



## Chapter Six



In this opening text we have here the apostle's advice to the Hebrews - that they would grow up from a state of childhood to the fullness of the stature of the new man in Christ. He declares his readiness to assist them all he could in their spiritual progress; and, for their greater encouragement, he puts himself with them: Let us press on. – *Matthew Henry*. Let us today do the same. Must we continually be a part of basic, elementary, simple Bible studies? There is a time for all, that we should look into deep, divine understanding, and doctrinal discipline that goes beyond just Bible reading, but leads us to diligent study, devotion, and immersion into God's Word. There is a time when delving into God's Word should bring about a mental, emotional, spiritual, and maybe even a physical struggle (losing sleep, etc.). If you are never brought to the point of mentally wrestling, or emotionally grappling with God's Word which in turn sets you into extended periods of prayer and meditation, then you have only involved your life in the elementary teachings of Christ.

**6:1** The principles of the doctrine of Christ are the elementary matters which had been previously taught to the Hebrew Christians. These Christians are encouraged to leave these things behind. Not that they are rejecting or

unlearning them but using them as building blocks to move on toward maturity, perfection, or completeness. Just as a child leaves milk for a more solid nourishment. Also, just as a student leaves their first reader to advance on to something more challenging. The ideas of maturity, perfection, or completeness will continue to reappear in the following chapters.

When planning to build a firm building it is necessary to lay a solid foundation. But once that foundation is laid it is no longer necessary. Those that move forward as if they have never experienced the initial responses of the gospel, fall away. They have rejected what they have learned and have no room in their hearts for a conversion as at the first. You will see that the word “again” in these verses will be important to their understanding.

**Hebrews 6:1** (1) Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Elementary principles are important foundational elements. This is why the writer says that the foundation does not need to be laid again. But,

now is ready to be built upon, those mature and complete things. Pressing on to maturity suggests a continually going on to maturity. One does not stop, but moves or builds upon the foundation. The KJV version of this translation is really one of the worst translations we have. (KJV) - **Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;** Where the ESV might be one of the better translations. (ESV) - **Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity.** Most translations are similar to that of the ESV. The call is not for us to go onto moral perfection, even though perfection is our standard, but the call is for us to go onto maturity in our faith as the context of the previous verse makes clear.

In the following verses the writer will mention six different and foundational items which are coupled into pairs and would be classified as simple teachings that must not be forgotten but must be built upon as we move forward. In these principles is the writer suggesting that these are Jewish practices or are they Christian practices? I believe he is referring to them as Old Covenant practices. In other words he is calling the Old Covenant foundation to be left for the New Covenant. The Old Testament was preparatory

for the New Testament.

The first item that is mentioned of the six is repentance from dead works. This is where man denies himself. This phrase is only used one other time in the New Testament and that is found in this book as well. **Hebrews 9:14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Repentance refers to a change of the mind the leads to a change in action. It is not clear why they are referred to as “dead works.” Perhaps it is because they are evil, and sin leads to death. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Perhaps they are “dead works” because they are works done by spiritually dead people. **Ephesians 2:1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins. Perhaps they are dead works because they are works of law and utterly helpless to save. Perhaps they are dead works because dependance upon the works of the law is foolish. Perhaps they are dead works because themselves are good, but the heart is far way. The Old Testament prophets are full of call to flee from such dead works. The dead works are



actions, even right actions, done without a corresponding attitude of the heart. **Amos 5:21-25** (21) “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. (22) Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. (23) Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. (24) But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (25) “Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?”

Many times, the people were told their sacrifices were unacceptable because their hearts were not right. Dead works need repented of. It is a given that people repent of dead works, and the could move on from that basic tenant of the faith and simply do what is right and press on. Jesus made it clear that are works were dead if our hearts were not involved.

