

“True Churches Have Much To Celebrate”

Hebrews 6:9-20

September 14, 2018

INTRO: Come... let us praise God together!

Today is a sweet day of remembering...
...a sweet day of celebration & restoration – Amen.

Please pray with me that the Lord’s love will permeate
this place... AND His people. Amen & AMEN

VIDEO: “Singing In The Victory” (5:45)

T/S: What a beautiful truth...
As the true Church, we’re singing in the victory!

- In a very real sense, that’s the song of Hebrews...
- A song of reminding, remembering, & restoration
- Hebrews is **an exhortation of celebration:**
 - Exhorting & celebrating **Justification**
 - Exhorting & celebrating **Sanctification**
 - Exhorting & celebrating **Glorification**

BIG IDEA: **True** Christians & Churches
can & do celebrate that Christ’s promises...
God’s promises... are absolute **GUARANTEES!**

PREVIEW:

- Celebrating God's Contrasting & Clarity
- Celebrating God's Goodness & Grace
- Celebrating God's Power & Promises
- Celebrating God's Truth & Love
- Celebrating God as our Great High Priest

I. Celebrating God's Contrasting Clarity

“There are many different responses to the gospel. The point of Jesus's parable in Matthew 13 was not to plant doubt in the hearts of the disciples. Rather, Jesus was showing his disciples how many ways the human heart can respond to the good news. The author of Hebrews does something similar in Hebrews 6:1-8. He is showing his congregation the way that many unbelievers in the church rejected the gospel. In doing so, he pastorally exhorts believers in the church toward a faithful obedience and maturity in Christ.

Hebrews 6:9-20 displays the author's confidence in these remaining believers to endure until the end and to inherit the promises that belong to them. How will they accomplish this? With faith and patience, just as Abraham did. By trusting God and persevering until the end, Christians will hold on to the hope set before us. This is what the last half of Hebrews 6 is all about.” – **Dr. Mohler**

Hebrews 6:9

⁹ Although we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.

VIDEO: “Beautiful Things” (4:40)

- That is one of my all time favorite songs/videos
- Th song & it’s ministering originators illustrate...
- See why we need both, remembering & *restoring*

VIDEO: “Lisa Gungor – I Found Unbelief” (6:55)

T/S: **Remember... Not all of Israel is Israel...**

- This has been the pattern from the beginning...
- Cain, Moses’ 250 leaders, Demas, Judas, _____?

II. Celebrating God’s Goodness & Grace

Hebrews 6:10-12

¹⁰ For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. ¹¹ And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

One of the most important catalysts of spiritual confidence is spiritual fruitfulness. Our faithful activity as Christians fuels our assurance. This is why the author longs for these Christians to show the same earnestness for the faith that they demonstrated when they first believed. As earnestness and diligence in their faith grows, so too will their fullness of hope until the last day.

- Christ Centered Exposition on Hebrews

VIDEO: *“House of The Rising Sun / Amazing Grace”* (7:50)

III. Celebrating God’s Power & Promises

Hebrews 6:13-16

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 & thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For people swear by something greater than themselves, & in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.

God's promises are unchanging and trustworthy because God is unchanging and trustworthy

- Life Application Study Bible

VIDEO: *“Jesus Is Better”* (5:10)

IV. Celebrating God's Truth & Love

Hebrews 6:17-19a

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...

Oaths taken in ancient Israel were much different from oaths taken today. Oaths in ancient Israel's day were not contractual as they are now. They were not sealed with a signature. Ancient Israelites sealed their oaths by their personal word. This is the nature of God's oath with Abraham, which is the focus of this passage of Hebrews. God is an oath-giving God who seals his oaths with his own word and by his own name. – Dr. Albert Mohler

These two unchangeable things are God's Word/promise and his oath. God embodies all truth; therefore, he cannot lie. Because God is truth, you can be secure in his promises; you don't need to wonder if he will change his plans. Our hope is secure & immovable, anchored in God

