

Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XX The Love of God Requires Action

(Chapter 6)
Fred R. Coulter

Let's go back and just do a little review through to where we are in Heb. 6 and pick up some key things to see what it is that Paul is writing about, and how he's building his case, so when we come to Melchisedec and our opportunity—as those who have been called—to pray directly to God the Father right in heaven above without having to go through a man, and with Christ as our High Priest there, it's really quite a thing.

Hebrews 1:1: “God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His Son*.” He is:

- the ultimate *Word*
- the ultimate *Son*
- the ultimate *Message*

Whom God has sent!

Verse 2: “Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the ages; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high” (vs 2-3) That's quite a statement, because God came to be a human being.

Let's just think on this: Why is Christ the intermediary between men and God? *Because He came in the flesh*, and He also—because of the nature of His birth—had to receive genes and human nature from His mother. Otherwise, His birth was not a birth, and it was not a pregnancy; it would have been an illusion. Then the one born was not really a human being; which a lot of people would like to believe that is so. In receiving genes from His mother, I think that's a very important thing, because if that being the case, then that means that Christ will be forever having those genes. So, we'll just think on that. This is one of these things that was a great and a magnificent thing that God did.

Then it talks about Him being the firstborn, loved righteousness, hated lawlessness; then in the light of all of that he begins to show *how important our calling is*, and then, what it is that Christ went through to suffer and to die.

Hebrews 2:1: “For this reason... [that's the reason of everything mentioned in chapter one] ...it is imperative that we give much greater attention to the things *which* we have heard, lest at any time we

should slip away.... [it's not the word that will slip away, but *we*] ...For if the word spoken by angels was *enforced* without fail, and every transgression and disobedience received just recompense, how shall we escape, *if we* have neglected so great a salvation...” (vs 1-3).

This is what Paul is writing about. In the course of human time, what happens? *Human beings get lazy, they get tired, they get neglectful and everything like this!* What is so great does not appear to be so great. In a progressive sense they can begin to slack up, and then we will see where that leads to. So then he refers to the situation concerning Abraham.

Then in Heb. 3, he wants to make it absolutely clear that Christ is greater than Moses. Remember, that's what the Pharisees said. Remember the man who was born blind? He was brought to the Pharisees, and they said, ‘Were you born blind?’ *Yes!* ‘How did you see?’ He told them how he saw; asked his parents, and so forth. And they said, ‘As for this man—referring to Jesus—we know He is a sinner. We're disciples of Moses.’ So, for the whole Jewish community, even to this day, those who reject Christ, Moses is the key individual. That's what they rely upon.

Hebrews 3:1: “Because of this, Holy brethren... [because of everything that Christ did to become the perfect sacrifice] ...partakers of *the* heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of *the faith* we profess—Jesus Christ, Who was faithful to Him Who appointed Him, even as Moses *was* in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of greater glory than Moses, even as He Who built the house has so much more honor than the house *itself*” (vs 1-3).

Again, it talks about the disobedience concerning the Sabbath, and not keeping the Sabbath; why they were left to die in the wilderness because of unbelief, and because they didn't follow God the way that they should. **Belief** is the whole heart and core of everything that we do. Then that follows either obedience or disobedience. You have belief and obedience; you have disbelief and disobedience. And that's what he's talking about here concerning the Sabbath.

Hebrews 4:9: “There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God.”

Paul shows how Christ is our High Priest in heaven; how that He was tempted in every way like we are, yet without sin. Then he shows the difference between the high priesthood of men and that of Christ, Who then for the first time in:

Hebrews 5:6: “Even as He also says in another *place*, ‘You *are* a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec’” We’re about ready to get into the explanation of Melchisedec a little bit more when we come to Heb. 7. Then it shows what Christ did, and then also again corrects them for being dull or sluggish in hearing. Heb.6:1 shows we’re to go beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, and we should go on to perfection. A lot of the things that we are doing and studying and so forth fall into that category. Those who don’t, Paul gives the warning of the unpardonable sin. And the last one that I did was, *How Is Your Spiritual Garden?* Are you growing good plants or you growing thorns and thistles?

Hebrews 6:8: “But *that* which brings forth thorns and thistles *is* rejected and near to being cursed, the end of which *is* for burning.” Of course, the end of that is the Lake of Fire; that’s what it’s referring to after talking about the unpardonable sin. What was the curse that was brought upon Adam because of his sin? *Thorns and thistles and things would be the result of it!* Why? *Because of sin!*

Now likewise, in our growing in grace and knowledge and understanding, we can either build, as we covered, ‘gold, silver and precious stones,’ or ‘wood, hay and stubble’; in this case thorns and thistles. If we neglect what God has given us, then it really creates great and huge problems.