The second item then mentioned is that of “faith in God.” Faith in God is a foundational and basic teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments. The readers were already made aware of a lack of faith disqualified some from

the Promised Land and so it would then cost them to lose out on the Sabbath Rest. Some have suggested that this does not refer to belief in God, but rather faithfulness towards God. Either way, we can agree that the concept of “faith” in God or faithfulness to God are elementary things that were ingrained in their minds through the Old Testament Law.

**6:2-3** This next pair are the doctrine or teaching of baptisms and of the laying on of hands. With the final pair of teachings of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

**Hebrews 6:2-3** (2) of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. (3) And this we will do, if God permits.

The first one to look at is the word here translated baptisms in that it is commonly applied to the various washing of the Old Testament, such passages as Hebrews 9:10 and Luke 7:4. The doctrine of baptisms would therefore seem to involve explanations regarding the difference between Jewish washings on the one hand and gospel baptism in the name of Jesus Messiah on the other. Referencing the Jewish washing clearly given in detail in the Old Testament, and



they are called to leave it behind would fit the context of the book. This would certainly involve some teaching on the significance of Christ's blood, and sacrifice, a point to be developed in detail later in this epistle.

A second thought is that there is a difference not just between Jewish and Christian washings but that of the baptism of John and Christian baptism. The early church made a distinction between the two. **Acts 19:3-6** (3) And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." (4) And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." (5) On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. John's baptism was a baptism into the shadow of what was to come, something that had yet to take place.

Laying on of hands was done in healing, blessing, or simply giving approval and endorsement. Many scholars believe that the laying on of hands also accompanied believer's baptism and signified the giving of the Holy

Spirit. If so, these two teachings go together in a special way and have to do with Christian initiation, or entering upon the Christian life. I tend to believe it is more with the sign of approval at one's immersion than it does the giving of the Holy Spirit. Some say that the Old Testament reference was to the laying on of hands for the transferring of sin. However the New Testament practice of laying on of hands was done for several reasons.

### **Ordination for an office.**

**1 Timothy 4:14** Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

**1 Timothy 5:22** Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

**2 Timothy 1:6** For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

### **The passing of supernatural gifts of the Spirit.**

**Acts 8:17** Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

## **Healing.**

**Acts 9:12** and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."

**Acts 28:8** And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him.

## **Setting apart for a special work.**

**Acts 13:3** Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

The fifth and six practices mentioned are that of resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment for this third section of pairings. These foundational principles have to do with Christian motivation or direction. These are not the only proper motives, to be sure, but in the elementary teaching of the gospel one is taught to look to the resurrection and judgment as the completion of what God has already begun, and therefore as motives for faithfulness.

Resurrection from the dead is a clear teaching in scripture. Both the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and our future resurrection of the dead.

There was a disagreement between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. **Acts 23:6-8** (6) But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" (7) As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (8) For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

There are countless scriptures which reference our immortality and future resurrection from the dead. **2 Timothy 1:10** but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, **Romans 6:5** For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, **1 Corinthians 15:42-44** (42) So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; (43) it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; (44) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural

body, there is also a spiritual body. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

The sixth teaching is that of eternal judgment. The future judgment cannot be any plainer from Christ and the Apostle's teaching and we should move on from that and understand it will take place, but not continue in the foundational teachings. **Acts 17:31** because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." **Hebrews 9:27** And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, We see that the judgment speaks of an eternal one. This makes clear that the judgment is final and permanent.

The writer acknowledges his dependence on the will of God. "If God" is willing, He will lead the reader to more advanced teaching and so to personal maturity.

**6:4-6** The writer begins this section by blasting those that consider going back into Judaism. He warns them if they leave that they just cannot return whenever they would like to. This verse four is one of the most disputed verse in all the Bible. It teaches that a person that is saved can become lost. It also teaches that there is a point in time when a person will not or cannot be restored, and their repentance will not be heard. This teaches there is a warning for not moving forward and pressing on towards maturity and the dangers of going backwards.

Many people today see the church and their faith in Christ as something they can just up and quit one day and pick it back up the next and continue in that downward spiral time in and time out. There should be a grave warning against that mindset and that can be seen plainly here. Our commitment to follow Jesus is a lifelong commitment that we do not plan on quitting and coming back when it is more convenient. There are some that quit the church for a time, so they can enjoy sin and then they come back later thinking that is alright. We cannot just treat the church and our faith as something common. God is gracious and forgiving , and he wants to forgive sin, but that attitude is one of the high-handed rebellion towards God and of willful

disrespect. The scenario here is not just one sin committed after baptism and that person not being restored. **Hebrews 10:26** For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, An attitude like that shows great irreverence towards the Lord and is disrespectful of the blood of Jesus, what an abuse of his sacrifice and grace! All of what we see in verses 4-5 is to describe the state of becoming impossible to restore unto repentance. In fact the several statements made will be an attempt to describe one who has become “impossible to restore unto repentance.”

The word “impossible” is used in this passage for emphasis. The term means something that cannot happen. The word “impossible” is used three other times in the book of Hebrews.

**Hebrews 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.

**Hebrews 10:4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

**Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of



those who seek Him.

What is it that cannot happen? Being renewed to repentance. Obviously, this does not speak of every person that sins, but what group of people are impossible to renew to repentance? He will describe the people that cannot be renewed with several descriptions.

**Hebrews 6:4-6** (4) For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

**Having been enlightened.** Those who have once been enlightened are Christians who have been instructed in the first principles of verses one and two. The following terms refer to these same individuals. In the post-apostolic writings, “enlightenment” came to be a technical term for baptism. In other words, he is speaking of a person who has seen the “light” and became a Christian through obedience to the light of the Gospel. In the New Testament the knowledge of God through Christ in the gospel is put in terms

of light. It is a reference to one coming to the knowledge of the truth. **John 1:9** There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. **Acts 26:18** to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' **Colossians 1:12-13** (12) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (13) For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, "Once" is an important word, and means once for all time. This enlightenment can take place only once, it cannot be repeated.

**Having tasted of the Heavenly gift.** Taste signifies experience. **Hebrews 2:9** But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. The heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit, the remission of sins, or probably the entire new life as a child of God. As a partaker of the Holy Spirit, Christians are partners of the Spirit. He is God's gift, the seal and earnest of future blessing

and the originator of fruit well-pleasing to God.

**Having been partakers of the Holy Spirit.** This is reference to the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit that all believers possess from their baptism. Remember, Acts 2:38 teaches that very thing, baptism for the forgiveness of sin and the receiving of or the partaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Having tasted the good Word of God.** Those who have tasted the good word of God are those who have experienced fulfillment of the precious promises God offers by claiming and receiving them in faith. The expression used here occurs also in the Greek Old Testament. **Zechariah 1:13** The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. **Joshua 21:45** Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass. The powers of the world to come probably refer to miraculous manifestations given to the infant church, but to a Jewish Christian this phrase would speak of the present reality of the Messianic era in which such things would take place. The world to come is literally the Coming Age, which is how the Jews spoke of the era fulfillment and blessing under Messiah in the

Kingdom of God.

**Having fallen away.** “If” is not in the original Greek, and the verb fall away is of the same tense as those preceding it in verses four and five. It is impossible to renew again unto repentance those who experienced benefits of verses four and five, then fell away, from our literal English idiom this would be “dropped out.” Not that all hope is gone, for God may once again give them repentance in acknowledging the truth. **2 Timothy 2:25** with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, But it is impossible for those individuals to experience again the renewal through enlightenment which was theirs in the first hearing of the gospel. **Acts 11:18** When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life." They cannot again go through the fundamental process of repentance and faith, or of initiation into the Body of Christ, as they did before. They have done that once, but have now rejected all that God offers. For such a person the gospel holds no appeal. This is not just a stumbling or a falling into sin. It has the deliberate and planned denunciation of God.

This passage is not teaching that if one sins after their baptism they cannot be forgiven. This is speaking of complete apostasy and abandonment of Jesus.

All through scriptures warnings are given to remain faithful as much as we possibly can. These individuals crucify for themselves the Son of God. By their apostasy they judge Christ to be an imposter and guilty of death. In such a person repentance cannot take place, for it is based on godly sorrow and a conviction of sin growing out of faith in Christ as the Son of God.

Such apostates put Christ to an open shame. This same verb is used in the Greek Old Testament to “hang them up.” **Numbers 25:4** **The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."** Where its point is clearly seen in a context of apostasy from God. They hang Him on the cross again, whether they forsake Christ for the world, for antichrist religion, or simply for carelessness and indifference.

I believe that the impossibility of restoring one to repentance does not as much rest with God as it

does the willingness or unwillingness of man to be forgiven. It is indicative of a person going so far that they will never again desire to repent and that the Holy Spirit will not work on that person again like He did in bringing that soul to its initial repentance and salvation. Forgiveness and salvation are not what are impossible, but the decision to repent is impossible. In the Bible we read of repentance as something God gives to man. **2 Timothy 2:25** with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, The not being renewed is similar to a person “being given over” in Romans chapter 1. Perhaps this is the same as the “sin not leading to death,” spoke by the apostle John. **1 John 5:16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. The end of verse 6 states the extreme state which one who gets to this point has gone.

To get to the point that someone will not repent, they would have to deny the effects of Jesus’ death on the cross themselves. The rejection is so extreme they are accused of crucifying Jesus again. The picture is clearly of murder and public

shaming. It refers to the mindset of the one who falls away, in their minds they put him back on the cross and treat Him as if He is dead to them. Instead of being blessed by the cross and what Jesus did on the cross, these people after accepting that, turned their backs on it completely. When it speaks of “open shame” the effect of this falling away is one of putting Jesus to shame and the church to shame before the world we see.

**6:7-8** The design of the apostle by this comparison is apparent. It is to show the consequences of not making a proper use of all the privileges which Christians have, and the effect which would follow should those privileges fail to be improved. He says, it is like the earth. If that absorbs the rain, and produces an abundant harvest, it receives the divine blessing. If not, it is cursed, or is worthless. The design is to show that “if” Christians should become like the barren earth they would be cast away and lost. – *Albert Barnes*.

**Hebrews 6:7-8** (7) For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; (8) but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and



close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

The earth or ground which drinks in the rain and then bears produce fitting and appropriate for those who have worked, receives blessings from God. On the other hand ground which produces thorns and briars or thistles proves itself unworthy of blessing and is rejected for cultivation. Instead it is burned over, perhaps to prevent the further spread of briars to the adjoining land. A double meaning is certainly intended here, for such unproductive and evil men will meet their end in the burning of hell.

We as Christians have received countless blessings from God and we need to show our thankfulness and gratitude for that. We can tell a lot about people by their fruits. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. The writer points out that many are very close to being cursed and the end result would be to be burned in the fire. What does your field or tree look like? Is it producing good fruit or bad fruit?

**6:9** What is true in the physical realm is true also in the spiritual, and the author's intention is to prevent this fate among his readers. Having

given such a stern and harsh warning in verses 4-8, he now quickly softens his tone to encouragement. He is persuaded or convinced that better things than this will come from his readers. He speaks of his personal confidence he has for their salvation. He looks for the fruitful lives and works which accompany salvation, things closely aligned with it and holding fast to it. **Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. His words are meant as a warning, not as a present judgment. His readers have shown fruits worthy of God in the past, and he urges them to remain steadfast in such a life in the future.

