

Hebrews 6B

- Last week was the Third Warning
 - This week picks up immediately after the end of the warning

[Heb. 6:9](#) ¶ But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

[Heb. 6:10](#) For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

[Heb. 6:11](#) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

[Heb. 6:12](#) so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- Notice we are back to first person (plural)
 - More friendly personal tone
 - No longer a warning
 - Now an encouragement
 - Notice the statement beloved
 - Speaking to the church (to believers) as he has been throughout the warning
 - We are convinced of better things
 - We = I and (presumably) the other leaders of the church
 - Things that accompany salvation (works)
 - Not produce faith, but are made possible by faith
 - This thought ends the chapter and bridges us back to Melchizedek in 7
 - There are certain works that accompany salvation which result in a blessing from God
 - These works are built on a foundation of Biblical understanding and ultimately upon faith itself

- And they are the basis for reward
 - And they are important sign posts on the road to maturity
- And so the writer begins by reassuring the audience that “we” have a belief (hope) that you will press on to maturity
 - You will produce fruit
 - The kind of things that naturally accompany salvation
- Though we are speaking in this way
 - Despite my harsh warnings, I am merely speaking this way to emphasize my concerns
 - He doesn’t presume an outcome
 - It’s not too late, in other words
- Because God is not unjust to forget your work and your love
 - They no doubt believe they have done some work already
 - And the writer acknowledges there was some fruit of maturity
 - And that God will not ignore their work
 - Which is why the writer has reason to be optimistic
 - They had hard work and they had love toward God’s name
 - What work?
 - How had they demonstrated their love toward God’s name?
 - Specifically, they did minister and are ministering to the saints
 - In this case of this church, the author draws hope for them from their response to the needs of other believers - in ministering to the saints
 - And God “will not ignore” (understatement) their works of faith and therefore fail to bless them for it

- At first, there appears to be a contradiction here
 - On the one hand he said they are in need again of teaching because they haven't matured
 - On the other hand, the writer cites their good work as evidence that they are pressing on to maturity and producing good fruit as a result
 - God won't overlook their good works, so they will receive a blessing
 - So which one is it?
 - Well look at the last two verses I read
 - In verse 11, the writer says he expects that everyone shows the same diligence
 - And in verse 12, he adds they should not be sluggish (nothros again)
 - Rather, be imitators of those who exhibit faith and patience so as to inherit the promises
 - So on the one hand, there are believers within the church who are exhibiting laziness
 - And they needed the warning
 - On the other hand, there are those who are showing patience and faith and should expect to inherit the blessings promised
 - And they are to be encouraged as held up as an example for the rest
 - Ultimately, the writer will hold up a list of historic figures as examples in chapter 11
 - Look to the strongest within the church as make them your example
 - Not the average or typical, but those whose lives are most honoring to the Lord's name
 - Those who serve the saints with the most dedication

- Understanding that this service is built upon a foundation of maturing in God's word
- Now the mention of promises moves the writer to a new direction
 - One that takes us back to Melkezidek
 - He wants to reinforce the importance of keeping our focus on God's promise to bless our obedience and our service in faith
 - And he will use the example of Abraham to make his point

[Heb. 6:13](#) ¶ For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

[Heb. 6:14](#) saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU."

[Heb. 6:15](#) And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

[Heb. 6:16](#) For men swear by one greater *than themselves*, and with them an oath *given* as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

[Heb. 6:17](#) In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, [Heb. 6:18](#) so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

- In the earlier verses tonight, the writer had said that God was not unjust to forget their good work
 - The implication is that it would be unjust to ignore their work
 - In other words, the good service rendered by a believer deserves some measure of reward
 - And that if God were to overlook that work, He would be unjust
 - But God is never unjust
 - He is ready and willing to reward His servants accordingly
 - Think of the parable of the talents in Matt
 - Think of Paul's statement in 1Cor

[1Cor. 9:24](#) ¶ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

[1Cor. 9:25](#) Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

[1Cor. 9:26](#) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

[1Cor. 9:27](#) but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

- Paul's focus was on the eternal heavenly rewards that were his for faithful service
 - Too often we minimize those rewards
 - It is though we must act as if we are above such things
 - God Himself in His word makes clear that He has prepared blessing for those who serve
 - And Paul encourages us to run in such a way that we win that prize
 - The author here is going to make a similar encouragement
 - And he will make the point drawing a parallel back to another historic Jewish figure
 - He references Abraham, who technically was not a Jew. He was a Hebrew
 - The Jewish nation begins with Isaac
- God made promises to Abraham too
 - They were promises concerning an heir, and land and a posterity
 - The promise is first given while Abram is still in UR in Chapter 12