- Life Application Study Bible

VIDEO: [“Worthy of Your Name” \(5:10\)](#)

V. Celebrating God As Great High Priest

Hebrews 6:19b-20

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 after the order of Melchizedek.*

Abraham believed the promise because God was the promisor. - Mohler

VIDEO: "Man of Sorrows" (5:00)

CLOSE:

Our anchor, Jesus, has gone before us as our forerunner to accomplish all that God's justice required. As our great high priest, Jesus has purchased our salvation and assured us of the promises of God. Thus, Jesus's atoning work on the cross guarantees the Christian's hope & anchors the Christian's soul. – Mohler

Let us Pray & Praise together...

VIDEO: "Your Glory / Nothing But The Blood"

VIDEO: "Build My Life"

VIDEO: "Oh Praise The Name"

Study & Research Notes:

6:10 It's easy to get discouraged, thinking that God has forgotten us. But God is never unjust. He never forgets or overlooks our hard work for him. Presently you may not be receiving rewards and acclaim, but God knows your efforts of love and ministry. Let God's love for you and his intimate knowledge of your service for him bolster you as you face disappointment and rejection here on earth.

6:11, 12 Hope keeps the Christian from becoming lazy or feeling bored. Like an athlete, train hard and run well, remembering the reward that lies ahead ([Philippians 3:14](#)).

6:15 Abraham waited patiently; it was 25 years from the time God had promised him a son ([Genesis 12:7](#); [13:14-16](#); [15:4, 5](#); [17:16](#)) to Isaac's birth ([Genesis 21:1-3](#)). Because our trials and temptations are often so intense, they seem to last for an eternity. Both the Bible and the testimony of mature Christians encourage us to wait for God to act in his timing, even when our needs seem too great to wait any longer.

6:17 **God's promises are unchanging and trustworthy because God is unchanging and trustworthy.** When promising Abraham a son, God took an oath in his own name. The oath was as good as God's name, and God's name was as good as his divine nature.

6:18, 19 **These two unchangeable things are God's promise and his oath. God embodies all truth; therefore, he cannot lie. Because God is truth, you can be secure in his promises;**

you don't need to wonder if he will change his plans. Our hope is secure and immovable, anchored in God, just as a ship's anchor holds firmly to the seabed. To the true seeker who comes to God in belief, God gives an unconditional promise of acceptance. When you ask God with openness, honesty, and sincerity to save you from your sins, he will do it. This truth should give you encouragement, assurance, and confidence.

6:19, 20 A curtain hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, "God's inner sanctuary." This curtain prevented anyone from entering, gazing into, or even getting a fleeting glimpse of the interior of the Most Holy Place (see also [9:1-8](#)). The high priest could enter there only once a year to stand in God's presence and atone for the sins of the entire nation. But Christ is in God's presence at all times, not just once a year, as the High Priest who can continually intercede for us.

Life Application Study Bible.

God's Certain Promise

Hebrews 6:9-20

Main Idea: Though many will reject the gospel, those who respond with faith and patience until the end will inherit the promises God has made to them in Jesus Christ. Believers have an unshakable hope in the certainty of God's Word and a stable anchor for their souls in Christ. We can cling to these at all times and in every circumstance.

- I. **The Better Things Expected (6:9-12)**
- II. **The Oath-Giving, Promise-Keeping God (6:13-18)**
- III. **The Hope Behind the Curtain (6:19-20)**

There are many different responses to the gospel. The point of Jesus's parable in Matthew 13 was not to plant doubt in the hearts of the disciples. Rather, Jesus was showing his disciples how many ways the human heart can respond to the good news. The author of Hebrews does something similar in Hebrews 6:1-8. He is showing his congregation the way that many unbelievers in the church rejected the gospel. In doing so, he pastorally exhorts believers in the church toward a faithful obedience and maturity in Christ.

Hebrews 6:9-20 displays the author's confidence in these remaining believers to endure until the end and to inherit the promises that belong to them. How will they accomplish this? With faith and patience, just as Abraham did. By trusting God and persevering until the end, Christians will hold on to the hope set before us. This is what the last half of Hebrews 6 is all about.