**Hebrews 6:9** (9) But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

Once again, we see the word “better” which is the theme for the book of Hebrews. Most of the time the word “better” is used when it refers to the ministry of Jesus of the New Covenant in comparison to the Old. Here the word “better” refers to the experience of his audience compared to those who are apostates. The end

result that he does not expect for the readers is falling away. He says he hopes for things which accompany salvation. One thing that accompanies salvation is eternal rewards. The idea here is probably in relation to our good works. Perhaps this is in reference to rewards in Heaven. The Bible does teach that there are rewards in Heaven in addition to our salvation. The human mind cannot comprehend how there be degrees of reward and punishment, of how anything can be better than salvation or worse than Hell, but Jesus does seem to teach that. This would have been a way to encourage the people to press onto maturity and not settle for the end result of being “burned in the fire.” Here we see his challenge to remain faithful to Jesus. Notice how he says, “though we are speaking in this way.” That statement refers to the harsh nature of what was said earlier.

**6:10** There is a negative and positive aspect to God’s justness. God is not unrighteous and will not forget any work or labor growing out of love and done because of His name or because of the relationship sustained to Him.

Since God is just, He also would have to, based on that justness, punish them if they do fall away. However, here the positive aspect of God’s justness is mentioned. Their faithful works would

hold no weight if they abandoned Christ. Our good works do not earn God's favor. God is just in His covenant relationship with us. He is focusing not just on salvation, but of heavenly rewards. Heavenly rewards are the things that accompany salvation. While we do not gain salvation through good works, we do gain rewards through our good works.

**Hebrews 6:10** (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.

How do we show love towards His name? We do it through His people. **Matthew 25:40** "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' Specifically, the writer points to the work and love they have shown. Work and love go together. **1 Thessalonians 1:3** constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. **Hebrews 10:24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Work without love is of no use. Our works are the evidence of love. The type of works that

they had been showing and are currently showing are evidence that they have not abandoned Christ like warned about in the previous verses. Any judgment that is levied upon them will be just.

The Hebrew Christians had ministered to or served the saints, their brethren, both in the past and in the writer's present. **Hebrews 10:32-34** (32) But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, (33) partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. (34) For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

**6:11** The writer wants every one of them to demonstrate the same diligence, not only now but to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Their danger was in stopping short of completion, of falling back before the goal had been attained. The writer warns against this repeatedly.

**Hebrews 6:11 (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,

This word diligence is a word intended to contrast with the world “lazy” or “sluggish” in the next verse. The same diligence that he speaks of is in the diligence they have to go good works and service to the saints as they minister. The same strenuous endeavor, the same ardor and zeal. He is saying that they need that same type of commitment to the rest of their faith. He is urging them to stay faithful to the end. We need to show diligence in serving the Lord. This was to make their hope sure. That full assurance of hope is to be obtained only by holy living. We have assurance in Christ. God could impart it at once when the soul is converted, but such is the tendency of man to indolence and sloth that even good people would then relax their efforts, and sit down contented, feeling that they had now the undoubted prospect of heaven. As it is, it is held out as a prize to be won - as that whose acquisition is to cheer us in our old age, when the warfare is over, and when amidst the infirmities of years, and the near prospect of death, we need special consolation; - *Albert Barnes*

**6:12** They are not to be slothful, sluggish, or lazy, but rather literally become followers or imitators of those godly men of old who did inherit the blessings contained in God's promises. Success always comes through faith and patience.

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

We are also called to be imitators of those that have gone on before us. To be like those that remained faithful. Not sure if he had specifically in mind Old or New Testament heroes in his thinking. Perhaps, he was thinking about people like Abraham, Moses, David, Job, and the Prophets as we will also list out in chapter 11. Perhaps he had in mind people like Stephen and James who were faithful until death. We will inherit the promises made to us some day. We just need to remain faithful and patient that the day will come for us as it did for them.

**6:13-14** The main point of focus is that those that moved forward in faith and perseverance will receive their reward. For example, when God promised Abraham in **Genesis 22:16-18 (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, (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. (18) "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Concerning his numerous descendants and other blessings, God could swear by no greater person than Himself, and so he swore by His own name or personal character.