Verse 9: “But, although we speak these things, beloved, we are persuaded *of* better things concerning you, even *the fruits* that accompany salvation.” This is what God wants us to do, what He wants us to have; those things in our life, which bespeak those who are called to salvation. Let’s look at some of the things where it talks about it.

Mark 4—here again, we’re talking about the fruits, talking about the things that are planted, and how they grow. We’ve seen this through the whole operation of what has happened to the Church of God, too.

Mark 4:14: “The sower sows the Word. Now the ones by the way, where the Word was sown, these are the ones who hear, but Satan comes at once and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts” (vs 14-15). He is able to do this today via many things. He’s got all kinds of helpers out there to distract people. And he can take it away! Some people hear it and immediately they think it’s

great, and then Satan comes along takes it away.

Verse 16: “And the ones which were in like manner sown upon the rocky places, these are *the ones* who when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with joy; but *because* they have no root in themselves, they do not endure; when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, they are quickly offended.... [we’ve also seen that happen] ...And those which were sown among thorns, these are the ones who hear the Word. But the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things *that* come into *their lives* choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. Now those which were sown upon the good ground, these are *the ones* who hear the Word and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, one thirty-fold, and one sixty-fold, and one a hundredfold” (vs. 16-20).

Here we have almost an exact parallel to Heb. 6 at this point, concerning how we are to bring forth fruit and so forth. He wants us to bring forth the fruit *concerning the things of salvation*.

Let’s see what those things are. Isn’t it interesting that it talks about:

- that which is the fruit of the Spirit
- that which is the result of the Spirit
- that which is spiritually growing and developing in your life

It talks first of all about the lust of the flesh, and it ends up with all the works of the flesh with everything it lists there. But here are the works concerning salvation:

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...” Those things hold you through, and carry you through, through all circumstances, because we’re all going to be tried in this world. We’re all going to have difficulties and problems come along. But if you have:

“...love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (vs 22-23). Meaning, that these things are a law unto themselves, and this becomes a very powerful force in our lives, that these are the characteristics that we develop.

Then it shows, again, the struggle that we have, v 24: “But those who *are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.” That means that’s how the operation takes place, where you control human nature, control the things that cause you to sin, and so forth, and you live by *the Holy Spirit*.

Verse 25: “If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit.” In other

words, if we claim to have the Spirit of God, let's walk as the Spirit of God will lead us to walk. That's what's important.

Verse 26: "We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another." All of that is just the competition and the sins of the world. We want to have those things, those fruits that accompany salvation. You might want to run a separate study yourself and cover more of the things concerning salvation so that you can add that to it. That would be an extra Bible study you could do.

Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work... [*No!* Even if no one else sees it. Even if no one else knows.] ...and the labor of **love** by which you have showed *honor* to His name, *in that* you have served the saints and are *continuing* to serve *them*."

What we're going to see here, we're going to see the three greatest gifts, which then are the gifts of the Spirit. Here we have love, your "...labor of love..."

Verse 11: "But we earnestly desire that every one of you be demonstrating the same diligence, unto the full assurance of the **hope** until the end." You have to make it to the end. *The one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved!*

Verse 12: "So that you do not become lazy, but *that you be* imitators of those who through **faith**... [there we have love, hope, and faith] ...and steadfast endurance inherit the promises." The promises start out with:

1. you're going to have an existence as God
2. you're going to live forever
3. you will have no more sin; it will be righteousness forever
4. not only inherit the world, as it was with Abraham, but also God is creating the universe for some spectacular things that we need to understand

The thing is this: If we focus just strictly on the things on the earth, then we're going to forget the things that are in heaven. That's why he says he doesn't want you to be lazy.

Notice how all of this ties in, v 13: "For God, after promising Abraham..." All of this comes right back to Abraham. 'If we are Christ's, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

"...swore by Himself, since He could swear by none greater" (v 13). And this is a phenomenal thing that God did to do that, to guarantee the

promise that He's given. We're not dealing with agreements like human beings have. They make them to break them. We're dealing with what God promised, *and promised unto His death in the person of Christ, that He would do for Abraham what He promised He would do.*

Here's what He said, v 14: "Saying, 'In blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.' Now, after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise" (vs 14-15).

It says in another place that he didn't obtain the promise. So, part of the promise that he obtained was the promise of a physical seed Isaac, and he lived to see Jacob up to two-years-old. There was the promise that he obtained; that part of it. The rest of it is yet to come. He draws a parallel between how men solve their problems vs how God handled this, and because of the swearing of an oath and so forth.

Verse 16: "For indeed, men swear by the greater, and confirmation by an oath *puts* an end to all disputes between them."

There are many oaths and swearings that people do. Whether they go to court, whether it's like the Indians that would have their blood oath (they would mingle their blood, or whatever), these are the kind of covenant promises that are made. God did something greater.

