

Hebrews 6:12-20 (ESV) – God’s Secure Promise

Main point: God is a sure and steadfast anchor for the soul.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: The writer of Hebrews (maybe Paul, maybe Peter) is encouraging his readers to “go on to maturity” in their faith, not being “sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (6:11-12).

This is a little more challenging than passages we usually look at, so we’ll mostly focus on the main themes.

Focus of the study:

¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” ¹⁵ And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever ...

Questions:

1. *v. 12: Who was Abraham in the Old Testament? Father of what?*
 - a. The Hebrew nation; chosen by God
2. *What was the promise that God made to Abraham? Goes all the way back to Genesis...*
 - a. Genesis 22:15-18: “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. ..., ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”
3. *Let’s talk about oaths. What is an oath?*
 - a. A promise, a commitment
4. *When you swear something, make an oath, take a vow, what does that mean?*
 - a. You WILL do it – no question, no ifs, ands, or buts
 - b. Commitment to action, attitude
 - c. Permanent and serious
 - d. A confirmation. *What does it mean to confirm something?*
5. *What kinds of things do we swear to? What about... (Build these out one at a time, using examples, what it means, what it represents.)*

- a. Marriage vows – promise to love, obey, cherish, until death
 - b. Military or police or firefighter vows: promise to safeguard nation, uphold the Constitution, protect
 - c. Testimony in court – promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
 - d. Religious vows – promise to chastity, poverty, service
6. *When does an oath not work?*
- a. When someone doesn't take it seriously
 - b. When someone looks for a way out
 - c. Distrust
 - d. When someone lies
7. *In the Hebrews passage, God swears to Abraham by his own name. Why was this an excellent guarantee? Is there anything stronger or more solid than the character of God?*
His character: Love, mercy, forgiveness
- a. *What can God NOT do?*
 - a. He cannot lie
8. *What was the essence of God's promise to Abraham?*
- a. "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed"
9. *What does that mean for us? (Read again: v. 18-19: "so that ... we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.")*
- a. *What is an anchor, and what does it do? (Build this out, examples about boats in storms, in harbors, when wind is fierce, when you don't know where you are...)*
 - b. *How is this hope we have in God and his character like an anchor for our souls?*
10. *God said he would bless "all nations." Who does that include? Who inherits that promise?*
- a. Everyone!
 - b. Includes us
11. *How long does it take to receive a promise? What do we need to do while we wait?*
- a. Sometimes takes a very long time...
 - b. Trust; obey; fix our hope on him, for our safety and blessing now and forever.
12. *How can we encourage one another to live and look forward in hope?*
13. Ask for prayer requests for today.
14. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
15. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace