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We Have This Hope as an Anchor for the Soul

6: 9-20

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul DIG: How does the author encourage his readers so that what they hope for could be fully realized? Is it possible to lose your salvation? What is your responsibility in ministering to the Body of Christ? What effect did God's promise and oath have on Abraham's descendants? What kind of illustration can Abraham provide for someone today? What were some of the ways that Isra'el was to be God's channel of blessing to the rest of the world? What is the anchor for the soul? Why is it important?

REFLECT: How would you describe your spiritual appetite right now? Just nibbling? A good meal is nice now and then? I'm famished for all I can get? Why? When have you been spiritually dull? What got you going again? Where in your life does trusting in YHVH come the hardest? Easiest? Why? What promises of ADONAI are your anchors?

After the severest of warnings, comes the most loving of appeals. The writer was earnestly hoping that **the unbelievers** he so forcefully had been warning (**to see link click [Ag](#) - The Audience of the book of Hebrews**) would not fall away - that **they** would not apostatize. It is clear that the writer is differentiating between **the believers** and **the unbelievers** among his readers, and is using **the saved** as examples for his **unsaved readers** to follow.¹⁴⁹ He was convinced that his fellow **believers** in the congregation had all the true marks of **salvation**.

First, he gives a brief word to **the believers** who are to be **imitated**. **Now even though we speak this way**, these fearful warnings do not apply to **you**. **Beloved, we are confident of better things in your case - the things that have to do with salvation (6:9)**. He calls **the saved** among **them, beloved**. It was if the writer was saying, "These warnings to apostates, or potential apostates, are put in this letter to **you** because these people are in **your midst**" (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ [Ev](#) - The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds**). The word **confident** (Greek: *pepeismetha*) is in the perfect tense, meaning *a past action with continuing results*. In other words, **their** ministry in congregation of **God** showed that **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** had produced fruit in **their** lives,

and that proved **they** were truly **born again**. The word **better** is one of the key words in **Hebrews**, and the author uses it eleven times to compare **Messiah** and **His** reign with what there was before.

The entire fifth and sixth chapters of **Hebrews** are devoted to **the things that have to do with salvation**. But the particular **ones** mentioned here are those that contrast the warnings of unbelief mentioned in **5:11** to **6:5**. For example **salvation** is not seen in infancy by **maturity**, not **milk** but **solid food**, not inexperience in **righteousness** by **perfection in righteousness**, not repentance in **dead works** by repentance of **sin** and belief in **Yeshua Messiah** for eternal life. **The things that have to do with salvation** are positive, not negative. **They** are not seen in the external trappings of ceremonial religion, but internal transformation, a new life, **born again**. **The things that have to do with salvation** don't come from repeated sacrifices, but from one **perfect**, complete **sacrifice** of **Jesus Christ**. They do not focus on **the milk** of the TaNaKh, but on **the blessed hope (Titus 2:13)**, not just on being **enlightened**, but on being made new, not just on **tasting salvation** but feasting on it, not just being around when **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** is around, but having **Him** live inside you, not just getting a **taste** of **God's word**, but drinking and eating it, not just seeing **the Lord's** miracles, but being one. **These are the things that have to do with salvation.**¹⁵⁰

God is not unjust. He will not forget your work in the kingdom of **God** and the love you have shown **Him** as you have helped **His people**, and continue to help them (**6:10**). As **believers**, our **works** do not what save us, but **they** are the evidence of **salvation (James 2:14-26)**. **God is not** so **unjust** and insensitive that **He** fails to see **the works** of love **His beloved** children perform. **He** clearly sees the fruit of our righteousness. **The one who overcomes** the world (**First John 5:4-5**) **will be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before My Father and His angels (Revelation 3:5)**. **The book** **Jesus** is referring to is **the book of life**, or the names of all those who were ever born (**Psalm 69:28; Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27**). If a person dies unsaved, his or her name is blotted out of **the book of life**. Those who are **saved** have **their** names retained in **the book of life**. In **Exodus 32:32-33**, Moses asked that if **the Lord** would not forgive the sins of the nation, would **He blot** Moses' name **out** of **the book of life**, taking away his **salvation** rather than Isra'el's. **The Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27)**, on the other hand, contains all those who have been **born again**, and therefore, it is impossible to be **blotted out** in that **book**. This promise assures all **believers** in every age, of their eternal security.