The Better Things Expected

Hebrews 6:9-12

The warning the author began in 5:11 now draws to its conclusion in this passage. The severe and sobering word of admonition now ends with a word of assurance and comfort. The author is fully convinced that those to whom he is writing, unlike those who fell away, will not fall away. For them, he is "confident of things that are better." He is certain that the good soil of their hearts will produce a good crop.

One of the “things” we encounter in the New Testament is those within the early church assisting and serving one another. This is what “by serving the saints” signals. The apostle Paul himself depended on the support of other churches for his own missionary ministry. The author of Hebrews could have been in a similar situation. Whatever the case, these Christians were showing their love for God by serving fellow brothers and sisters in practical ways. This love for other Christians solidified the author’s confidence in them.

One of the most important catalysts of spiritual confidence is spiritual fruitfulness. Our faithful activity as Christians fuels our assurance. This is why the author longs for these Christians to show the same earnestness for the faith that they demonstrated when they first believed. As earnestness and diligence in their faith grows, so too will their fullness of hope until the last day.

The term *lazy* in verse 12 points back to the sluggishness that the author addressed in 5:11. There he was admonishing those who had become lazy and dull in their understanding. Now he is encouraging believers not to become sluggish but to instead pursue things that result in assurance. The author is pushing his people not to become like those whom he began admonishing in 5:11.

He encourages them to be imitators of those who through faith and perseverance inherit the promises. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the writer encourages believers to imitate saints from the Old Testament. In chapter 11, which 6:12 anticipates, we find an impressive list of Old Testament saints whose faith and patience is worthy of our emulation. **The author charges his**

readers to face their difficulties with faith and perseverance, just as those saints who came before them faced theirs. Only earnestness in the faith until the end guarantees the reception of God's promises.

The Oath-Giving, Promise-Keeping God

Hebrews 6:13-18

Oaths taken in ancient Israel were much different from oaths taken today. Oaths in ancient Israel's day were not contractual as they are now. They were not sealed with a signature. Ancient Israelites sealed their oaths by their personal word. This is the nature of God's oath with Abraham, which is the focus of this passage of Hebrews. God is an oath-giving God who seals his oaths with his own word and by his own name.

The context of verse 13 points to Genesis 22:16-17, where the Lord says to Abraham, "by myself I have sworn," and also promises to greatly bless and multiply him. God swears by himself because there is no one greater to swear by. This, in fact, is why humans invoke the name of God when they take an oath in court or an oath of office. **Abraham believed the promise because God was the promisor.** By swearing by his own name, God guaranteed the fulfillment of his promise, so Abraham waited patiently and obtained what was promised. God swore by his own name to declare publicly for all creation that he was making this pledge to Abraham and that he would keep it.

The first "heirs" of God's promise were Abraham and his descendants. In order to show the certainty and trustworthiness

of his promise, God sealed his promise with an oath. But what does Abraham's promise have to do with the author's audience? For them, the heirs of the promise are those who have been adopted by faith in Christ as sons and daughters of God. As we have already seen in Hebrews 2:5-18, Jesus's brothers and sisters share in Abraham's promise.

The "two unchangeable things" the author mentions in verse 18 refer to the irrevocable nature of God's purpose and word, and the oath that he declared publicly. Because it is impossible for God to lie, God never deviates from the truth in these two unchangeable things. God would cease to be God if he could lie.

