

**"Our Great High Priest"**

**Part 18**

**Hebrews 4:14-8:5**

**Introduction:** In our study of the letter of Hebrews we are currently looking at a section in which the writer is following up a warning with some great words of encouragement for his readers. We are looking at Hebrews 6:12-20 and in this section the writer is encouraging his readers to consider the faithfulness of God as seen in the life of Abraham.

We must keep in mind that the Hebrews who received this letter were saved and because of their faith in Jesus Christ they were facing some severe persecution. So it is the writers desire to get them to press forward in their faith and not to turn back to Judaism. They were battling with a divided allegiance at the time of this writing and it had caused them to go backward in their faith. So the writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is encouraging them to FULLY trust in God and surrender over completely to His care and His will. The past 2 weeks I had shared with you that Peter called on his readers to do the same.

**1 Peter 5:6-7**

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

*<sup>7</sup> Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

This was also the desire of the writer of Hebrews. But there would have been a question with the Hebrews, "Can we really trust God to fulfill His promises even in the midst of what we are facing?" The answer to that of course was, "YES"! He then reminded them of the promise made to Abraham and the faithfulness of God in the fulfillment of that promise.

Now in the 8 verses that are before us in this section which pertain to God's faithfulness there is so much for us to learn.

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

**Part 3**

**Notice Hebrews 6:12-14**

I want to quickly review these verses in order to prepare of minds for that which we will consider tonight. God had made a promise to Abraham that from him would come a nation that would be so great in number that no one would be able to number them. Abraham desired that God would solidify His promise with a covenant and that is exactly what God did. God made a covenant with Abraham that was patterned after a Chaldean covenant.

**Genesis 15:8-12, 17-18**

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

<sup>9</sup> *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.*

<sup>10</sup> *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.*

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

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

<sup>17</sup> *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.*

<sup>18</sup> *In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram,*

This covenant was based upon God's faithfulness and not Abraham's. It was an unconditional covenant so there was absolutely no way that Abraham could do anything to keep the covenant from being fulfilled. It all rested upon God.

**Notice Hebrews 6:15**

Abraham was 75 when the promise was made and he was 100 when Isaac was born so he waited for 25 years to see the fulfillment of the promise. This now brings us to where we are tonight in our study.

**Notice Hebrews 6:16**

This verse connects to verse 13. Let us read the 2 verses together. There is no one greater than God so God swore by Himself when He made the covenant with Abraham. Now here in verse 16 the writer explains why men make covenants with one another. We need to understand that covenants or oaths were very popular and significant to the Hebrews. The reason the oaths were made and people would swear by someone greater was to put an end to all strife. In other words if 2 men needed to settle a deal between them they would often swear by God (Who is greater) and that would then confirm that the man was going

to be true to his word. But there is something else which comes to my mind when I think about this. These people were very cautious when it came to oaths because of what the religious leaders were doing. Let me show you the Words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 5:33-37**

<sup>33</sup> *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*

<sup>34</sup> *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

<sup>35</sup> *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

<sup>36</sup> *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

<sup>37</sup> *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

The religious leaders, who Jesus is correcting here, had taught that you could swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem or whatever and if you did not swear by God you were not obligated to fulfill the oath that you had promised. So this helps us to understand why these Hebrew believers were so cautious. It was difficult to trust people in their society.

Let me get your mind back to Hebrews again. The point of swearing by one greater was to confirm your promise.

**Notice Hebrews 6:17**

There is much for us to consider here. The overall idea in this verse was to help them to see the tender heart of God in making the covenant with Abraham. God did not need to confirm His promise with an oath because His Word is the absolute Truth but because of God's love and compassion for man He came down to the earth and walked through the sacrificed animals so that Abraham would have a "token" of His faithfulness and so that Abraham could get his mind wrapped around the message which God was sending. But it was not just for Abraham.

**Hebrews 6:17**

<sup>17</sup> *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*

All that is recorded about Abraham is recorded for everyone that is an heir of God's promise. That includes you and me. That which God recorded about Abraham in the Old Testament is so that we will be able to better understand the "IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL". Now I must ask the question, "What is the immutability of God's counsel?"