We serve others in the congregations of **God** by ministering with our spiritual gifts (**Romans 12:3-8; First Corinthians 12:9-11; First Peter 4:10-11**). But much of our service to one another is simply part of every believer's responsibility. The proof that the **Hebrews** addressed in **6:9-10** were true **believers** was **their** loving, **faithful**, and continuing ministry to each other. If we love our **Lord**, we will serve each other. We cannot say we love **God** and, at the same time, have no use for our **brothers and sisters** in the **faith: Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness (First John 2:9)**. A few chapters later, the author states the same truth even more strongly: **Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love (First John 4:8)**. Finally, in the last chapter, he summarizes the truth: **Everyone who loves the Father, loves His children was well (First John 5:1b)**.

Then he once again addresses **the unbelievers**, those who had made some sort of flimsy profession of **faith** but were in imminent danger of falling back into Judaism and losing their opportunity for **salvation** forever. **We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised (6:11-12)**. The **hope** was then extended to **them** to become imitators of the true **believers** just described and to step over the line from knowledge to **faith**. It was if the writer was saying, "Take a look at these true **believers**. My desire is that every one of **you** could have the same assurance of **salvation**. We don't want **you** to fall away and lose all **hope**." There is no **hope** apart from **Jesus Christ. He is the blessed hope (Titus 2:13)**.

Diligence can carry the idea of eagerness or haste. The basic idea was that **the unbelievers** he was addressing should not waste any more time and put **their faith in Messiah as High Priest today**. Once someone hears and understands the gospel, stepping over the line from knowledge to **faith** should not be a long drawn out process. All it takes is an act of **obedience**. **Salvation** is an instantaneous experience and should not be postponed (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith](#)).

The Jewish **unbelievers' laziness** was a terrible barrier to **their** being saved. **Lazy** is a translation of the same Greek word (*nothros*) that is rendered **dull** earlier (see [Ba - You Have Become Dull of Hearing](#)). Just as they were **dull** in **their** hearing, **they** were **lazy** in **their believing**. **They** had not consciously rejected the gospel; but by not accepting it **they** had placidly rejected it. There are only two kinds of spiritual food. There's devil's food and there's angels food . . . and if you aren't eating one - you're eating the other. There is a time

for careful deliberation, but not when you know the right thing to do and have no guarantee of how long you will have the opportunity to make it. The time to accept **Christ** is never tomorrow, it is always today: **Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)**. Before it was too late, **they** needed to imitate true **believers**.¹⁵¹

Probably the most outstanding example of **trusting YHVH** in the TaNaKh is **Abraham**. In fact, **he** is called **the father of all who believe (Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:7)**, and it is **Abraham** that the writer now sets before his readers as a model of **faith**.

As we have seen, the writer to the **Hebrews** had urging **the Jews** to completely abandon the Levitical sacrificial system and commit **themselves to Christ as their great High Priest** and once-for-all-time **Sacrifice**. But the author says, in very clear terms here (and even more clearly in **Chapter 11**), that **faith** was the essence of the sacrificial system. When a **Jew** brought a sin offering for unintentional sin, a guilt offering for known sin, a burnt offering for averting **God's** wrath for sin by means of a substitute, a grain offering to restore fellowship with **God**, or a peace offering as an act of voluntary worship, the offering, any offering, was worthless in **God's** sight with out **faith** because **without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)**.

Then the writer cites the example of **Abraham** as an illustration of one of those who through **faith** and patience inherited the promises of **YHVH**. In light of Jewish persecution that those intellectually convinced **Jews** would almost certainly face if **they** made a commitment to **Yeshua Messiah**, **they** are pointed to **Abraham**. It was as if the writer was saying, "Not only can you look around you at the true **believers** as examples, you can look to **Abraham**. Look back at the history that you know only too well." The father of the **Jews** is also the father of the **faithful**. **He** is the perfect illustration of a man of **faith**, who, in the midst of adversity, uncertainty, and seeming impossibility, totally **trusted** in **ADONAI** for everything. **He** went so far as to raise a knife to kill his son who alone could fulfill **God's** promise- because **God** had told **him** to sacrifice **his** son. Such was **his faith in God**.¹⁵²

The hesitating **Jews** who recognized the truth of the gospel, who had seen miracles performed by the apostles, were still afraid to let go of the dead Levitical system. **They** were afraid to step over the line from knowledge to **faith** for fear that **He** might not be able to save **them**. And so **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** encourages **them** that **they** can trust **YHVH** to do just what **He** says: **When God made His promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for Him to swear by, so "He swore an oath by Himself," (Hebrews 6:13 quoting Genesis 22:16)**. Just as surely as **ADONAI** has kept **His** promise to **Abraham**,

He will keep **His promise** to those who trust in **His Son**. **He said: I will surely bless you and give you many descendants (Hebrews 6:14 quoting Genesis 22:17)**. Did **God** keep **His promise**? Yes, there are untold millions of **believers** around the world today. **Ha'Shem** has never failed and **He** never will. **He** can't lie or back out of **His promises**, "**The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you or forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged (Deuteronomy 31:8)**". That is true for Isra'el and **His** children of every age.