The author reinforces God's unchangeableness in order to encourage the church to once again hold firmly. The church is the refugee who must flee to God for rescue and who needs strong encouragement to seize the hope set before her. Because God's Word is true and it is impossible for him to lie, we have all the confidence in the world to take heart and trust God's promises just as Abraham did. The faithfulness of God and the certainty of his promises are not theoretical propositions. They are unchangeable realities. **Like Abraham, we can stake our lives on God's promises because God is the One who has promised them. Our God is a promise-keeping God.**

The Hope Behind the Curtain

Hebrews 6:19-20

The author poignantly reminds his people of their need for "an anchor for the soul." The troubles and temptations of this world throw our souls around far too often. And yet, we have a sure and

steadfast anchor that stabilizes our souls amidst the waves of this world. The promises of God are firm and secure enough to hold us steady in a storm. God's promise and oath anchor the hope that "enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain," that is, the most holy place.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest went into the most holy place and offered the blood of an animal in order to turn God's wrath away from Israel. Jesus, as our high priest, entered the inner place behind the curtain and offered his own blood on our behalf. Our anchor, Jesus, has gone before us as our forerunner to accomplish all that God's justice required. As our great high priest, Jesus has purchased our salvation and assured us of the promises of God. Thus, Jesus's atoning work on the cross preaches the Christian's hope and anchors the Christian's soul.

Reflect and Discuss

1. How does the author's confidence in the believers addressed in Hebrews 6:9-20 complement the severe warning that precedes it? In other words, how does the author use his admonition to encourage believers in the certainty of their salvation?
2. What grounds the author's confidence in those who respond to the gospel in faith until the end? Why is the author so "confident of things that are better" for the believers in this church?
3. What are some practical ways that you and your church can serve and assist other like-minded, evangelical churches? How are you and your church currently serving and working with other churches? With individual Christians?
4. What are evidences of a heart receiving the gospel as opposed to one rejecting it? What does it mean to confirm your calling and

election and to have earnestness in the faith? How is your earnestness in the gospel on display?

5. Name Old Testament saints other than Abraham who showed faith in God's promises and waited patiently for their fulfillment. How might you imitate their example?
6. How did the fact that God swore by himself encourage and equip Abraham to wait patiently for the promise? How should it encourage and equip us to wait for the fulfillment of God's promises to us?
7. How do God's promises to Abraham apply to believers today? What does it mean to be an heir with Abraham? How does being an heir of God's promise change your perspective on the promises of this world?
8. Think about the eschatological nature of this passage and God's promises. How does the future certainty of God's promises to believers equip our earnestness in the gospel and encourage us to hold on to our hope?
9. How does God's unchangeableness encourage you to flee to him in times of trouble or temptation? As you think about your experiences as a Christian, what are some tangible ways the truth of God's Word has anchored your soul and encouraged you to hold on to the hope set before you?
10. Consider the other passages in Hebrews in which the author talks about Jesus as our high priest. What implications does Christ entering the most holy place on our behalf have for us? What does it mean for Christ to be our forerunner?

**- Christ-Centered Exposition –
Exalting Jesus in Hebrews.**

6:9 Following the dire warning of [vv. 4-8](#), the author expresses confidence in the salvation of his **beloved** audience (cf. [10:32-34](#), [39](#)). Though he warns that some may fall away ([6:4-8](#)), he thinks that, generally speaking, his readers will not do this, for they have **better things** than those described in [vv. 4-6](#); in fact, their lives give evidence of genuine spiritual renewal, for they have **things that belong to salvation**.

6:10 Evidence is given for the author's confidence in the salvation of his readers ([v. 9](#); cf. [10:32-34](#)), including the good fruit of their service (**work**) and the **love** of the **saints** (see [3:1](#); [13:24](#)).

6:11-12 The purpose of the warning ([vv. 4-8](#)), indeed of the whole letter, is to encourage earnest perseverance **until the end**. This demands **hope**, which is closely allied with **faith** (see [11:1](#); cf. [10:22](#)), and enduring **patience** (cf. [6:15](#)). For **sluggish**, see note on [5:11](#). **imitators of those who... inherit the promises**. Abraham is the immediate example in [6:13-15](#); other examples are found in [ch. 11](#) (OT saints) and in [13:7](#) (church leaders).