Verse 17: "In this *way* God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise... [which is Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, *and us*] ...the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed *it* by an oath."

God doesn't need to take an oath, because, God does not lie. So, this is an extraordinary thing that God has done:

- to grant eternal life to us
- to grant the forgiveness of sin to us
- to give us all of these promises and things

This is a tremendous thing that has happened brethren, and that's what He wants us to understand.

Verse 18: "So that by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible *for* God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the **hope** *that has been* set before *us*." That's the hope of the eternal life, which he's talking about all the way through the book of Hebrews.

Verse 19: "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast..." He's really bringing out a lot of things here. This is some pretty powerful writing, and covers a huge gamut of what we have in the Bible.

“...and **which enters into the sanctuary within the veil**” (v 19). Now he’s starting to build up to being able to have that access to God the Father directly through Christ in heaven above. In other words, whenever we get on our knees to pray, we are praying, and we are being heard, by God the Father. That’s what he’s saying here. “...the sanctuary within the veil”—that’s in the Holy of Holies in heaven above.

Verse 20: “Where Jesus has entered for us... [on our behalf] ...*as* a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.”

From here on there is going to be an awful lot concerning *the order of Melchisedec*. Let’s go back and let’s look at some things here that we need to understand concerning *love*. The bottom line of everything that there is, ***if you don’t have the love of God, and you don’t have love, all the rest really doesn’t count***. It’s not completely thrown away, but if you have that love of God... Let’s see what Jesus says about it. Let’s see the parallel here in John 15 to that of Heb. 6. Remember, we just got done with the warning of those who are not producing; here it talks about fruit. God expects things in our lives. Not only accomplishments that we do, that’s fine. Remember, He told the apostles to ‘go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.’ That’s work they have to do; it is to produce fruit.

- you have fruit that a church does
- you have fruit that a group does
- you have fruit in your individual lives

and this can encompass all of that. Here He’s talking about the individuals. This is on the Passover night talking to the apostles:

John 15:1, Jesus said: “I AM the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit...” (vs 1-2). Again, tie that in with the warnings that we’ve seen in the book of Hebrews. What this is doing is showing us a consistency in the pattern of how God teaches us.

“...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit.... [as we just saw, some 30, some 60, some 100-fold] ...You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you” (vs 2-3).

In other words, through the word which Christ has spoken and, of course, with repentance and baptism and all the other things that go with it, *you are clean*. That gives you the entrance into the Holy of Holies so that your prayers go directly before God. That’s something we are not just to say okay, that’s interesting. That’s something we are to

believe and *act* upon and *consider* our prayers to be answered in that manner.

Let’s notice how this is accomplished, v 4: “Dwell... [live] ...in Me and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, *and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing” (vs 4-5).

That’s what we always need to understand. The world will have a hard time understanding this, because in the face of whatever the circumstances are, we continue doing this, regardless.

Verse 6: “If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned.” Notice how this follows right along with:

Hebrews 6:9: “...we are persuaded *of* better things concerning you...”

John 15:7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you.” That’s why this kind of love, and this kind of faith, and this kind of hope is so profound and important.

Verse 8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love” (vs 8-10).

Loving God requires action, and action then is the *obedience*. Yes, there’s the emotion, but there’s also the action that follows it, because the love is backed up by faith, and faith is backed up by doing. That constantly gives us hope because God is there to help us, and intervene, hear and answer our prayers. That’s what it’s talking about here. This is what is so profound concerning what we’re covering here.

1-Corinthians 13—unfortunately in the *King James* they’ve translated the Greek word for *love*—which is ‘agape’—as ‘charity’ which is a Latin word for love. The Latinist on the committee that did this section of the New Testament took away from the real meaning of it. But here now, one of the most humble but greatest men of the New Testament—the Apostle Paul—here’s what he writes about love. And here’s what we constantly need to come back to, to run our lives, to regulate our lives, to produce the things in our lives that God wants us to do. We can have great accomplishments, like Paul said here.

1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.... [in other words, hollow] ...If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (vs 1-2).

That’s why he said in the beginning: *love is the greatest thing!* This is why whatever we do in the world, whatever our accomplishments are, that’s fine; that’s wonderful. Thank God for it and realize that He has provided the way, the means, and everything to do so. Whatever trial or difficulty we have that comes along, now those are going to be hard. Thank God for it so that you can learn from whatever the trial and difficulty is. Trials and difficulties are to help you grow in

- character
- resolve
- belief
- hope
- love

That’s what they’re there for. Here Paul is showing some different aspects of it.

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods...” On whatever cause, because sometimes you can give to causes which are not just for the poor and be some magnanimous philanthropist in the world.