The word "immutability" means "unchangeable" or "unalterable". The word "counsel" means "purpose". So the "immutability of God's counsel" means that God's purpose is completely unalterable or unchangeable. Now let me place this in the context which it belongs. God did not need to confirm His promise to Abraham by an oath but He did because He desired that everyone of His children know that when He makes a promise His purpose is completely unchangeable and unalterable and there is not one person who can change or alter His purpose **because it rests upon God's faithfulness and not man's**. The oath which God made with Abraham was an outward manifestation of the immutability of God's purpose. It was an outward sign that no one would ever be able to stop God's promise from being fulfilled.

Now let me show you how God's power was far greater than any situation which Abraham could get himself into. We can see 2 situations in the life of Abraham.

### 1. Abraham in Egypt.

#### Genesis 12:11-17

<sup>11</sup> *And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:*

<sup>12</sup> *Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.*

<sup>13</sup> *Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.*

<sup>14</sup> *And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.*

<sup>15</sup> *The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.*

<sup>16</sup> *And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.*

<sup>17</sup> *And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.*

### 2. Abraham and Abimelech

**Genesis 20:1-3**

*And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.*

<sup>2</sup> *And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.*

<sup>3</sup> *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.*

In both of these situations God's power was greater than either situation which Abraham found himself in.

Let us now get back to Hebrews 6 again. I need to raise a question, "What does all of this mean to the Hebrew believers and to you and me right now?" This answer is found as we move on.

**Notice Hebrews 6:18a**

The oath which God made was based upon 2 "immutable" things. They are the promise of God and the oath which rests completely upon the character of God. So in these 2 things it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore God's promises are based on the character of God and when He makes a promise it is "unalterable".

**Notice Hebrews 6:18 again.**

Understanding the immutability of God's promises these believers now had a strong comfort. They had fled for refuge to lay hold upon hope set before them. This verse is so rich in spiritual Truth. The word "refuge" would have been special to these Hebrew believers because it would have taken their mind back to the Cities of Refuge. If we think back a while ago we looked at the Cities of Refuge and they were cities of security for the man who was fleeing from the avenger of blood. Once the man arrived at the city he was secure.

When these Hebrews came to Jesus Christ they had fled from the avenger who is Satan and they laid hold on the hope that is in Jesus Christ and the promise of eternal life.

**Notice Hebrews 6:19a**

The writer tells his readers that this hope is an anchor of the soul and is both sure and stedfast. At the time of this writing these people were in some turbulent waters but there was an anchor which would keep them from drifting and that anchor was the hope of

eternal life found in Jesus Christ and the immutability of God's promises and His Word. If they were to keep their minds and hearts focused upon Jesus and the promises of God they would be able to remain steadfast no matter what the storm would be which they faced.

**Notice Hebrews 6:19b**

This statement is amazing! Their souls were anchored and they were sure and steadfast. Where were they anchored? They were anchored inside the veil. This was a reference to the veil inside the Temple that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies. To go inside the veil was to enter into the presence of God. That was exactly where their souls were anchored, in the presence of God.

**Notice Hebrews 6:20**

This is exactly the same place that our Forerunner, Jesus has entered, and He is there at this present time serving as a High Priest FOREVER which means He is continually interceding for the believer.

**Conclusion/Application:**

Now we need to see the application in all of this for our lives.

When we came to Jesus Christ God made to us a promise.

**John 3:16**

*<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

This promise is based upon the blood of the New Covenant between God the Father and God the Son. We were brought into this covenant when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior. This promise is secured for us by the faithfulness of God. Just as God gave to Abraham a promise and an oath so God has given to us a promise and a pledge.

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

*<sup>13</sup> In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

*<sup>14</sup> Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

The word "earnest" means "pledge". When we were saved God promised to us eternal life and as a "pledge" He gave to us the Holy Spirit. Now just as Abraham could do nothing to stop God's promise neither can we.

**1 Peter 1:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*

<sup>5</sup> *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

We are therefore kept by the power of God. Now because His promises are immutable and unalterable and because God cannot lie we then have a hope which is an anchor for our souls. We are to LAY HOLD TIGHTLY upon the promises of God knowing that God will never fail and as we face the storms of this life we will be unmovable because our soul is anchored in the presence of God. Do you know what that means? It means we are NEVER separated from God!! The priests of the Old Testament had to get in and out quickly when they came into the Holy of Holies. We are anchored there. Then even beyond that we have a High Priest FOREVER who is at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf.

**Hebrews 7:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

<sup>23</sup> *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:*

<sup>24</sup> *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

<sup>25</sup> *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*