And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised (6:15). The word **patiently** refers back to **verse 12**; the word **received** (Greek: *epitugchano* meaning *to hit a marker or reach a point*) summarizes the long wait for Isaac. Between the promise that **God** made to **Abraham** and the time Isaac was born, twenty-five years had passed. **Abraham waited patiently** for twenty-five years to **receive what was promised**. **Abraham** was a good example to **those** who were having second thoughts about receiving **Christ as their Lord and Savior**. While **the promises** of **ADONAI** are not always immediate, they are always certain.

The writer now illustrates the security of the divine **promise** by using the analogy of human practice. **Since there was no one greater for Him to swear by, so "He swore an oath by Himself," for people swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument (6:13b-16)**. When **Ha'Shem** makes a **promise**, it does two things. First, it stops all contradiction and controversy, and second, it establishes that which is trustworthy. Now, **people swear by something greater**. **Jews** swore by the Altar and the Temple. For **them**, that was supposed to settle the issue. When **people swear by something greater, they pledge themselves to fulfill the promise**. It is the nature of **swearing** to appeal to a higher authority. But **God Himself** is the highest authority, so **His Word** settles and confirms everything. **YHVH** swore the same **oath** that **people swear**. Yet, **ADONAI** could not appeal to a higher authority, so **"He swore an oath by Himself."**¹⁵³

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 (6:17). The word **promise** is preceded by the definite article in the Greek text, pointing to a definite, particular **promise** defined in the context. Of course **YHVH** didn't need to take **an oath**. **His** word is every bit as good without **the oath** - as ours ought to be (**Matthew 5:33-37**). But to accommodate to the weak **faith** of **people, God swore His promise by Himself**. Since **His** promise is already unbreakable, **His** pledge did not make **His promise** any more secure.

I believe **the pledge** (Greek: *arrabon*) of **ADONAI's oath** is **the Spirit of God**. **When you believed, you were marked in Christ with a seal of ownership, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession (Second Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13b-14)**. In modern Greek, the same basic word for **pledge** used by Sha'ul means *an engagement ring*, **the promise** of marriage. It was as if **the Ruach** was saying to those hesitating, unbelieving **Jews**, if you will only believe that **Yeshua** is who **He** says **He** is, and step over the line from knowledge to faith, **I will come into your heart as a deposit, guaranteeing your inheritance in Christ.**"

God did this so that, by two unchangeable (Greek: *ametathetos*) **things in which it is impossible** (Greek: *adunatos*) **to lie (6:18a)**. The **two unchangeable things** are **God's promise** and **His oath**. First, **the promise** given to **Abraham** in **Genesis 12** was **unchangeable**. When **Abraham** was seventy-five years old, **YHVH promised him** a son. Second, **the promise** with an **oath** was given when Abraham was ninety-nine years old. Both **the promise** and **the oath** are unconditional guarantees of the covenant. The term *ametathetos* was used in relation to wills. Once properly made, a will was *ametathetos*, unchangeable by anyone but the maker. **Ha'Shem has declared His promise and His oath** to be *ametathetos*, even to **Himself**. They cannot be taken back or altered. It's as if **God** is saying, "You're secure. Come to **Christ**; there's nothing to fear. **I'll** hold on to you; **I'll** never let you go." Our security isn't in our never letting go of **God**, but in **His** never letting go of us.¹⁵⁴

We who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged (6:18b). The word refuge is a reminder of the concept of the **cities of refuge** found in the TaNaKh (**Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19; Joshua 20**). Just as a man would **flee** to a **city of refuge**, those **Jews** who had not yet made a decision to follow **Messiah** needed to **flee** to **Him** because **He** was **their** only **hope**. **Abraham** patiently endured and **the promise** was fulfilled. Those unbelieving **Jews** would have the same results if **they** only believed. We will never know if **God** can hold onto us until, in desperation, we run to **Him** for refuge. **The hope set before us is Jesus Christ** and the gospel **He has brought (First Timothy 1:1)**.