“...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing” (v 3). Then he goes right on showing, after we’ve looked at ourselves the way we really need to look at ourselves. ***If you love God you’re always going to be in a repentant attitude***, and that’s what this is showing.

Verse 4: “Love is patient *and* is kind... [in spite of all the circumstances and difficulties] ...love envies not; does not brag about itself, is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things...” (vs 4-5).

That doesn’t mean you don’t take care of yourself. It just means it doesn’t seek its own to the exclusion of helping other people and serving them, too.

“...is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails....” (vs 5-8). What it’s telling us here is that the love of God, coupled with the hope and belief of God, and that all in faith, then is a formula for success regardless in

the circumstances in the world.

Someone sent me by e-mail 36 pages of something to do with some of the martyrs of the Anabaptists. He says that some of that reading was really most inspiring, how people looked at the circumstances when the Inquisition was going on. Of course, the Anabaptists were Sabbath-keepers. And they believed in baptizing at an older age; that’s why they were called Anabaptists instead of infant baptism as children. Sooner or later the day is going to come when all the words that have been said about enduring to the end and holding fast in spite of all circumstances, is going to come true. It may be some difficult sledding somewhere down the road in the future. That’s why we need to be doing it now, because you can’t hurry up on a hurry up course and get it from someone else.

Here’s what we need to understand, “...But whether *there be* prophecies...” (v 8). I am convinced that those are prophecies of men, because Jesus said not one of His words would fail. Haven’t we had a lot of *prophecies of men*, interpreting the Bible the way they saw it, come out wrong? *Yes!* So, they failed!

“...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease...” (v 8). Yes, they’re all going to be replaced with a true language. Just exactly like God confounded the languages in Gen. 11, so He’s going to give the whole world a true language again when He returns. What language we will speak when we are resurrected, we’ll find out when we’re resurrected, because we’ll be able to communicate. What we know now is going to cease.

“...whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away” (v 8). That means the knowledge that we know and understand when we have the knowledge of God and are God; it’s going to pale in such insignificance all the things that we have in this human life that it’s going to be just like vanishing away. What God has for us is absolutely fantastic.

Here is the truth of the whole matter, v 9: “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” Living in the end-time we can key together a few more things than before. But it is still *in part*. Remember the sermon I gave *The 14 Points of Prophecy* (Day 6, FOT, 2002) that have to take place before Christ returns? Only three or four had any degree of fulfillment at all. So we prophesy in part.

Now then, here’s the day we’re looking for, and this is what Paul is also writing about to try and inspire the brethren by saying:

Hebrews 6:9: "...we are persuaded *of* better things concerning you, even the fruits that accompany salvation."

1-Corinthians 13:10: "But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child" (vs 10-11).

What he is really saying here is if we don't have the qualities of love that he has just covered here, then we are childish in our understanding of God's way and are behaving in that manner. We need to put those things away. *Childish behavior is the behavior of the world*, where there are all the things that go on there. We have to function in the world, so you have to be careful and cautious with that; we have to understand how they are. But that doesn't take away from what we need to do for God.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly..." We can see, we can catch glimpses of these things. Today, I would say, considerably more than the Apostle Paul. I wonder what he would have thought if he could have seen some of the telescopic pictures of the universe. I wonder what kind of epistle he would've written. So, we can see a little more clearly, but it's still darkly. Because when we come down to these things we have to say, as Jesus said, we don't know 'the day,' we don't know 'the hour.' But we can, if we're watching, understand the season of these things as they are coming.

"...but then *we shall see face-to-face*..." That's going to be something to see God face-to-face.

"...and I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 12-13)—because it never fails. We have the same kind of pattern here back in Heb. 6 of *love, and hope, and faith*. Exactly in the way that he has written it here.

Let's come to Revelation 22:3 and see what he's referring to, *face-to-face*. "And there shall be no more curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it... [New Jerusalem] ...and His servants shall serve Him, and **they shall see His face**..." (vs 3-4).

We will see God face-to-face. There can be no greater thing or hope or promise that has been given of God to cling to so that we are successful unto the end, to see Him face-to-face.

"...and His name *is* in their foreheads" (v 4). That's what Paul is talking about back here in 1 Cor. 13.

Now let's look at a couple of other Scriptures here that tie in with Heb. 6:10, and love, serving God, and so forth.

2-Thessalonians 2:13: "Now, we are duty-bound to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, who are beloved by *the* Lord, because God from *the* beginning has called you unto salvation..."

Stop and think about that! Out of all the billions on the face of the earth. This is why the world does not like the Church of God—in the final analysis, won't like the Church of God—and those who believe this, because we will say 'we have been chosen by God' for eternal life, and 'you have not.'