6:13-20 *The Certainty of God's Promise*. Abraham is shown to be an example of one who, through patience and faith, "inherited the promises" ([vv. 13-15](#); cf. [vv. 11-12](#)). God's promises are guaranteed by God's own perfectly trustworthy character ([vv. 16-18](#)). Therefore the promise of salvation through Jesus' high priesthood is a secure and trustworthy hope ([vv. 19-20](#)).

6:13-14 **promise to Abraham**. God's promises to Abraham include those found in [Gen. 12:1-3](#); [17:1-22](#); [22:16-18](#). Here the

author focuses on the blessing God promised to Abraham and his offspring in [Gen. 22:16-17](#) (partially quoted in [Heb. 6:14](#)), concerning which God—since there is **no one greater** who could assure his promises—pledged by oath upon his own character (see [Gen. 22:16](#); [Heb. 6:16-18](#)).

6:15 having patiently waited. Abraham waited 25 years for the birth of Isaac (cf. [Gen. 12:4](#) with [Gen. 21:5](#)), and he did not witness the fulfilled promise of innumerable offspring in his lifetime (see note on [Heb. 11:13](#)). His patience in faithful waiting is to be imitated ([6:12](#); cf. [11:8-19](#)). In his lifetime, Abraham **obtained the promise** through seeing Isaac born, and through the ram offered on Isaac's behalf ([Genesis 22](#)). But now there is even greater fulfillment for Abraham, through the fact that Abraham's descendants are indeed too many to count.

6:16 Oaths were common legal devices in ancient times as in the modern world (**disputes** implies a legal context). Oaths usually required appeal to some greater authority (often a deity; see [v. 13](#)).

6:17-18 The **two unchangeable things** are God's **promise/purpose** and his **oath**. The character of God is holy, and he does not **lie**. Thus his announcement of his promise is sure, and doubly sure when combined with his oath. This encourages one to **hold fast** (see [4:14](#)) **to the hope** ([3:6](#); [6:11](#); [7:19](#); [10:23](#)) of God's promises.

6:19-20 The Christian **hope** is in the person and saving work of Christ (pictured here as the high priest). **Anchor** was a common ancient metaphor for stability; hope provides security and stability for the soul. Clearly, even though the author warns the

readers concerning apostasy ([vv. 4-8](#)), he believes they can have assurance of their salvation. The **curtain** (Gk. *katapetasma*) is the veil in the tabernacle or temple separating the **inner place** (i.e., “Most Holy Place,” [9:3](#)) from the rest of the tabernacle/temple. On this veil, see [Ex. 26:31](#); [Num. 18:7](#); [Matt. 27:51](#); [Heb. 9:3](#); [10:20](#). **forerunner**. Jesus, who went beforehand and opened the veil, now permits others to draw near ([9:3](#), [6-14](#); esp. cf. [9:8](#); [10:19-20](#)). **high priest**. The author now returns to the subject of [5:5-10](#) (see [5:11](#)).

ESV Study Bible

[6:9](#) beloved. This term shows a change of audience and a change from a message of warning to a message of encouragement. That the address is to believers is further confirmed by the expression of confidence that “better things” could be said of them (as compared to those who were being warned in the preceding verses). **The “things that accompany salvation” are their works which verify their salvation (v. 10; cf. Eph. 2:10; James 2:18, 26).** The very statement implies that the things described in [5:11-6:5](#) do not accompany salvation, but are indicative of unbelief and apostasy. *though we speak in this manner*. Though it had been necessary to speak about judgment in the preceding verses, the writer assures the “beloved,” those who are believers, that he is confident of their salvation.

[6:10](#) work and labor of love. See [1 Thessalonians 1:3](#), [4](#). *toward His name*. Throughout this epistle, *name* has the Hebraic sense of the authority, character, and attributes of the Son of God ([1:4](#))

or of God the Father ([2:12](#); [13:15](#); cf. [John 14:13, 14](#)). *saints*. All true Christians are saints, or “holy ones” (cf. [13:24](#); [Acts 9:13](#); [Rom. 1:7](#); see note on [1 Cor. 1:2](#)).