The **hope** that **Hebrews** describes is critical because it allows the believer to enter the inner sanctuary where **ADONAI** dwells. The vast body of Jewish law, known as *halakhah* (the way), or the Oral Law (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei - The Oral Law**), can never usher anyone into the presence of **YHVH**. Only one who belongs to **the Way (Acts 19:2)** makes such communication possible. To all who have ever known the

frustrating burden of attempting to enter by any other means, the words of **Hebrews** are a comfort: **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure (6:19a).**¹⁵⁵



This hope is the anchor that enters the inner sanctuary behind the veil, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf (6:19b-20a). Yeshua is in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly Tabernacle. In the Dispensation of the Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - The Dispensation of the Torah**), atonement was made once a year by the high priest. However, in the Dispensation of Grace (see **Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**), the atonement was made once for all time by **Messiah's** sacrifice on the cross. This **High Priest is the Rock of Salvation** into which **the anchor** of the believer's soul is fastened. Therefore, our **anchored** soul is, in the mind of **God**, already secure **behind the veil**. When **Jesus** entered the heavenly Most Holy Place, **He** did not leave after the sacrifice as did the Aaronic high priests, but **He sat down at the right hand of HaG'dualh BaM'romim, the Majesty of heaven (Hebrews 1:3e CJB quoting Psalm 110:1a CJB).**

The Aaronic high priest arrayed in his gorgeous robes, would enter the sanctuary, wearing on his shoulders twelve onyx stones upon which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Isra'el, and upon his breastplate, similar onyx stones with the names of the twelve tribes of Isra'el upon them. Thus, he would carry upon the shoulders of his strength and upon the heart of his love, the righteous of the TaNaKh into the presence of **ADONAI**. Even so, our heavenly **High Priest** carries on **His** shoulders of omnipotence and upon the heart

of **His** infinite love, those who believe in **Him**. Thus does the writer encourage the unsaved readers to put their faith in **the Sacrifice** of the B'rit Chadashah, **the Messiah**, rather than going back to the Levitical sacrifices that were set aside by **God** at the cross.¹⁵⁶

He has become our **Great High Priest** (Hebrew: *Cohen Rosh Gadol*) **forever, in the Order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20b** quoting **Psalm 110:4**). Specifically, **the Son** remains forever as **Guardian** of our souls. Such absolute security is almost incomprehensible. Not only are our souls **anchored** behind the impregnable, indestructible heavenly sanctuary, but our **Savior, Yeshua Messiah**, sits **at the right hand of God interceding for us (Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1)**. How can our security be described as anything but eternal (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**). Truly we can trust **YHVH** with our souls.

The author then returns to the line of thought that he left at **5:10** in order to exhort his readers to **diligence**. He was also preparing the groundwork for his coming position on **the Order of Melchizedek** and the priesthood of **Yeshua** (see **Bj - The New Priesthood is Unchangeable**).¹⁵⁷

Anchors are a clear and familiar image of security, yet there is something unique about **the Anchor** we see here. Every other anchor goes down into the sea to a place unseen to hold us secure, but this **One** goes up to heaven where by faith we can see **the inner sanctuary behind the veil**. What a powerful portrayal of **hope** for the believer. For others, hope is only wishing. Wanting but not having. And the failure of wishful hoping leads so many people into despair and depression. Believers want many things also. We want blessing, we want peace, and we want security. But unlike the **hope** of the world, which goes nowhere and has no anchor, our **hope** in **Christ** goes before us into heaven, where it is anchored to the **unchangeable nature of His purpose and the oath He has sworn**. We have a lifeline of salvation, so to speak, that nothing can break or destroy, so that we can be certain of arriving safe in the harbor of heaven.

Forerunner is yet another of the nautical terms used in **Hebrews (6:19b)**. The Greek word *prodromos* appears nowhere else in Scripture, but has to do with a familiar scene in the ancient world. The Greek harbors were often cut off from the sea by sandbars, over which the larger ships dared not pass until the full tide came in. So a lighter vessel, a **forerunner**, took the anchor and dropped it the harbor. From that moment the larger ship was safe from the storm, although it had to wait for the tide before it could enter. Therefore, because **Messiah**, our **forerunner**, has entered heaven itself, **He Himself is the pledge** that we too, will one day enter the harbor of our souls and the very presence of **YHVH**. Can



unforeseen circumstances break the line to this **Great Anchor**? No. **ADONAI** is greater than them all, and **His oath** shall override every obstacle. Believers are safe because **God's oath** and promise, secured by the finished work of **Messiah** on the cross.¹⁵⁸