- God is the One Who makes the selection
- God is the One Who does the calling
- God is the One Who gives the Holy Spirit
- God is the One Who will resurrect us from the dead

But He has chosen us specifically, individually! That's why with the Holy Spirit of God in you, you belong to Him. ***You are chosen by God the Father!*** The great Sovereign of the entire universe has chosen those whom He has called. *Handpicked! Hand selected* to the exclusion of other people. Their day will come; He has a different plan for them.

"...called you unto salvation... [that ties right in with fruits that accompany salvation] ...through sanctification of *the* Spirit and **belief of the Truth**" (v 13). That's why it's so important.

The love of the Truth, belief of the Truth is so hard in this age of talk shows and opinions. Everybody has an opinion, and that's where so much religious confusion comes from. They have an opinion about this, an opinion about that in the Bible. Rather than saying that the Bible says this, 'let me find out what else does it say about this,' and put it all together so that you know what God says.

I don't know if they've ever done this on a religious program or not, it certainly wouldn't surprise me if they would do it to run something like: What do you think? What's your opinion of this? What's your interpretation of this? Then run a quick poll, and then five minutes later say, 'Well, 60% say this and 40% say this.' You have to **believe the Truth**, which is from God, and it's not like a CNN poll. You have two choices:

1. believe it and live it
2. reject it

Those who are in-between create for themselves great problems. That's called *Laodiceanism!* They had a more difficult time than we do. Why did they have it more difficult than we

do? *Because today we have the Word of God!* Remember, 2-Thess. was the second epistle that Paul had written. Granted, they may have had a form of what became the Gospel of Matthew; chances are they probably had that, because Matthew's Gospel was finished in 35_{A.D.}

They had the Old Testament. But here we have the complete New Testament, so our belief of the Truth should actually be stronger than their belief because we can base it upon facts that we can study out of the Bible and build Scripture upon Scripture and do as it says, 'precept upon precept; line upon line; here little, there a little,' and so forth, to put it together. We can have a more solid and firm belief of the Truth. The Truth is what? *Your Word is Truth! The Truth of God!*

Verse 14: "Unto which He called you by our Gospel... [again verifies that God is the One Who does the calling] ..to *the* obtaining of *the* glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here they were understanding already at that time that our inheritance is going to be obtaining the same glory that Jesus has.

Verse 15: "So then, brethren, stand firm..." Isn't it interesting how the style—though he's covering a subject a little differently—that the Spirit of God makes the style very similar to Hebrews?

"...and hold fast the ordinances that you were taught, whether by word or by our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God—even our Father, Who loved us and gave *us* eternal encouragement and good hope through grace—encourage your hearts and establish you in every good word and work" (vs 15-17).

See how the admonition that we find here in Heb. 6 follows right along with the same flow as we have in 2-Thess. That's another proof, by the way, that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. There are quite a few scholars who don't believe he did. But when you see the style and you see the way that it's put together, you can see how closely it follows along.

Hebrews 6:11: "But we earnestly desire that every one of you be demonstrating the same diligence, unto the full assurance of the hope until *the* end."

In other words, since *God is true, God is righteous and God is love*, then we can have the full assurance that what God has promised as *the hope* is there to the end. And that's what's so profound and important.

Let's understand something about the hope that God gives us. It's not just a false mirage of a thought within our hearts. It is part of the fruit, as we

saw: *love, joy, faith, and hope*. Just like *love* comes from God, *faith* comes from God, they are the gifts of the Holy Spirit; so *hope* comes from God, because that's what He's called.

Romans 15:13: "May the **God of hope** fill you now with all joy and peace in believing..." That kind of belief, with the hope of God, the love of God, and all of these things combined together:

- will bring joy, in spite of all circumstances;
- will bring peace of mind regardless of what is happening

"...that you may abound in hope *and* in *the* power of *the* Holy Spirit" (v 13). That's how we are to run our lives, and to which Paul is talking about back here in the book of Hebrews.

Here's why we have hope, Hebrews 6:12: "So that you do not become lazy..." That is always to inspire you. The proverb says that without vision the people perish. That's what hope is. ***Hope is the vision***; the looking out into the future; the seeing the great and fantastic possibilities. ***That hope is the vision!*** When you have that, then you're going to be, what the world calls *a self-starter*. What does that mean? That means that *you can run and govern your life with the power of the Holy Spirit to do what is right!*

- you *will pray* because you desire to pray
- you *will study* because you desire to study

—because ***this hope is that vision*** which gives you the impetus and the power everyday to go ahead, regardless of the circumstances that are around you. So that's a fantastic thing. That's why he says that, when you have that, you have that hope you're not going to become lazy. That doesn't mean you're not going to have periods where you're going to have some letdowns, because we all have that. But this means *lazy and negligent*.

"...but *that you be* imitators of those who through faith and steadfast endurance inherit the promises" (v 12).

