

## Hebrews 6:13-19a – God’s Secure Promise

**Main point:** Our hope in 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 is encouraging readers to “go on to maturity” in their faith, not to “be lazy, but to follow the example of those who inherit the promises through faith and patience” (Hebrews 6:11-12).

### Focus of the study:

<sup>13</sup> When God gave Abraham his promise, God swore by himself since he couldn’t swear by anyone greater. <sup>14</sup> God said, “I will certainly bless you and multiply your descendants.” <sup>15</sup> So Abraham obtained the promise by showing patience. <sup>16</sup> People swear an oath by something greater than themselves. An oath guarantees what they say and shuts down any argument. <sup>17</sup> So when God wanted to further demonstrate to the heirs of the promise that his purpose doesn’t change, God guaranteed it with an oath. <sup>18</sup> So these are two things that don’t change, because it’s impossible for God to lie. God did this so that we, who have taken refuge in God, could be encouraged to grasp the hope that is set before us. <sup>19</sup> We have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.

### Questions:

1. *v. 12: In Jewish history, Abraham is a very special person. I wonder who knows who Abraham was, what made him special? There’s even an old song, “Father Abraham...” (Father of what?)*
  - a. Abraham was chosen by God to be father of the Hebrew nation.
2. *Abraham’s story goes all the way back to Genesis, the beginning of the Bible! God had tested Abraham to see if Abraham would be willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, a foreshadowing of God giving up his own Son, Jesus, for us. After Abraham passes the test, listen to the promise that God made to Abraham:*
  - a. Genesis 22:16-18: <sup>16</sup> “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you did this and didn’t withhold your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore..., <sup>18</sup> And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you obeyed me.”
3. *So God makes an oath to Abraham, and God “swears by himself.” What is an oath?*
  - a. A promise, a commitment; serious and deliberate.
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, not subject to change.
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. Doctors: the Hippocratic oath, to do good and do no harm.
  - d. Testimony in court: promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
  - e. 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, or when someone lies.
  7. *In the Hebrews passage, God swears to Abraham by God's own name. Why was this an excellent guarantee? Is there anything stronger or more solid than the character of God? What is God's character?*
    - a. Love, mercy, forgiveness, TRUTH.
    - b. *What is the one thing that God cannot do?*
      - i. God cannot lie.
  8. *What was the essence of God's promise to Abraham? (Reread Genesis 22:17-18: "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore ..., <sup>18</sup> "And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.")*
    - a. The promise: God's blessing to Abraham AND to the whole world!
  9. *I wonder what that promise means for us? Let's go back to the Hebrews passage. (Read Hebrews 18b-19a: "so that we, who have taken refuge in God, could be encouraged to grasp the hope that is set before us. <sup>19</sup> We have this hope 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...)*
      - i. Holds the boat in place; provides security, safety; won't tip over.
    - b. *How is the hope we have in God and his character like an anchor for our souls?*
      - i. When everything around us threatens to swamp our boat, we can be sure in God's promises: His presence with us and our eternal safety.
  10. *I wonder what you might think the difference is between hoping and wishing?*
    - a. "Wishing" is more like a guess. We say we "hope" it won't rain, but we're not sure – we just wish that it wouldn't rain.
    - b. But in the Bible, the word "hope" is a SURE THING that's fixed in the future. We don't really have a good translation in English! It's a word that signifies confidence, a knowledge that's based in experience. We don't say we "hope" the sun comes up tomorrow, because we KNOW that it will, even though it's in the future. That's the biblical sense of hope!
  11. *Even when you're sure about the outcome of a promise, how long might it take?*
    - a. Sometimes it takes a very long time.
  12. *What do we need to do while we wait?*
    - a. Be like Abraham: patient, trusting, obedient.
    - b. Fix our hope on God, for our safety and blessing now and forever.
  13. *How can we encourage one another to live and look forward in hope?*
    - Ask for prayer requests for today.
    - Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
    - End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

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## Genesis 22:15-18

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