

# Hebrews Chapter 6 v 13 - 20

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Hebrews chapter 6 verses 13 to 20. We have just before the words that we're going to read a description of Jesus as the great high priest.

And you'll see in chapter 7 it follows this by talking about Melchizedek, this shadowy person who we don't know anything about and yet was likened to the Lord Jesus.

And it also gives just at the end of chapter 5 in the beginning of verse 6 a warning against falling away. So here was a message going out to these Hebrews reminding them of the greatness of Jesus the great high priest and the warning against falling away.

And then we come to verse 13 which tells us about God's promise. When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself saying, I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.

And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves and an oath confirms what he said and puts an end to all argument.

[ 1 : 16 ]     Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what it was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

God did this so that by two unchangeable things in which it's impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.

He's become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. And may the Lord bless his word to us. It would be useful if you had that passage that we read in Hebrews in front of you.

There are two things which I've seen over the last couple of weeks, one of which if you didn't see it, you'd have heard all about it, and that of course was the total eclipse.

[ 2 : 27 ]     I'll mention the other one in a second, but if anybody did see it, the total eclipse. Did anybody see it here?

Not the total one, no. 88% or whatever it was, 89%. Yeah, we were fortunate in some ways that it was just behind a cloud, but the cloud was enough just to take the intensity of it away, and we could actually see the eclipse behind.

Interesting, if you heard them talking about that afterwards, these scientists were saying that, you know, not only is there not going to be another one for 75 years, but that even after 75 years, it might not be the same as now because everything is going to change slightly in terms of the alignment of the different three planets and stars, as it were, and therefore we might not ever see it exactly as it was last time.

And it reminded me of a story that was recounted about Darwin in his books when he went on his voyages of discovery.

And for all the certainty with which the facts that people proclaim, the facts, I say, because that's what they call them, of evolutionary theory, Darwin himself wasn't quite as confident as that, particularly towards the end of his life.

[ 3 : 59 ] And one of the incidents that swayed him in that sense was the fact that when he was on the Galapagos, he was caught up in an earthquake. And he recounts in his log that until that time, he'd assumed that the earth was fixed.

And when it started to move underneath him, and he was frightened, he realized that nothing, as he said, in this world is permanent.

Nothing is fixed. Everything is liable to change. And I want us to think tonight about this verse, or part of a verse which occurs in chapter 6 of Hebrews.

It's only the second time in the Bible that this particular term is used, because it talks about an anchor. And it's in verse 19.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. This hope being the promises of God and the promise of his purpose to his people.

[ 5 : 10 ] And one thing we know from the psalm that we read and many other things in the Scripture is that God is proclaimed, and God proclaims himself to be unchangeable.

God never changes. God is. And therefore, going back to Darwin's problem and everybody's problem in this world, that he summed up in what he said is that there's nothing in this world that we can cling on to.

Nothing that is fixed. Nothing that is so steadfast. Nothing that is so secure. Nothing that is so firm, as the words used here, that could possibly be something that we could, as it were, hold on to like an anchor and be sure that we'd be safe.

Some people hold on to the fact that they've got tremendous abilities in various subjects or skills. But ultimately, that, if they cling on to it, often leads them up into ways that don't lead to anything.

And many of them become discouraged because of the fact that that happens. There was a scientist on the other day who was trying to find a cure for a form of cancer.

[ 6 : 36 ] And he was exploring a particular way, different from other scientists. And the interviewer said to him, well, what happens if after you've followed this path through and you've been working on it for 25 years, he said, what happens if it proves to be the wrong path?

And he said, well, that's science. We start again on a different path. Unfortunately, for human beings, God's creation, we can't do that because our path that we pursue for a lifetime, however long that might be, is the only one that we get.

And we can't start again. And if it leads to disaster, as the Bible says it will, if we don't trust in Christ, then, as many people have found, there's nothing you can do about it if it's left to the end.

So it's important that we find this anchor, this anchor for the soul, which is spoken about, because this anchor is firm and secure.

Well, the one thing I know, I'm looking around tonight because Colin's not here, but the last time I asked a question about anchors, Colin was the only person in the whole place who knew the answer to it.

[ 7 : 59 ] But what I want to do tonight is to talk about three things, all linked, and the first is an anchor, the second is a seal, and the third is a stone.

Well, I'm quite confident now that Colin isn't here that I can talk about these things with great assurance. There are different types of anchor.

One type is the type that you get the anchor which goes down and hits the bottom and digs into the base, whatever that would be, and then when the ship tries to move, it fixes the ship in that position.

And that's got certain properties. It's not just a bit of metal that's thrown into the sea, but I'm sure maybe anchors started out like that. But the traditional design is such that the cross piece, the stock as it's called, when attached to the bottom, which Colin informed me last time we called the flukes, they're at right angles to each other.

So when you drop an anchor, it must stick into the seabed. It can't do anything else. It can't fall flat and just be pulled along the bed. It must dig in.

[ 9 : 20 ] That's one type of anchor. But there's another thing which is called a sea anchor. And in a sea anchor, it's not something which sticks into the seabed, but it's a lot of connected panels which when it's thrown into the sea, and this is particularly when things are stormy, it just slows the ship or the boat down and keeps it on path so that it's not taken away in a different direction.

And really, that's what this passage is talking about. It's a combination of those two things. We need a fixed point.

We all need something that we can trust in, something that we can assume is unchanging. And that thing, of course, the Bible tells us is God himself and the plan of salvation that is made for mankind.

But we also need another kind of anchor as we go through life. It's from the same source, but that's something which keeps us from drifting in the storm of what happens in this world, in our lives, because it would be quite easy to drift in one direction or another.

That brings me to the second part of nature, if you like, that I saw this week. There have been several programs about it and that was a tsunami that happened in eastern countries like Japan and China and all of the places in the Pacific Ocean and they were showing you clips of film and it was staggering to see that this thing, I imagined it was waves a hundred foot high ploughing into the country, but in actual fact it was just a stream of water, a massive one that just came across a town or a city and completely swallowed it up.

[ 11 : 23 ] and you could see people desperately trying to either save possessions or save themselves. There were people in cars trying to drive away.

There were people standing on the roofs of houses and there were people running across the fields trying to get away from a wave that was going at 60 or 70 miles an hour which they had no chance.

And yet, they put their confidence in lots of things. They thought they could escape. The people who got in a car thought if they got in a car they could just drive away and drive far enough away so the water wouldn't affect them.

But unfortunately, this wall of water was moving faster than their car and the car soon got swept away. There were others who put their trust on the fact that their house had firm foundations and perhaps unlike some of the other houses which were built out of wood theirs was built out of concrete and therefore they'd be safe on the roof.

And they soon discovered that they weren't safe at all and that the house was still going to be swept away. And there were others who just assumed that they could outrun the water and there was one very frightening picture in this particular sequence where there was an older lady who was going across a field and suppose in her way she was going as fast as she could and everybody because they were looking down on this open bit of land just behind the houses and everybody could see this water going towards her and everybody was shouting go faster go faster and she seemed oblivious to this and thought she would just get to this rise in time.

[ 13 : 19 ] In the end she was saved but only because others ran down and basically pulled her out of the way. All of these people had put their hope in different things and none of them were effective.

Well it's the same in the Christian life. We all need to be anchored as this verse tells us and it needs to be an anchor that's firmly placed in Christ because that is where the anchor rests because it goes on to say this hope this anchor takes it into the inner sanctuary behind the curtains where Jesus who went before us has entered on our behalf.

He's become the high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. This anchor that we have this hope that we have of one day being in heaven and being saved from our sin is all centered it's focused in Jesus.

And it's a wonderful thing to have that confidence of knowing that we got a firm and secure faith in this case that God has given to us.

Look at what verse 17 says because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised he confirmed it with an oath.

[ 14 : 46 ] God did this so that by two unchangeable things in which it's impossible for God to lie we who fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged because the hope that's offered to us is salvation through Christ and this unchangeable thing this unmoving thing about God is mentioned in three different ways there it's his unchanging nature of his purpose it's impossible for God to lie these are things which will never change these are things which the Lord will always have but I want to move from that for a moment to think of something else that was the anchor but I mentioned a seal and we know that when kings of old wanted to give protection to one of their messengers or servants when they were doing a task particularly in foreign land they gave letters of safe passage to them and so that when the king received it they would be absolutely certain it was from the king who'd written it they would seal it with some wax and they get the ring on their finger which always had a particular design and they'd impress it in the wax so that when the person received it opened it they knew that this was correct that this was the truth that it was indeed from the king and there's a sense in which it's alright understanding this anchor that we have for the soul but it's another thing to live a life where you're confident of what's going to happen because your trust is in that anchor because even as a

