

Hebrews 6:9-6:20 – Persevere like Abraham

Jesus is superior to the Old Testament prophets, the angels, Moses and Joshua. Jesus is also a better priest. He is an eternal high priest after the order of Melchizedek. In 5:11-6:8, the recipients were admonished for being spiritually immature. They were warned about the peril of falling away. The discussion of Jesus as high priest is picked up again in Chapter 7. For the rest of chapter 6, the recipients continued to be exhorted, admonished and warned, but with a little bit of encouragement.

Read Hebrews 6:9-12.

Although the author had given the recipients a stern warning in the previous section, what was the author persuaded about concerning the recipients? (6:9)

In Matthew 7:16, Jesus said that “you will know them by their fruits”. What fruit did the recipients exhibit? Some translations slightly obscure the original text. Their love was displayed when they served (past tense) the saints and continued to serve (present tense) the saints. Their fruit wasn’t just in the past, it was continuing in the present. We should not overlook that their love, manifested in service, was “for His name”. (6:10)

In verse 11, “show” is the same word that was used in verse 10. ESV has “show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope”. NKJV has “show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope”. NASB has “show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope”. NIV has “show this same diligence..., so that what you hope for may be fully realized”. Is the meaning that they should earnestly seek full assurance? Or is the meaning that by showing diligence they will obtain full assurance? What does this verse mean? (6:11)

What would be the result of being earnest and diligent? Verses 13-15 give an example of someone who through faith and patience inherited the promises. The word “sluggish” was used in 5:11; “you have become dull of hearing”. (6:12)

Read Hebrews 6:13-20.

Why was Abraham a good person to imitate when it came to inheriting God’s promise through faith and patience? How did God make his promise more sure? (6:13)

In verse 14, what Old Testament verse was quoted? See Genesis 22:17. What is the context of the OT verse? God's promise was emphatic. The verse starts with "surely". BDAG says that this is a "formula used in oaths" and means "surely, certainly". The KJV reflects the original "blessing I will bless" and "multiplying I will multiply". When a word was used twice in a row it was a way to make the word emphatic. So, there are three emphatic expressions in God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17. There is one difference in Genesis 22:17 and the quote in 6:14. The original Hebrew and the Greek translation both have "multiply your offspring". ESV, NKJV and NASB have "multiply you" in 6:14 while NIV has "give you many descendants". (6:14)

How did Abraham obtain the promise? Did Abraham see the promise fully realized in his time? See Hebrews 11:8-19. (6:15)

According to verse 16, why do people take an oath? What was usually included in an oath? In Matthew 23:16, Jesus confirmed that this was a common practice. This was not an endorsement of oaths. See what Jesus said in Matthew 5:33-37. Also, consider the oath which people sometimes take in court which ends with "so help me God". (6:16)

Why did God guarantee the promise with an oath? Why didn't he need to use an oath? Who were the heirs of the promise, besides Abraham? (6:17)

In verse 18, what are the two unchangeable things? What did "we" flee from? What did "we" flee to? BDAG says the word "fled for refuge" means "to gain shelter from danger, take refuge". NASB leaves out the idea of "flee". NIV leaves out the idea of "refuge". BDAG translates the end of the verse as "we who have taken refuge, to seize the hope that is placed before us". What encourages us to hold fast to the hope set before us? (6:18)

Verse 19 starts with a relative pronoun which refers to the "hope" of verse 18. How is our hope described? What does an anchor do? Where does our hope go? This word "curtain" is always used in the NT of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. This is what was torn when Jesus died. BDAG understands this part of the verse as "the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, the holy of holies as a figure for heaven". Verse 20 is a bridge which resumes the topic of chapter 5, Jesus our great high priest. Jesus entered the Holy of Holies as our eternal high priest after the order of Melchizedek. When did the high priest enter the Holy of Holies? When did Jesus enter the Holy of Holies? (6:19-20)