

"16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb 6:16-20)

To summarize where we have been thus far in the book of Hebrews: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, fully God in all His attributes. Therefore, His words are to be given greater honor than the words of angels, by which the Law was given. We will not escape if we neglect the great salvation that was spoken by the Son of God. [Hebrews 1:1-2:4]

For it is God's purpose that man be placed over all the works of His hands, and though we do not yet see that, yet we do see Jesus Christ through whom we have received the promise that we shall enter into His rest, our inheritance in Him, Our King of Glory. But we are warned, that Israel had a promise of entering into the rest of God just like we do, but many of them could not enter into that rest, because of unbelief. [Ps 95] They had the Sabbath day, they had the land of Canaan, but they did not have the rest of God that was promised to them: only in Christ is this rest given, and they did not believe. The word of God does not just speak to the outer man, but to the inmost recesses of the heart, dividing asunder the soul and spirit; the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is where the true rest reigns, in the heart and in the soul, and that is obtained only at the throne of Grace to our great High Priest, Jesus our Lord, where we obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need. [Heb 2:5-5:16]

But for the Jew to understand the nature of this High Priest is became necessary to speak of Melchisedec, for the promise of a future rest for the people of God hinged upon this, for the Savior would be a priest after the order of Melchisedec. [Ps. 110] All of their enemies would be destroyed by Messiah, sitting at the right hand of God. But even the Hebrew Christians did not have a good understanding of the Scriptures, for they did not understand the significance of this mysterious man who appeared to Abraham after the slaughter of the kings. They needed to grow up in Christ. Just as a baby must grow up to exercise his senses fully, so the babe in Christ must grow up in his spiritual senses, so that he will be able to discern both good and evil. In the same way, seed thrown on the ground must produce good fruit, not thorns and thistles. Everyone is urged not to be slothful, but to show diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.

This brings us to our text: Heb. 6:16-20, in which the writer is giving us the meaning of the oath that God took in Psalm 110. We will see thing things. 1)The nature of an oath in general; 2) The nature of this particular Oath; 3) The perpetuity of this Oath.

I. The nature of an oath in general.

A. The sacredness of an oath was known before Moses for we have several incidents in the book of Genesis of oathtaking, which I will not elaborate on. The oath was formally described in the Law of Moses, summarized in the third commandment.

Q99: What is required in the third Commandment? A99: That we must not by cursing,[1] or by false swearing,[2] nor yet by unnecessary oaths,[3] profane or abuse the name of God; nor even by our silence and connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and in summary, that we use the holy name of God in no other way than with fear and reverence,[4] so that He may be rightly confessed [5] and worshiped [6] by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.[7]

Q100: Is the profaning of God's name, by swearing and cursing, so grievous a sin that His wrath is kindled against those also who do not help as much as they can to hinder and forbid it?

A100: Yes, truly,[1] for no sin is greater and more provoking to God than the profaning of His name; wherefore He even commanded it to be punished with death.[2]

B. Jesus, however, said there was more to the oath than merely external speech: as all of the commandments, it goes to the heart.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear [lightly] not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

1. An oath is for giving strength to speech: "the ending of strife": you really mean what you say.
2. An oath is a special kind of promise, or vow. See Psalm 15: the character of the heirs of salvation. The righteous "swearth to his own hurt, and changeth not."
3. But why is it necessary for us to give strength to speech: because we are sinners. If men were not sinners, no oath would be necessary. People would keep their word; contracts wouldn't have to be written. Civil lawyers would be unnecessary. But that is not the world in which we live: we are sinners and there are times where we need to solemnly swear by the Name of the Lord; but that is a confession of the sinfulness of men.
4. In this light, it doesn't matter what you swear by, [speaking to the Jewish tradition] all of our words bind us, and even idles words will judge us in the last day. If you do not mean it, do not say it.
5. God means what He says, and we, in His image, are to mean what we say. You and I live in the presence of God; this gives a sacred character to all that we do, for God

is in heaven, we are on the earth; hence, out yea is to be yea, and our nay is to be nay.

II. What is the nature of this particular oath, that Hebrews says was taken by God. It is a reference to Psalm 110:

- A. The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."
1. LORD: Jehovah: the Triune God, although the mysteries of the Trinity were not revealed so plainly in that day.
  2. My Lord: the Messiah, the God-Man. As God He can sit there; as Man He can be a priest. He is the Mediator between God and man. Vs. 1
  3. "Sit" "Have authority" Not as the Son of God, but as the Son of Man. Made of our flesh, Made one with us, The fulfillment of the purpose of God to place man over all the works of His hands. Vs. 1
  4. The result of this reign of Christ will be the destruction of all his enemies and the willingness of His people to love and follow Him. He will never age nor decline from strength. Vs. 2-4
  5. This heavenly reign of Christ is the result of the word and the oath of God. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." He is a priest/king who will subdue all his enemies: 5-7
  6. His reign is characterized by two things: the willingness of His people; and the absolute destruction of all His foes.
- B. This establishment clause: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, is referred to in Psalm 2 [read] in the same context, but without the priestly element; and in Romans 1. [read] "Declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead: "declared" = established, anointed, crowned. The authority of entering into office.

III. The perpetuity of the Oath of God. Vs. 17-20

- A. He took an oath for those who will be heirs of salvation. Vs. 17
- B. God's counsel, [will, word, purpose] is revealed, it is shown to be unchanging: It is ok to speak of it! Vs. 17.
- C. The oath emphasized the immutability [unchanging nature of God's purpose and plan] of his counsel to the heirs of the Promise.
- D. These two things are the anchor of the soul: God's word and His Oath. His word and His oath established His covenant.
- If you deny the immutability of the word and promise [oath] you have turned the soul loose into the raging storm of relativism and agnosticism, without hope and without an anchor. These two things are the anchor of the soul: God's word of promise and His oath as a seal to His promise.
- E. Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God is our "forerunner" the one who runs before, behind the veil into the presence of God. How rich is this imagery. But He is not a priest like Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec, of whom we will speak next week. May God bless you. Amen and Amen