In the Hebrew text of this passage, an idiom is used which simply means, "I will surely bless you and multiply you." The Greek Old Testament translated the phrase word for word and gave a rather awkward reading which our author quotes here and which is carried over into the English.

**Hebrews 6:13-14** (13) For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, (14) saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU."

Verse 13 connects the idea of what was just said about inheriting what was promised through faith and patience. Here we Abraham as the example

for waiting patiently for the promises of God. Abraham is a major figure throughout this book. He is mentioned 10 times in these writings. Abraham is significant because he is pictured as the father of faith in the book of Romans. He is a model of what it looks like to walk and live by faith. If you think about it, he is the spiritual father to the Jews, Christians, and the Muslims (Ishmeal). He is a picture of waiting for God's promise. The concept that is conveyed is that just as God made a promise to Abraham, He also made a promise to us. Later we will see that it is a better promise. Just as Abraham had to wait for the fulfillment of the promise, we have to wait for the ultimate fulfillment of ours. The particular promise that is mentioned here regarding Abraham is quoted in verse 14. The same God who made promises to Abraham is still faithful to fulfill His promises to people today. The writer wants for the readers to understand that we must wait patiently living in faith and hope for the promises of God that are to come.

This example of Abraham would have held great weight with the Jews. **Genesis 22:15-18 (15)** Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, (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, (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. (18) "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The immediate promise was that Abraham would have a son; the distant promise is that he would have numerous descendants and they would be blessed. The idea of many descendants was a huge deal to the Jewish male.

**6:15** In this manner and under these circumstances, Abraham first patiently endured; only then he obtained the fulfillment of the promise, He saw the beginning of the fulfillment in the spared life of Isaac. The rest he saw only by faith according to **Hebrews 11:13, 39** (13) All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (39) And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, As Abraham had to wait, so do we. This is the writer's exhortation, and this is why he mentions Abraham.

**Hebrews 6:15** (15) And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

From this we see two important things: First, we see the certainty of God fulfilling His promises. Second, we see the need for patience before the thing hoped for is received. Verse 14 focused on God's promise. Verse 15 focuses on Abraham's response to God's promise. Abraham's response was that he waited patiently. The message for the readers then and for us today, is to hang in there, be patient, and the promise will be received. Abraham was promised a son, and he received one son of promise. The patient wait was not easy. Then he waited for more descendants. He was promised more descendants than the stars of the sky or the sands of the sea. He had Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac had twins boys, while Ishmael had twelve sons. Thirdly, he waited for the one offspring through whom all nations would be blessed. This speaks of the promise of the Messiah. He waited for the promise to be fulfilled even after his death. **Galatians 3:26-29** (26) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female;

for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Sometimes we can get tired, weary, and frustrated, but the promises of God are going to one day be fulfilled. God is not bound by our limitations of time and space, but if He says He will do something you can count on it that He will, in His timing. The nature of the promise made to Abraham is similar to the nature of the promise made to us.

**6:16** As we see in the case with men, they swear by something greater than themselves. Jesus instructed His followers not to swear at all. **Matthew 5:34** But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, The writer wants to emphasize for a the significance of the fact that God took an oath.

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

Among men, an oath serves two purposes. Negatively, it is an end of all strife. When a man takes an oath there is no more point in disputing his word or questioning him. Positively, it is for

confirmation. It gives all the assurance that is possible by the spoken word. The idea was that this was a legal guarantee.

**6:17** We see here that God condescended to man's own level of understanding and confirmed His promise to Abraham by an oath. **Hebrews 9:15** For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Man uses oaths to guarantee their promises and God did the same. This was to show or demonstrate to the heirs of promise (Christians) the unchangeableness or immutability of God's counsel or purpose and design.