6:11 *you*. The author is speaking again to unbelievers, but appears to intentionally distance this particular group from the would be apostates of [verses 4-6](#), who are in danger of being impossible to restore. *diligence*. This term can carry the idea of eagerness or haste. It is a plea for unbelieving Jews to come to Christ immediately. If these uncommitted Jews followed the example of the active faith of the saints ([vv. 9, 10, 12](#)), they would obtain the salvation which gives “full assurance of hope until the end” (cf. [10:22](#); [Col. 2:2](#)). Salvation should not be postponed.

6:12 *sluggish*. See note on [5:11](#), where the same Greek word is translated “dull.” *imitate*. This concept is repeated in [13:7](#) and is inherent in the many illustrations of faith given in chapter 11. *inherit the promises*. The inheritance and the promises of salvation are a theme of this epistle (cf. [vv. 13, 15, 17](#); [1:14](#); [4:1, 3](#); [9:15](#); [10:36](#); [11:7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 17, 33, 39](#)).

6:13-20 The persecution and trials that the believing Hebrews faced required patient perseverance. That persevering faith would enable them to inherit the promises of God, which at the time of suffering seemed so distant. Regardless of their circumstances, they were to remember that God is faithful (cf. [v. 10](#)) and that in Him their hope was secure (cf. [v. 11](#)).

6:13 *Abraham*. To encourage the Hebrews to rely on faith as opposed to holding on to the Levitical system of worship, the writer cited the example of Abraham, who, as the great model of

faith (cf. [Rom. 4](#)), should be imitated ([v. 12](#)). *swore by Himself*. As recorded in [Genesis 22:15-19](#), God promised unilaterally to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant.

6:14 Quoted from [Genesis 22:17](#), this summarizes the essence of God's promise. The fact that God had said it assured its fulfillment. It is significant that the quote in Genesis is in the context of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, who was the immediate fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Ultimate fulfillment would also take place through Isaac and his descendants.

6:15 *patiently endured*. Abraham was an example of the patience mentioned in [verse 12](#). He received the promise in the beginning of its fulfillment by the birth of Isaac (*see note on [v. 14](#)*), but he did not live to see all the promises fulfilled ([11:13](#)).

6:16-18 God's Word does not need any confirmation from someone else. It is reliable because God Himself is faithful. People confirm their promises by appealing to someone greater (especially to God) as witness. Since no one is greater than God, He can only provide an oath from Himself. By doing so, He is willingly ([v. 17](#)) accommodating Himself to human beings who desire the confirmation because of the characteristic unreliability of human promises.

6:18 *two immutable things*. These are God's promise and His oath. The Greek term behind *immutable* was used of a legal will, which was unchangeable by anyone but the maker of the will. *fled for refuge*. In the LXX, the Greek word is used for the cities of refuge God provided for those who sought protection from avengers for an accidental killing ([Num. 35:9-34](#); [Deut. 19:1-13](#); [Josh. 20:1-9](#); cf. [Acts 14:5, 6](#)). *hope*. *See note on [3:6](#)*.

Hope is one of the themes of Hebrews. It is also the product of OT studies ([Rom. 15:4](#)). Hope for the fulfillment of God's salvation promises is the "anchor of the soul" ([v. 19](#)), keeping the believer secure during times of trouble and turmoil.

[6:19, 20](#) Our hope is embodied in Christ, who has entered into God's presence in the heavenly Holy of Holies on our behalf (*see note on [4:14](#)*). By this line of reasoning, the writer returned to the topic which he left in [5:10](#)—the Melchizedekan priesthood.

The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

The apostle, having applied himself to the fears of the Hebrews, in order to excite their diligence and prevent their apostasy, now proceeds to apply himself to their hopes, and candidly declares the good hope he had concerning them, that they would persevere; and proposes to them the great encouragements they had in the way of their duty.