Christian there may be times and many Christians have discovered this when they begin to doubt whether they were a Christian they begin to doubt whether God can do things but Lord wants his God as of course he firmly holds on to us and those times pass but if we want to go through life and want to be sure it would be good to have not only this anchor but a seal as well well 2nd Corinthians chapter 1 verses 21 and 22 says this now it's God who makes both you and us stand firm in Christ he anointed us set his seal of ownership on us and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come so God has given us that seal and part of that seal is the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that's a guarantee of what's to come and what does it say in what we read there it says that God it's impossible for him to lie

God's guarantee is a guarantee for eternity it's not just for this life it's a guarantee for eternity and the fact that God has anointed us with this seal of ownership and he's given us his spirit it guarantees what is going to come and if we were unsure about it in Revelation chapter 9 it's talking about those who don't believe those who have rejected Christ and when this message is coming to the people and to those who are bringing destruction on them they're told to save some and the ones that they weren't to save is only those who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads if we don't have this seal of God if we don't have the fact that God owns us as it were and he's given us his spirit then it says we won't have any place in the kingdom 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 19 says this

God's solid foundation stands firm sealed with this inscription the Lord knows those who are his the Lord knows you know when you say those words when I say them now it's a frightening thing in this perspective if there's anybody who isn't a Christian and you hear those words the Lord knows those who are his there won't be a hiding place it's like that tsunami the destruction is coming and whatever they're holding on to it will just disappear there'll be nothing to cling on to there'll be no protection there'll be nothing that they can trust in because the Lord knows those who are his and only those will be saved only those who trusted in Christ what about the stone there's no stone mentioned here but there is a stone and it's a foundation stone 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 10 and 11 say this for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid which is

Jesus Christ Jesus Christ is described as a foundation stone now I'm on my ground because I did train as an engineer and I know that a foundation stone is the one that's set at the bottom of the wall usually it's the one right in the corner and it's the stone from which all the other measurements are taken and then as the building is erected the whole building is erected virtually on top of that foundation stone or part of it is and once it's there it can't be moved because the whole building is on top of it it's absolutely anchored to the bottom of that building it can't move it's literally something which cannot be moved as I was reading up about anchors I got interested in other things as you do on the internet you start looking and I thought well how do they anchor an oil rig so I went on the page about anchoring oil rigs and of course that's fixed to the ocean bed depending on how deep it is sometimes by a great big concrete plinth which is fixed into the ocean bed and then the oil rig is sited on top of that or if it's really deep they'll have lines steel cords steel cables going down and into the ocean bed there'll be huge bolts bolted in that these wires are fixed to to make sure that that particular thing is anchored because of course they need to resist all of the storm force winds that they will experience so they can't afford not to be anchored and fixed in that particular point well there's a sense in which that's the foundation too it's the foundation for the oil rig that rock that stone that plinth that's in the bottom on the bed of the ocean to which all of these other things are attached and of course this is the foundation that's being talked about when it says that

[ 23 : 06 ] Christ is the foundation for the Christian life he's the one to which we got to be attached so whether you think about a sea anchor an anchor that drops down and bites into the seabed or whether you think about an oil rig which is fastened to a plinth or fastened to bolts which go down into the seabed then whichever one of those that you pick the same thing is true for all of them that to be any good at all they must be immovable they can't be swayed they can't be moved they can't after a time give up isn't it fantastic as a Christian to know I find it fantastic anyway that despite my sinfulness God is never never going to give up on me if we trust in Christ he's never going to let us go he's always going to keep that hold on us some people have said those people have got sailing boats that occasionally if the storm is very fierce and they've dropped an anchor that the the waves will still take them away for a distance but if they didn't have the anchor they'd just be swept away completely and they say that once the storm is passed they find that they're not far away from the point that they originally dropped anchor and we know that if we do stray from the Lord that he won't let us go and that when the trouble is passed we'll be drawn back to himself so we got these three things we got this anchor we got a seal we got this foundation stone and all those illustrations demonstrate the permanence and the safety inherent in our faith in Christ as our saviour he has to be saved doesn't he because he's a saviour that's what a saviour does he makes us safe well there's an obvious question which arises especially as