Then he talks about Abraham, and you know the story about Abraham. You can read it in *The Christian Passover* book, that the Passover actually began with Abraham in Gen. 15. That's a profound thing! It didn't begin with Israel. *It began with Abraham!* Isn't it interesting how it always comes back to Abraham. Abraham had to believe God, because God said, 'I want you to leave your country, I want you to leave your house and go into a land that I will show you'; that he would be a blessing to all nations—his seed. That He would bless those that bless us, curse those that curse us, etc. *So, it all goes*

back Abraham! What I want to do is for us to understand something very important concerning this example that he is drawing out here.

Gen. 22 is the example that he uses. Lots of times God will do things so that on the surface it will look like it's not going to come out the way that you think, but in the end it comes out better than you have thought. Does that make any sense? *Yes!*

Remember, Abraham was called when he was 75-years-old. He received the promise that Isaac would come when he was 85; that's 10 years. He then also had the promise confirmed in his 99th year that Sarah would bear and bring forth Isaac. So, here now we have 25 years involved. This is what Paul is talking about, the time span leading up to Abraham. Gen. 22 is very instructive *in faith, in hope, in belief*, and all of those things are very important here concerning what God asked Abraham to do.

Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your son, **your only son Isaac...**'" (vs 1-2). Isaac was not his only son. If you recall, Ishmael was also his son—not through Sarah, but through Hagar. That problem still exists with us today with Jacob and Esau. But how does God look at it for the inheritance?

"...your only son Isaac..."—which means, it was his only *true* son, though he fathered Ishmael, because his wife Sarah bore Isaac. It was the both of them combined.

"...‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you’" (v 2).

We find in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11—the faith chapter—that he did this because he counted that God was also able to raise him from the dead, if it really came to the point of sacrificing him. In other words, God gave to him when he was 100-years-old—gave him Isaac as his son—his body being dead. You know at 100-years-old, I'm sure things don't work like they do when you're 20 having a son. Then he said in his own mind, and *this is belief, this is faith*: 'If God asked me to do this, I know that He will resurrect him from the dead.' God didn't quite require that.

Verse 3: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then

on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, 'You stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go yonder and worship, and come again to you'" (vs 3-5).

We've debated back and forth many times how old was Isaac at this point? He's called *a lad*. I don't know if Abraham, being at this point well over 100-years-old, and he has a young son, how many years he could still call him *a lad*. But you know how it is with older folks, they even call 30-year-old adults 'youngsters.' So, we don't know. We've estimated back and forth at different times anywhere from 12 to perhaps 30. We don't know, probably on the younger side, below 20. I think we have the clue,

"...and took two of his **young men** with him..." (v 3)—*a lad* then has to be younger than *young men*. Let's figure 20 or below just for the sake of trying to figure it. Here's what happened. Now just imagine this scene:

Verse 6: "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son...." This is a type of Christ carrying His own cross because he was carrying the wood for his own sacrifice.

"...And he took the firepot in his hand..." (v 6). That means he took a censer bowl of coals, carried it in his hand because you can't hold fire in your hand.

"...and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I *am*, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood.... [*I see the fire and the wood*] ...But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?'" (vs 6-7).

This is quite profound here, because I don't believe that up until this point Abraham told Isaac what was going to happen. Notice his answer, and here is a good example of faith for us in spite of the circumstances looking like they are desperate and unto the end. I've also found that when you go through circumstances that are desperate and look like the end, and you go through with faith and understanding—and perhaps maybe even the end does come in certain situations—but you still remain faithful to God, there is a blessing that comes later in God's time and in His way. Here we have a very similar thing.

Isaac asked the question of his father, and notice his answer, v 8: "And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.'...."—which is also a type of the coming sacrifice of Christ. Which is also then a type of what

is called theologically, *a substitutionary death*. Which then becomes the death of another for your sins; or in this case, the death of another for the death of Isaac. He said, "...God will provide..."

"...So they went both of them together" (v 8). I don't imagine there was very much conversation at that point.

Verse 9: "And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood, upon the altar."

This would indicate he is younger rather than older, because if he were older, maybe the weight would be a little difficult for him to get him up there on the altar. I've often wondered two things:

1. I wonder what Isaac was thinking when he was helping his father build the altar?
2. I wonder what he thought when he was binding him to put him on the altar for the sacrifice?

And you notice that Isaac himself did not fight back either.

Comment was made that it probably was God's Spirit supernaturally kept them calm while they had the faith. But here in this case, we have to know that Abraham had to have faith and Isaac had to have faith. He had to have faith and trust in his father that in spite of the circumstances his father knew what he was doing; likewise for us in relationship to God the Father. Whatever our circumstances are, God the Father knows what they are, and we trust God—in that faith and belief—that He knows what is best for us according to His will. That doesn't mean we consign ourselves to not thinking or doing or acting. But that just means *we continue to trust God for the solution!*

Verse 10: "And Abraham stretched put his hand..." He reached down to take the knife, whether it was in a sheath on his waist, or whatever.

