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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews

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### Hebrews 6:13-20: *We have Hope in God!*

**General idea:** Our God is a God of promises Who keeps His Word! He gave a promise to Abraham and has kept it for all generations. God is Great and nothing is greater than Him, nothing greater to live or swear by. He told Abraham, *I will bless you and increase your descendants into a countless multitude of nations.* God even told him *all nations will be blessed through you.* God fulfilled this promise while at the same time, Abraham had to learn patience, faith, and trust in God. Such as with oaths: when one takes an oath, something greater is sought to bind him or her to it. We are bonded to God by His work and our faith in response. God is above oaths as an oath is something you swear by that is greater than you or the oath. Nothing is greater than God so He does not swear by anything since nothing is superior to Him or His Word. Oaths are binding; the oath God gave Abraham and us is even more binding, as nothing can bind or change God. God has given us His oath and promise—His unchangeable love and presence—so we can have courage and confidence in Him and the faith and life that He gives. We have a God who is there, who cares, and in whom we can have assurance and take refuge. He is personal and trustworthy so we can be faith-worthy. We have an anchor for our souls, as He leads us to the safe harbor of His presence and plan, and into eternity. He is our High Priest in the line of Melchizedek. We have hope and life in Christ!

### Contexts and Background:

Our faith is secured by God's oath and promise, thus our faith can endure as we look to Christ. Abraham is our example for this. We are not alone in this journey; we have Christ Himself as example and lead. We are not only called to spiritual growth—that is, the formation of the investment of faith Christ gives us—but we are also to give back to Him in dividends. This is a deep conviction of our faith, a practiced submission that shows our obedience, and a life of personal, spiritual, and relational maturity. We have to listen to God. If not, we will not learn and then we will not grow and then we will not have a life of transformation and growth. Instead, we will have a storm-tossed sea of life, wayward in every perspective because our eyes and ears are not upon our Lord (Psalm 110:4; James 1).

### Commentary; Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Promise.* Referring to the Abrahamic promise of Genesis 12:1-3 and 22:16-17, *I will surely bless you... and all people will be blessed through you.* A testament of how God worked through His chosen people and with us today. This is a covenant of God to the Jews first, and then to all of humanity to *be faithful and I will bless you.* This is also a call to be personally faithful and to

place God first and foremost in our lives. As God intervenes in us, we respond back to Him by faith, as Abraham demonstrated (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:8-21; 17:1-14; 18:18; 22:1-18; Ex.32:13; Is. 60:1-5; Matt: 5-3-12; Rom. 4:13; Heb. 11:16; Rev. 7:9-17; 11:9).

- *Swear by/Oaths.* A legal term, this is the verbal security of a promise that binds the oath taker to his or her pledge. This was and is necessary because of our fallen sinful nature; we are not always trustworthy, so we swear to something greater than ourselves. Here God is infallible and His promise is even more binding because since God is God, there is nothing to bind Him; He is ultimately trustworthy and thus binding to Himself. Here, Jesus' Priesthood is established by a Divine oath (Gen. 15:8-21; 22:17; Psalm 89:35, 49; 106:26; 132:11). Should Christians swear oaths today? See Matthew 5: 33-37.
- *He swore by himself.* God is absolutely trustworthy and dependable! Meaning the force of God's Word, as His Word, is Truth; thus take it seriously. This is also a shadow of judgment to those who refuse Him (Psalm 110:4; Isa. 45:23; Jer. 22:5; 49:13; 51:14; Amos 4:2; 6:8; John 17:17; Titus 1:2).
- *After waiting patiently.* Meaning to endure as well as be restrained and not retaliate. God does not retaliate back to us when we deserve it. He gives as much time as possible, but one day there will be judgment, referring to the birth of Isaac and the rest of Abraham's descendants and the faith he had to learn first before their births. When Abraham learned and applied faith, he received what was promised (Gen. 12:1-4; 17:2; 18:10; 22:1-22:12; Rom. 4:13-17; Col. 1:11; 3:12; James 5:7-11).
- *His purpose.* Christ's work is credited to us as righteousness. God is God and we are not. He is never changing; yet he condescends to meet us with salvation that is undeserved on our part and something He is not obligated to give to us (Gal. 3:6-9; Heb. 11:9).
- *Heirs of what was promised.* God's promise to Abraham is binding to humanity, including us today. Humanity's response was supposed to be gratefulness and lived out faith, which few did or ever will do. Abraham did not live to see the fruition of this in Christ, but was the "type and shadow" to what was to come. The land of Abraham was the habitat but not the promise; most people do not get this. The Promised Land is merely an instrument for the work of God in people; God's faithfulness is the real Promise and His oath to save whom He elects, even when He does not have to.
- *Two unchangeable things.* God's promise and His oath to us; He does not lie—He always tells the Truth. Perhaps the meanings are that God is unchangeable and infallible (John 8:56; Heb. 11:13).

- *Take hold of the hope offered.* Abraham saw this only in anticipation; now, we have Christ fulfilled, and we can be encouraged. God is real and personal—not petty as in the Greek gods. We can trust in God whereas Apollo and his lot were not trustworthy. This also means faith is a responsibility we must act on!
- *Anchor /Immutable.* We as Christians are “moored” to God himself! God is absolute and unchangeable and unchanging in purpose and distinction, He is Who holds us firm. Here in its context, this means that our souls and lives are secured by Christ, He is our inner sanctuary and hope. He is our security and guarantees our safety and rest (Psalm 18:25-26; Acts. 27: 29-40; Heb. 8:2; 9:11-12, 24-25; 10:19-20).
- *Inner sanctuary.* A metaphor that refers to God’s preeminence and supremacy. For the Jews, this meant the God who is behind the veil, who utters His decrees. Now we have the God who is here with us, *Immanuel*. This refers to the Old Testament Tabernacle tent that meant God’s heavenly dwelling on earth in the Tabernacle. It refers to the inner sanctum of God’s most holy of holies that contained the Ark with the two tablets of the Testimony Moses brought from Mount Sinai. This represented God’s home on earth as a “copy” of God’s Throne Room, made for His presence in the inner chamber of Jewish Temples and the Tabernacle that was a tent, used before the Temple was built by Solomon (Ex. 24:9-11; 25; 25:40; 32:15; 38:21; Lev. 16:2; Deut 10:5; 1 Kings 5-7; 22:19; 2 Chron. 2-4; Is. 6; Ezek. 1; 10:1; Dan. 7:9-10; Matt. 13:38; John 8:42-45; Heb. 8:1-6; 9:1-14; Rev. 3:12; 4:1; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15-17; 15:5-16:1, 16:17; 21:22; Rev. 11:15-19; 15:1-8; 21:1-8).
- *Behind the curtain/veil.* Referring to the *ark of his covenant*, this represents the presence of God, His faithfulness, and atonement in keeping the covenant He made with His people even when they disobeyed Him. The Ark refers to the main Jewish icon, the box chest, made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold, which held the tablets of the Ten Commandments and was placed behind the sanctuary curtain in the inner sanctum where the presence of God dwelt. Here it is meant to display God’s dwelling and power and our reverence of Him. This is all meant to show us God in an understandable and approachable manner, as God “condescends” to us. This means that God “descends” to our level to make Himself known; He lowers Himself—makes Himself accessible—and gives us insight according to our level of understanding so we can perceive Him from our aptitude to recognize what is otherwise incomprehensible. It is Christ who paid for our sin, and with whom we have our covenant (Ex. 25:10-22; Lev 26:11-13; Duet 10:1-2; 2 Kings 25:8-10; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 9:23; 10:19-20; Rev. 3: 10-13; 4:6-8).
- *Jesus, who went before us.* Jesus is the forerunner, as in our *vanguard*, who goes before us in life and in battle. Entrance to the Temples inner sanctuary was not possible or permissible except for the high priest once a year to dust.

Now it is impossible to enter God's inner sanctuary (as in eternity) and Will without Jesus paying for it and our accepting and living it by faith. Christ is our High Priest who becomes our inner sanctuary, with whom we have direct access to at anytime. Thus, we follow Christ—by faith—to our intimate, personal relationship with God. The more we follow, the deeper we go and grow in our faith formation.

- *Melchizedek*. See Hebrews 5:1-10 study. Here Melchizedek is the example of Christ's priesthood, He who secures our faith and gives us hope and reason as well as confidence (Heb 5:1-10; 7:20-28).

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

This passage continues to speak to us about the importance of spiritual maturity as we are living in the certainty of God's Promise. We are called to take hold of the hope offered by our Lord with faith and patience and we will inherit that which has been promised!

Jesus, who went before us, demonstrated what it means to walk by faith; He paved the way in our redemption and our ability to live a life of worthiness, faithfulness, and joyfulness. He can and does identify with and understand you personally and your life, situations, obstacles, and opportunities, He is the God who is here, here with you now, knowing you and carrying you through the ups and downs of life. He walked your life in your behalf, cheated death and sin, and now we all have a True Lord and are anchored to Him as Savior; we can go directly to Him, because he knows us, loves us, and will minister to us now and forevermore.

We are called to spiritual growth—that is, the formation of the investment of faith Christ gives us that we give back to Him in dividends. This is a deep conviction of our faith, a practiced submission that shows our obedience, and a life of personal and relational maturity. We have to listen to God; if not, we will not learn and then we will not grow and then we will not have a life of transformation and growth. Instead, we experience a storm-tossed sea of life, wayward in every perspective because our eyes and ears are not upon our Lord (James 1).

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?

7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. What gives you Hope? How have you seen that God is Great?
2. Why do you suppose Abraham had to learn patience, faith, and trust in God before the promise could be fulfilled? After all, he is the prime patriarch of the Jewish faith and lineage.
3. Have you ever taken an oath? What needs to be added to oaths for them to seek something greater than the one who is taking it in order to bind him or her to it? What does this have to do with our relationship with Christ?
4. How have you seen God give you His oath and promise? What does it mean to your faith that God is unchangeable?
5. How have you seen Christ pay your sacrifice for salvation? How does this inspire your Christian living?
6. How can you be more filled with gratitude for whom and what He has done? How can you be better at developing your faith so you can endure? How does looking to Christ help?
7. Do you know the importance of spiritual growth? How has it reached your daily life?
8. How can a deeper conviction of your faith help you practice your submission and obedience? What would your life look like with this going on?
9. Look back on your journey of faith. How have you been growing in faith, being enlightened by Him, and becoming more experienced in matters of faith and practice? How have you become more of a good use to God in the lives of others? How can you be more so?
10. How can you develop more patience so you have more confidence to be better, stronger, and more faithful? How would this help you pass on His care to others and be His example and tool?
11. How have you seen and felt His love and presence? How has that helped give you courage and confidence in Christ? What are you going to do now with the faith and life that He gives?

12. What does it mean to you that God is a God of promises, and keeps His Word? How can your church communicate this better? What would it do for your church?

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