[Gen. 12:1](#) ¶ Now the LORD said to Abram,
 "Go forth from your country,
 And from your relatives
 And from your father's house,
 To the land which I will show you;

[Gen. 12:2](#) And I will make you a great nation,

And I will bless you,
 And make your name great;
 And so you shall be a blessing;
[Gen. 12:3](#) And I will bless those who bless you,
 And the one who curses you I will curse.
 And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

[Gen. 12:7](#) The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

- More details of the promise are seen in Gen 15

[Gen. 15:1](#) ¶ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying,

"Do not fear, Abram,
 I am a shield to you;
 Your reward shall be very great."

[Gen. 15:2](#) Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

[Gen. 15:3](#) And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

[Gen. 15:4](#) Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

[Gen. 15:5](#) And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

[Gen. 15:6](#) Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

- This is the promise at the heart of the Abrahamic covenant
 - Which itself is the foundation for the New Covenant
 - Abram and Sarai were too old to have children
 - Yet Abram was desperate for God to give him an heir
 - And so God reiterated His promise to give Abram an heir in Gen 15
 - And more than that, he promised Abram that his descendents would be too numerous to count

- A fantastic unbelievable promise for a man who showed no earthly possibility of ever having children
- Everything about the promise was unbelievable, yet Abram believed God's word nonetheless
- And because Abram believed the promise (Heb 6:15), God reckoned his faith as righteousness
 - Here you have the definition of saving faith
 - Belief in God's promises
 - God spoke a word
 - It was not accompanied by any physical proof
 - It merely rested on the trustworthiness of the one promising
 - So if the word of God is believed, God will count it as righteousness
 - Where is word is rejected, it becomes the basis for condemnation
 - We will study this at much greater length when we reach chapter 11 of this book
 - But for now, we must understand that this is always the way God has dealt with men since Adam
 - Believe in God's promises and live or reject them and perish
- So Abraham's righteousness came from faith, not from works
 - But the rewards inherent in God's promises came because of Abraham's works done in faith

[Gen. 22:1](#) ¶ Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

[Gen. 22:2](#) He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

- As we all know, Abraham obeyed this command faithfully
 - And at the point where Abraham's obedience was made clear, God intervenes and says:

[Gen. 22:15](#) ¶ Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,
[Gen. 22:16](#) and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,
[Gen. 22:17](#) indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.
[Gen. 22:18](#) "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

- These are the verses that the writer of Hebrews quotes
 - He doesn't quote from Gen 15, where Abraham is declared righteous on the basis of faith
 - Rather, he quotes from Gen 22, where Abraham's faithfulness is evidenced by his obedience
 - And because of his obedience, God says Abraham will receive the benefits of the promise
 - God says, because you done this thing
 - All the nations will be blessed, because you obeyed
 - Remember, he was already righteous by faith earlier
 - This is about receiving the blessings of the promise
 - And that required obedience
- James describes it this way

[James 2:21](#) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

[James 2:22](#) You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

[James 2:23](#) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

- James says that Abraham was justified by works
 - Difficult phrase that caused Luther difficulty
 - Also misused by Catholics and others to claim that salvation is by works
 - The word “justified” (dakaioo) can mean made righteous, but it can also be complimentary word

[Matt. 11:19](#) “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is **vindicated** by her deeds.”

[Luke 7:29](#) When all the people and the tax collectors heard *this*, they **acknowledged** God’s **justice**, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

- So Abraham was vindicated, acknowledge to be righteous by his works
 - That’s why James can say faith was working with his works
- But then he says that Scripture was “fulfilled” by his actions
 - The scripture that was fulfilled was the scripture in Chapter 15
 - Abraham declared righteous
 - But until it was acknowledged and made evident, it could have been in doubt or questioned
 - Once he was willing to sacrifice his son, his faith in God’s word was made clear
 - And his obedience then gave rise to God swearing an oath to confirm the promises to Abraham
- So point 1 is how Abraham is an example to follow of someone who through patience and faith inherited the promises given to him
 - Faith and patience
 - Faith to believe
 - Patience to live according to that faith