I say if we take that statement that the Lord knows those who are his that should surely encourage anyone to ask these questions am I safe for eternity because I've trusted in Christ as my saviour have I got an anchor for my soul sealed through Christ shed blood and set in the foundation stone of Christ two important questions and notice in that verse this anchor is an anchor for the soul it's not just an anchor for our minds our bodies or any of the things that we naturally perceive as our humanity this is the spiritual dimension that we have our soul the eternal element of the creation that will live on beyond death and will either find itself in hell or will be part of this heavenly vision that the

Bible paints for us now I think for anyone who watched that tsunami and what happened to those people and the whole town just being washed away as if it didn't exist that sort of annihilation is the end result for all but more than that that's just the physical death but the Bible says that after that comes the judgment and that's where the soul comes in that's where we really need to be safe that's where we really need to have this assurance that we're anchored in Christ sealed through Christ's blood and set on the foundation stone well there's clearly some applications of this which are mentioned in this passage let me just pick out three just as we close it starts off where we began our passage when God made his promise to

Abraham since there was no one greater for him to swear by he swore by himself saying I will surely bless you and give you many descendants and so after waiting patiently Abraham received what was promised you know when I was going to say when I was young but I'm still the same today if I was going to do an activity whether it was play table tennis play football or bowling as soon as we got to the pitch or the table or the bowling alley I had to start right away give me the ball let me get going while the rest of the family or the rest of my friends were putting the shoes on and getting ready to start and making sure that everything was set I just was desperate to bowl I had no patience and yet this passage is telling us that we need to be patient we need to wait on the Lord but as we wait it doesn't mean that we don't do anything we need to take heed of the parable of the virgins you remember the wise and the foolish virgins the wise ones who are waiting for the bridegroom use that time to prepare themselves for what was going to happen when they met the bridegroom the picture of course is that we are hopefully like the wise virgins we know the

Lord is coming we don't know when but we should be preparing ourselves for his coming and that's an important question isn't it the Bible says what will we be found doing when the Lord comes again that's an important question but we need to be patient for Abraham he had to wait for 25 years before the promise began to be fulfilled about his children and the fact that they would be as numerous as their heavens so we don't know how long we need to be patient but we need to be patient because God is doing and will do his work the second thing that comes out of here as an application is in verse 17 because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised he confirmed it with an oath so we need to trust the Lord we need to trust his promises we need to take what the Bible says and to trust it here's a verse from Timothy 1st Timothy chapter 4 part of verse 9 and 10 this is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance and for this reason we labor and strive that we have put our hope or our trust in the living God who is the saviour of all men as

[ 30 : 57 ] Christians we put our trust in God there is no one else to trust in no one else in this world is trustworthy but God is and we can trust him and the last thing in terms of an application and going back to the illustration there was a tsunami there was this lady coming across this field not realizing the danger and at the end she was saved because if you like she had been too patient she put her trust in the things of this world but in the end what saved her was that somebody put down their hand and you could hear it clearly on the voice she says take my hand and I'll bring you out of here but she had to do something didn't she she had to put her hand in that hand to be saved so we need to as it says here we have this hope as an anchor for the soul firm and secure we need to take hold of this we need to take hold of this anchor we need to take hold in other words of Christ in order for us to benefit from all the promises that the

Bible makes if you just started to list them children of God joint heirs with Jesus we're going to heaven there's going to be a new creation we're going to be there with God we're going to worship him forever there's going to be no more crying there's going to be no more pain you look through the pages of the scriptures and it speaks about this wonderful heaven that those who trust in Christ are going to that's just a fraction of what the Bible tells us about this place and the only way that this passage says that we can get there is to be anchored in Christ absolutely firm absolutely sure we've got to be patient we've got to trust God that he will carry out his promises but most of all we've got to keep hold of that anchor in order that one day we might be able to see him face to face and worship him in a way which we've never been able to do in this world because it's an imperfect world and we're imperfect people what a wonderful promise this gives us it's no wonder that in this

NIV version the title of this section is the certainty of God's promise how many times have you heard people say something like you know there's nothing certain in this world anymore and they're absolutely right it's maybe the only right thing that people say but there is certainty in trusting in Christ certain that we will be saved according to God's immovable immutable and unchangeable plan