"...and took the knife to slay his son.... [that's coming down right to the last minute] ...And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am'" (vs 10-11).

This is done to show all of us, how far God required Abraham to go to prove his belief and his obedience. *To the absolute ultimate!* Likewise, when God calls us what are we to do? *We are to love God more than father and mother, and brother, and sister, and lands, and children, and yes, our own life also;* and we're to carry our own cross, just as Isaac carried his own wood, and follow after Christ just

like Isaac followed after Abraham. We are to trust the Father in spite of the circumstances, which may look totally opposite of what we may consider they ought to be. I think that describes a lot of situations in a lot of lives. I can tell you this, in my own life it has not been as I ever had thought. I would have to truly say I really never thought very far beyond.

Notice what happened here, and this is what the Apostle Paul is writing about in the book of Hebrews concerning Abraham. This was such a fantastic and profound thing to do.

Verse 12: "And He said, 'Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'"

What does this tell us about our test and trials? *It tells us the exact same thing!* God knows that we love Him and fear Him when that which in our lives is the most dear to our hearts—that is, in this world—we *count as nothing for the sake of love and obedience to God and eternal life.*

It is easy to say those words, but it is hard to carry them out as Abraham and Isaac did here. Let's also note that at this time we can say, if he was 12-years-old, then it's 37 years; if he was 20-years-old, then it's 45 years that God was trying and testing Abraham and then at that moment, because he did this He said,

"...for now I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me" (v 12). That's quite a thing. That's why we are told *endure to the end*. And that's what it's based upon here.

Now then, we have a miraculous thing take place, v 13: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked. And, behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns...."

I've said *maybe* God supernaturally created this. He could do that because nothing's impossible for God, as a type of the supernatural existence of Christ in the flesh, that's possible. Or, while he was laying Isaac up on the altar, God caused a ram to go up there and get caught in the thicket. Either way, it was there; either way, God provided it.

"...And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son" (v 13). This is the exact same thing that God the Father has done for us in our sins. *He offered up Christ for our sins instead of us!* The wages of sin is death, but God says: All right:

- *if* you repent
- *if* you love Me
- *if* you believe Me

- if you live My way

then I will apply the sacrifice of Christ and His death to your life. Here is a type of it here:

Verse 14: “And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide; so that it is said *until* this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’ And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time” (vs 14-15). Here is the swearing that is quoted back in Heb. 6. Let’s understand how important that this is.

1. God cannot lie
2. God needs not take an oath

—because what He says will be. God doesn’t have to take an oath for His Word to be true.

He did this because of what Abraham did in his belief. That’s why if we are Christ’s then we are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. We are to be of the faith of Abraham. So, then God did an extraordinary thing. The only time He has ever done this. Which means that it goes from the time of Abraham on down through all eternity, of course.

Verse 15: “And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, ‘By Myself have I sworn,’ says the LORD, ‘because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you...’” (vs 15-17). It becomes irrevocable, unconditional, that God is going to do this in two profound ways:

1. “...and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens...” (v 17).

Those are the resurrected spiritual sons of God who will shine as the stars, as Jesus said. That is the ultimate promise. That is the promise given to us who are called today.

2. “...and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” (v 17).

The sand then represents the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and as it comes down into the world today. In those nations the world has been blessed, and from those nations has come the Word of God.

That’s why the world hates us today. They’re jealous, just like Isaac had the jealousy of Ishmael, and Jacob suffered the jealousy of Esau—*because here is the promise. It’s unequivocal*, which means that their descendants will receive the promise that God gave to Abraham, which came to Isaac, which came to Jacob when he blessed the twelve sons of Israel, when the blessings came in to the twelve tribes of Israel, that *that blessing is not*

dependent upon their behavior, because it’s unconditional. The blessing *will* come!

Now, the retaining of the blessing then, becomes conditional, but God will give the blessing. That’s why, just take for example, we live in this tremendous land in America, or wherever you may live in part of the countries of Israel, whether its New Zealand, Australia, England, parts of Europe or Canada. We were blessed with this land, grew up in this land, and we received it not because of anything that we did. The world looks upon that and looks at all of our sins and says these people don’t deserve it. And in some ways they’re correct. So, here it is, irrevocable.

Let’s apply this to the *spiritual* seed. It is irrevocable that the spiritual seed, those who are called to eternal life because of what Abraham did—and then Isaac and Jacob and on down to the birth of Christ and what Christ did—which this little episode here in Gen, 22 was just sort of a miniature thumbnail sketch of what God the Father and Jesus Christ would do during the ministry of Christ. God has bound Himself to do this. He will not lie! So, therefore, if you understand the Word of God, if you have the Spirit of God, realize that God is going to do and finish the work He has sworn to Abraham. *He has sworn by Himself*. We can believe that to the uttermost of our being.