- Point 2 is the significance of the oath
 - Look at the details concerning this oath God took
 - He swore by Himself
 - In ancient times, men would enter into agreement on the basis of a verbal promise or contract
 - And a man's word was binding, often on the penalty of death

[Num. 30:2](#) "If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

- An oath was like a promise in that it was a binding agreement
 - Because it was even greater than a promise because it invoked the power of a higher authority
 - A man might swear an oath by someone or something
 - By the King
 - By the Temple
 - By his father
 - Or by God
 - The oath invokes the authority of the third party
 - It means that the one swearing the oath is pledging to stand under the authority of that higher power for any penalty that might arise for failure to perform according to the terms
 - So if you swear by the King, then you are acknowledging that you will stand for the King's judgment if you fail to keep the oath
 - And the other party will accept your oath and trust it because they trust that the King will do whatever he must to protect his good name

- If the oath wasn't fulfilled, the injured party to go to the King and relate that an oath had been sworn by the King but not fulfilled, and the King would bring a penalty against the one who swore the oath
 - So the injured party was sure to get what he had been promised
 - This is why the author says that an oath ends every dispute
 - Because it brings a third party to the agreement who has the power to enforce the agreement (a higher power)
- So when God swore to Abraham, he couldn't go higher than Himself, so He swore by Himself
 - Even though God's earlier promise stood by itself as trustworthy
 - Nevertheless, God went a step further
 - He swore an oath to Abraham by Himself
 - To assure Abraham that God's very character and reputation would be on the line were He to fail to keep this oath
 - Why take the extra step?
 - Verse 17 tells us
 - Desiring all the more to show us that His promises can be trusted
 - He didn't have to do it
 - He wanted to do it for our benefit
 - That's why the writer says that God used two unchangeable things to give us reason to take refuge
 - And what is the expected response?
 - We who have taken refuge (been saved)
 - Would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope that is set before us

- And that's point #3 – if we are to follow the example of Abraham, we should do what he did
 - We take hold of the same hope of reward based on our willingness to act out on God's promise of blessing for those who serve in obedience
 - Consider the difference between having taken refuge and taking hold of the hope set before us?
 - Taking refuge is accomplished by faith alone
 - The hope (of blessing and reward) is only available to those who have taken refuge
 - Therefore, taking refuge is independent of the hope it makes available
 - We can have a hope sitting in front of us but not take hold of it
 - We can live without realizing the hope that is available
 - As a result, it just sits there
 - But once it's explained to us and we understand it
 - And then set our mind upon it like Paul running the race, everything in our lives changes
 - We run for that prize and not earthly prizes

[Heb. 6:19](#) This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

[Heb. 6:20](#) where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

- The hope we have is the hope of verse 11
 - The full assurance of the hope of rewards
 - Not lazy, but imitators of those who inherit the promises
 - It's sure and steadfast
 - You can count on it
 - And it won't go away

- Think of Jesus' challenge to store up treasure in heaven and not on earth
 - The treasure in heaven is not subject to deterioration or loss of any kind
 - It's permanent, lasting, indestructible
- That's what the writer means when he says steadfast
 - The word *bebaios* means secure, unalterable
- And it's a reward that enters within the veil
 - In other words, it's a heavenly reward ("one")
 - Behind the veil is a reference to entering God's presence
 - In other words, the location of this hope, this reward, is behind the veil
 - The same place Jesus has entered (he is where our blessings and hope are stored)
 - Who is a high priest forever according to Melkizedek
 - And here we are back on track talking about Mel
- What the writer did in the detour was say basically this
 - All Christians need to understand how Jesus is our High Priest
 - But the readers aren't able to follow it easily because they haven't been progressing in their spiritual maturity
 - And they haven't progressed because they aren't devoting themselves to the practice of studying what God has provided for them to know in his word
 - Therefore, they are in danger of losing any hope of progressing in obedience through repentance and renewal by the Holy Spirit
 - But provided they do continue in this work of maturity, they can be assured that God is just to provide an eternal blessing (or reward)

- We should set our hope on that blessing because God has promised it and others before us have proven that God is just to keep His promises
 - And that hope is based in something sure and steadfast and worth our effort to obey
- Where do we stand?