I. He freely and openly declares the good hope he had concerning them, that they would endure to the end: But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, [v. 9](#). Observe,

1. There are things that accompany salvation, things that are never separated from salvation, things that show the person to be in a state of salvation, and will issue in eternal salvation.

2. The things that accompany salvation are better things than ever any hypocrite or apostate enjoyed. They are better in their nature and in their issue.

3. It is our duty to hope well of those in whom nothing appears to the contrary.

4. Ministers must sometimes speak by way of caution to those of whose salvation they have good hopes. And those who have in themselves good hopes, as to their eternal salvation, should yet consider seriously how fatal a disappointment it would be if they should fall short. Thus they are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

II. He proposes arguments and encouragements to them to go on in the way of their duty.

1. That God had wrought a principle of holy love and charity in them, which had discovered itself in suitable works that would not be forgotten of God: God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love, [v. 10](#). Good works and labour proceeding from love to God are commendable; and what is done to any in the name of God shall not go unrewarded. What is done to the saints, as such, God takes as done to himself.

2. Those who expect a gracious reward for the labour of love must continue in it as long as they have ability and opportunity: You have ministered to the saints, and you do minister; and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence.

3. Those who persevere in a diligent discharge of their duty shall attain to the full assurance of hope in the end. Observe,

(1.) Full assurance is a higher degree of hope, is full assurance of hope; they differ not in nature, but only in degree.

(2.) Full assurance is attainable by great diligence and perseverance to the end.

III. He proceeds to set before them caution and counsel how to attain this full assurance of hope to the end.

1. That they should not be slothful. Slothfulness will clothe a man with rags: they must not love their ease, nor lose their opportunities.

2. That they would follow the good examples of those who had gone before, [v. 12](#). Here learn,

(1.) There are some who from assurance have gone to inherit the promises. They believed them before, now they inherit them; they have got safely to heaven.

(2.) The way by which they came to the inheritance was that of faith and patience. These graces were implanted in their souls, and drawn forth into act and exercise in their lives. If we ever expect to inherit as they do, we must follow them in the way of faith and patience; and those who do thus follow them in the way shall overtake them at the end, and be partakers of the same blessedness.

IV. The apostle closes the chapter with a clear and full account of the assured truth of the promises of God, [v. 13](#), to the end. They are all confirmed by the oath of God, and they are all founded in the eternal counsel of God, and therefore may be depended upon.

1. They are all confirmed by the oath of God. He has not only given his people his word, and his hand and seal, but his oath. And here, you will observe, he specifies the oath of God to Abraham, which, being sworn to him as the father of the faithful, remains in full force and virtue to all true believers: When God made a promise unto Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. Observe,

(1.) What was the promise: Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. The blessing of God is the blessedness of his people; and those whom he has blessed indeed he will go on to bless, and will multiply blessings, till he has brought them to perfect blessedness.

(2.) What was the oath by which this promise was ratified: He swore by himself. He staked down his own being and his own blessedness upon it; no greater security can be given or desired.

(3.) How was that oath accomplished. Abraham, in due time, obtained the promise. It was made good to him after he had patiently endured.

[1.] There is always an interval, and sometimes a long one, between the promise and the performance.

[2.] That interval is a trying time to believers, whether they have patience to endure to the end.

[3.] Those who patiently endure shall assuredly obtain the blessedness promised, as sure as Abraham did.

[4.] The end and design of an oath is to make the promise sure, and to encourage those to whom it is made to wait with patience till the time for performance comes, [v. 16](#). An oath with men is for confirmation, and is an end of all strife. This is the nature and design of an oath, in which men swear by the greater, not by creatures, but by

the Lord himself; and it is to put an end to all dispute about the matter, both to disputes within our own breasts (doubts and distrusts), and disputes with others, especially with the promiser. Now, if God would condescend to take an oath to his people, he will surely remember the nature and design of it.

2. The promises of God are all founded in his eternal counsel; and this counsel of his is an immutable counsel.

(1.) The promise of blessedness which God has made to believers is not a rash and hasty thing, but the result of God's eternal purpose.