Verse 18. “And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because you have obeyed My voice.**” That’s the whole key thing throughout the whole Old Testament and New Testament: **Do you obey the voice of God:**

- under all circumstances?
- under all duress?

That’s not to say that Abraham didn’t have his faults and problems, *he did!* That’s not to say that he didn’t have his sins, *he did!* But when God said do something he did it. When He asked him to do the impossible, he did it. That’s why.

Let’s come back to Hebrews 6 and to see why this is so profound, and how this ought to affect our very lives in the way that we live and believe and everything that we do. I am convinced also that if we are faithful to God and we look to God, He is going to provide opportunities for us to do things we’ve never even thought of.

Hebrews 6:13: “For God, after promising Abraham, swore by Himself, since He could swear by none greater, saying, ‘Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you’” (vs 13-14)—and He has.

Here’s why, v 17: “In this way God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise

the unchangeable nature of His own purpose...” The heirs of promise include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all of the spiritual seed that are called, and all of the physical seed that would come from that.

“...confirmed *it* by an oath; so that by two immutable things...” (vs 17-18). ‘In blessing I will bless; in multiplying I will multiply’—those are the two immutable things.

“...in which *it was impossible for God to lie...*” (v 18). Most of the religionists today accuse God of lying all the time. They think that the New Testament is a pack of lies, too. But God does not lie; it’s impossible for God to lie!

Now, let’s come here to Titus 1, because we need this in here concerning God not lying. Titus 1:1: “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to *the* faith of God’s elect and *the* knowledge of *the* Truth that *is* according to Godliness; in *the* hope of eternal life, which God Who **cannot lie...**” (vs 1-2).

The Greek here is ‘adunati’—meaning, the *impossibility* of God lying. That’s why it’s so very important that the Word of God be presented truthfully, straightforward. Because you can take the Truth of God and you can exchange it for a lie by having all kinds of false doctrines and things that you claim are in the Bible.

Verse 2: “In hope of the eternal life, which God, Who **cannot lie...**”—the impossibility of it. That’s why we are to have absolutely no doubts whatsoever that what God said, He is able to do. He is.

Not only that He cannot lie: “...promised before the ages of time, but revealed in its own set time in *the* proclamation of His Word, with which I was entrusted according to *the* commandment of God our Savior” (vs 2-3)—Who is Christ. Christ is God; the Father is God. So, it’s impossible for God to lie.

Hebrews 6:18: “So that by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for* God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope *that has been* set before *us*; which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul...” (vs 18-19). When that is that way then you are, what you would say in this world, *stable*. James 1 talks about those who don’t have faith are driven like the wind of the sea, driven here and there. They’re not anchored.

“...both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil” (vs 19). That you have that relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ in heaven above in the Holy of Holies in the temple in heaven. That’s awesome.

Now if you want to know what that’s like, read the section there in *A Harmony of the Gospels* on the Wave Sheaf Offering Day when Christ was, after He was resurrected and was accepted of God the Father. What was that like? That will give you something to really sink your teeth into.

Verse 20: “Where Jesus has entered for us as a forerunner... [He’s the One Who went ahead and paved the way to prove it can be done] ...having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.” *We’re going to see that the order of Melchisedec is different than any other priesthood. It is the only priesthood that was and is a King and a Priest!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 7; 1:1-3
- 2) Hebrews 2:1-3
- 3) Hebrews 3:1-3
- 4) Hebrews 4:9
- 5) Hebrews 5:6
- 6) Hebrews 6:8-9
- 7) Mark 4:14-20
- 8) Galatians 5:22-26
- 9) Hebrews 6:10-20
- 10) John 15:1-6
- 11) Hebrews 6:9
- 12) John 15:7-10
- 13) 1 Corinthians 13:1-9
- 14) Hebrews 6:9
- 15) 1 Corinthians 13:10-13
- 16) Revelation 22:3-4
- 17) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
- 18) Hebrews 6:11
- 19) Romans 15:13
- 20) Hebrews 6:12
- 21) Genesis 22:1-18
- 22) Hebrews 6:13-14, 17-18
- 23) Titus 1:1-3
- 24) Hebrews 6:18-20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 7; 6:1
- Genesis 11; 15
- Hebrews 11
- James 1

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *How is Your Spiritual Garden?* (Hebrews Series #19)
- *14 Points of Prophecy* (FOT, Day 6, 2002)

Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:mds/cs/dds
Transcribed: 11/16/2002
Reformatted/corrected: bo—January/2017