**Hebrews 6:17** (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,

An heir, is someone that received or inherits what someone else had. We are heirs of the promise in that the promise goes to us as well. God wanted to show that His purpose was unchangeable and would not change. That

purpose was to bring a Messiah into the world, which He even planned before the creation of the world. If God constantly changed His plans and willed one thing today and another thing tomorrow, then who would trust Him or in Him? No one! God's ultimate will has never changed and that is for all people to be saved and for us to be sanctified. **Ephesians 1:4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. Notice also that it was the plan that God predetermined and not the individual person. **Revelation 13:8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

The word "interposed" means guaranteed or assured. He did not have to guarantee His oath, but He did. Proving that His power is as great as His love.

**6:18** God wanted this to be clear to the heirs of the promise. God's promise was made twice sure by two immutable things: His word, His promise, (it is impossible for God to lie), and His oath (taken in His own name). As man views the situation, he may have full confidence in the promises of God.



**Hebrews 6:18** (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.

Both things are unchangeable. Once it has been spoken it is going to happen because God does not lie and He does not swear falsely. It is against God's nature to lie this confirms the promise and reliability of God if the people were questioning God's faithfulness to His promises. They could find strong encouragement to maintain the strong position they have taken regarding Jesus. We can find great encouragement in the truth being taught here that god does not lie, and He is faithful to His promises.

This can encourage us in the midst of doubts and discouragements to stay faithful because if God is true to His promises, he is also true to His warnings. "Strong" is emphatic here and is read by weak men who need the encouragement. Christians are those who have fled for refuge (the Greek Old Testament uses the same word of fleeing to one of the six cities of refuge). The hope set before us is to be laid hold of or seized. God's twice-sure word of promise is a strong

encouragement for all Christians, by patiently waiting to do just that. The idea is that the Christian has once been guilty and deserved death because of their sins, but can flee to the redeemer and if they stay in that refuge of Jesus, they will be safe, but if they leave, they are in danger again.

**6:19** This hope is an anchor or the soul. The anchor was a symbol of hope in the ancient world as well as now. A ship in distress would toss out an anchor in the midst of a storm seeking safety. Our anchor is both secure or unfailing and steadfast or firmly fixed. The hope of heaven carried us through and is our anchor for the soul. Two important things about anchors; First, is that the anchor is solid and that the construction of it is sound. It must be strong enough not to break. Secondly, is the placement of the anchor. If it is placed along a sandy bottom the ship will not be totally secure.

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

The Christian's anchor is placed in the best place possible, behind the veil that is in heaven itself. If you remember not just anyone could go

beyond the veil in the Temple it was a sacred area where only the High Priest could enter. We can have strong confidence in Jesus our hope. Within the veil indicates the most holy place (Holy of Holies) of the tabernacle, into which the high priest entered one day each year. The phrase here symbolizes the presence of God, and refers to the fact that Jesus has passed into heaven as the next verse will state.

**6:20** The word “forerunner” means one going in advance. The high priest’s entrance into the Holy of Holies did not make it possible for anyone else to enter, but Jesus’ did. The very presence of God in heaven our forerunner has already entered. **Hebrews 4:14** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. “Forerunner” in the Greek was used of a scout, one who went before and led the way. Jesus has not only entered into God’s presence for us, He has also entered into heaven in front of us, leading the way, guaranteeing by His own entrance that the path is clear for us to follow.

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

The Christian's hope is certain and confident. It is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ and is based on His sinless life and His atoning death. If our hope were in our own obedience or knowledge or power, we could have no strong confidence at all. But it rests in the Son of God, and for that reason it is sinful not to have strong confidence. As our High Priest he intercedes for us before the Father.

The Christian's sin is no cause for loss of hope, but rather for genuine repentance and prayer, for throwing himself on the mercies of God through His mediator Jesus Christ. Because of the life Jesus lived and the death He died and because the Christian is one with Him, God's people ought to cherish a living hope. They have fled for refuge to the merciful and all-powerful Son of God. Nor do they wait for the death of a high priest, for Jesus is their high priest, and He lives forever, after the order of Melchizedek.