(2.) This purpose of God was agreed upon in counsel, and settled there between the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit.

(3.) These counsels of God can never be altered; they are immutable. God never needs to change his counsels; for nothing new can arise to him who sees the end from the beginning.

3. The promises of God, which are founded upon these immutable counsels of God, and confirmed by the oath of God, may safely be depended upon; for here we have two immutable things, the counsel and the oath of God, in which it is impossible for God to lie, contrary to his nature as well as to his will. Here observe,

(1.) Who they are to whom God has given such full security of happiness.

[1.] They are the heirs of the promise: such as have a title to the promises by inheritance, by virtue of their new birth, and union with Christ. We are all by nature children of wrath. The curse is the inheritance we are born to: it is by a new and heavenly birth that any are born heirs to the promise.

[2.] They are such as have fled for refuge to the hope set before them. Under the law there were cities of refuge provided for those who were pursued by the avenger of blood. Here is a much better refuge prepared by the gospel, a refuge for all sinners who shall have the heart to flee to it; yea, though they have been the chief of sinners.

(2.) What God's design towards them is, in giving them such securities-that they might have strong consolation. Observe,

[1.] God is concerned for the consolation of believers, as well as for their sanctification; he would have his children walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

[2.] The consolations of God are strong enough to support his people under their strongest trials. The comforts of this world are too weak to bear up the soul under temptation, persecution, and death; but the consolations of the Lord are neither few nor small.

(3.) What use the people of God should make of their hope and comfort, that most refreshing and comfortable hope of eternal blessedness that God has given them. This is, and must be, unto them, for an anchor to the soul, sure and stedfast, etc., [v. 19](#). Here,

[1.] We are in this world as a ship at sea, liable to be tossed up and down, and in danger of being cast away. Our souls are the vessels. The comforts, expectations, graces, and happiness of our souls are the precious cargo with which these vessels are loaded. Heaven is the harbour to which we sail. The temptations, persecutions,

and afflictions that we encounter, are the winds and waves that threaten our shipwreck.

[2.] We have need of an anchor to keep us sure and steady, or we are in continual danger.

[3.] Gospel hope is our anchor; as in our day of battle it is our helmet, so in our stormy passage through this world it is our anchor.

[4.] It is sure and stedfast, or else it could not keep us so. First, It is sure in its own nature; for it is the special work of God in the soul. It is a good hope through grace; it is not a flattering hope made out of the spider's web, but it is a true work of God, it is a strong and substantial thing. Secondly, It is stedfast as to its object; it is an anchor that has taken good hold, it enters that which is within the veil; it is an anchor that is cast upon the rock, the Rock of ages. It does not seek to fasten in the sands, but enters within the veil, and fixes there upon Christ; he is the object, he is the anchor-hold of the believer's hope. As an unseen glory within the veil is what the believer is hoping for, so an unseen Jesus within the veil is the foundation of his hope; the free grace of God, the merits and mediation of Christ, and the powerful influences of his Spirit, are the grounds of his hope, and so it is a stedfast hope. Jesus Christ is the object and ground of the believer's hope, and so it is a stedfast hope. Jesus Christ is the object and ground of the believer's hope in several respects. 1. As he has entered within the veil, to intercede with God, in virtue of that sacrifice which he offered up without the veil: hope fastens upon his sacrifice and intercession. 2. As he is the forerunner of his people, gone within the veil, to prepare a place for them, and to

assure them that they shall follow him; he is the earnest and first fruits of believers, both in his resurrection and in his ascension. 3. And he abides there, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, a priest for ever, whose priesthood shall never cease, never fail, till he has accomplished its whole work and design, which is the full and final happiness of all who have believed on Christ. Now this should engage us to clear up our interest in Christ, that we may fix our hopes in him as our forerunner, that has entered thither for us, for our sakes, for our safety, to watch over our highest interest and concerns. Let us then love heaven the more on his account, and long to be there with him, where we shall be for ever safe, and for ever satisfied.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible.