturity. We also looked at the warning which the writer gave them in Hebrews 6:4-8. And then we went on to look at the encouragement and the desire of the writer for the Hebrew believers.

Now I need to refresh your mind about a few points which we considered previously and in so doing it will prepare us for what it is that we are about to consider tonight. These Hebrew believers were under persecution for their faith and so they were not completely surrendered over to Jesus Christ. They had a divided allegiance. They were divided between Judaism and Christianity. This divided allegiance was causing major problems within their lives. We saw this in chapter 5 of Hebrews.

Hebrews 5:11-14

¹¹ *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.*

¹² *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, 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.*

Here were the repercussions of the divided allegiance:

1. **They had become dull of hearing.**
2. **They had not grown in their faith.**
3. **They were unfit for spiritual warfare.**
4. **They had come to the place where they could not discern between good and evil.**

It was the writer's concern about these 4 points which led him to write what we have studied so far in Hebrews 6.

Therefore, Hebrews 6:1-12a is for the purpose of getting them to fully surrender over to Jesus Christ. In other words it is all about getting them to fully trust God and forget about the ceremonies and the rituals of the Old Covenant. The Holy Spirit through the writer is calling them to cast all their care upon Jesus Christ in the midst of the persecution they were facing. Peter gave the same invitation to the believers who were suffering under the persecution of Nero.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

This is the very same thought which the writer of Hebrews has. He is calling on the Hebrew believers to cast all of their care upon the Lord and surrender their entire lives as well as the situation they were facing over to Him. Now I believe there would have been some questions which the Hebrews would have raised, "Can I really trust God if I cast all my care upon Him? Will He be able to fulfill His promises? Does the situation which we face have any effect upon God's faithfulness? What about His power, does the situation hinder the power of God?"

These questions bring us to where we are tonight in our study.

I. The Example of Faith, Patience and God's Faithfulness

Notice Hebrews 6:12

It is the end of this verse that is going to lead us into the section where the writer will show the faithfulness of God. The writer shows a contrast in this verse. Instead of being slothful or sluggish, they were to follow those who walked by faith and patience and then inherited the promises of God. Faith and patience were the 2 attributes needed in the lives of these believers as they faced the persecution.

Notice Hebrews 6:13

Now the writer reaches back into the Old Testament and lifts up the father of the Jewish Nation and that is Abraham. So the writer is going to use Abraham's life and especially the

Abrahamic Covenant as an example of faith, patience and the faithfulness of God. This would be something which the Hebrew believers were very familiar with.

Notice Hebrews 6:13a again.

Here we see that God had made a promise to Abraham. Let me show you the promise.

Genesis 12:1-4

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

² **And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:**

³ *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

⁴ *So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and **Abram was seventy and five years old** when he departed out of Haran.*

The promise was that God would bring forth from Abram a nation which would be the nation of Israel. This meant that Abram would father children. And it would be through Abram that all the families of the earth would be blessed because the promise also included that from the nation of Israel would come the Promised Messiah. So Abram receives this promise when he is 75 years old.

In Genesis 15 God reminded Abram of the promise again as a means of comfort.

Genesis 15:1-6

*After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, **Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.***

² *And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?*

³ *And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*

⁴ *And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; **but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.***

⁵ *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

⁶ *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

This passage comes right after Abram defeated the kings who had captured Lot and his family. As Abram laid down to sleep that night it seems as though fear invade his mind. Most likely he began to see himself as a target in this land of Canaan and therefore believed that others would desire to kill him after they heard of how he slaughtered the kings and their armies. It was as he wrestled the thoughts of fear that God spoke to him and reinforced the promise again. He told Abram that HE would father a child and from HIS seed there would be a nation. By this time Abram is getting close to 85 years of age.

Therefore, Abram desired that God would somehow confirm this promise in some way.

Genesis 15:7-8

⁷ *And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.*

⁸ *And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?*

Now let us notice Hebrews again and then we will get back to this.

Notice Hebrews 6:13b

This verse tells us that when God could swear by no greater He sware by Himself. What does this mean? Let us go back to Genesis again. Abram desired that God do something to confirm the promise so God made a covenant.

Genesis 15:9-18

⁹ *And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.*

¹⁰ *And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.*

¹¹ *And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.*

¹² *And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.*

¹³ *And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;*

¹⁴ *And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*

¹⁵ *And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.*

¹⁶ *But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

¹⁷ *And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.*

¹⁸ *In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land,*

Abram had asked for God to confirm His promise so God did something which Abram would have fully understood. God told Abram to sacrifice a heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a pigeon. The heifer, the goat, and the ram were all to be split down the middle and laid across from one another. The birds were not to be split but one laid across from the other.

Abram would have understood this because this was the way in which the Chaldeans made their covenants with one another. They would sacrifice the animals and then the 2 people who were entering into the covenant would walk between the animals which had been split in half. This was a "blood" covenant. And when the 2 people walked between the sacrificed they were making a public promise that they would be true to their part of the covenant and if they did not then might the same thing happen to them which had happened to the sacrificed animals.

So as Abram sacrificed the animals and he divided them into 2 parts making a path to walk between them he knew what was about to happen. He fully expected that he would walk with God between those sacrificed animals. So he sat back and he waited. The fowls of the air tried to feed upon the carcasses but Abram chased them away. As the day came to a close the unexpected happened. God caused a Abram to fall into a deep sleep. Then there were 2 objects which passed between the divided animals.

¹⁷ *And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.*

There was a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between the divided animals. These 2 objects represent God the Father and God the Son. This is so very important! If Abram would have passed between the divided animals then the covenant would have depended upon Abram's faithfulness. And if that would have been the case then the covenant would have never been fulfilled because Abram was human and he made many mistakes.

But the fulfillment of the covenant did not rest on Abram but it rested upon God and His faithfulness and since God is faithful there was not anyone or anything that could stop the promise of God from being fulfilled. God had made a covenant with Abram and it was all based upon the faithfulness of God. There was none greater so God swear by Himself.

Let me now show you the promise.

Notice Hebrews 6:14

God's promise to Abram was that He would bless him and He would multiply him. The question is, "Was God true to His promise?" Let me just remind you that there are somewhere around 13-14 millions Jewish people in the world today!!! That does not even include those who are saved who would be the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

We will continue this next week but before we close this out I need to explain what this would have meant to the Hebrew believers. They had come to Jesus for salvation and so they too had entered into a "blood" covenant with God.

Matthew 26:26-28

²⁶ *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*

²⁷ *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;*

²⁸ *For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

The promise of this NEW COVENANT which the Hebrews were now a part of was that Jesus would present them holy and unblameable when they one day stood before Him and that they would be given eternal life.

Colossians 1:21-22

²¹ *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*

²² *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*

John 10:27-28

²⁷ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

²⁸ *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

These were 2 of the promises of the NEW COVENANT. So again the question from the Hebrews was, "Can we trust God to keep His promises?" The answer is, "YES!" The NEW COVENANT just like the covenant given to Abraham is based upon the faithfulness of God. You see, the New Covenant was also made between the Father and the Son. When

Jesus died upon the cross He satisfied the demands of the Father. Jesus was the sacrifice made for the New Covenant and it was His work that paid the penalty for sin.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² **And he is the propitiation for our sins:** *and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Now because of God's character it is impossible for Him to lie. So when He makes a promise it will be fulfilled. The New Covenant did not depend upon the faithfulness of the Hebrew believers but it depended upon the faithfulness of God. So they could fully surrender their lives over and know that He would be true to His promises.

Conclusion:

What does this mean to you and me? We who are saved are also partakers of the New Covenant. That means that we can surrender completely over to our Lord knowing that He will be true to His promises. We will be presented holy. We do and will forever possess eternal life. Because the Covenant we are in is based upon the faithfulness of God not the good works of you and me.