

## Lesson Eleven — Our Hope and Abraham's Promises

*Day One — Our Hope*

*Day Two — Other New Testament Writers' Perspective on Hope*

*Day Three — Promises Made to Abraham*

*Day Four — Promises Made to Abraham can't.*

*Day Five — Review*

Last week we completed study on the third of the five warnings in the Book of Hebrews. This third warning has to do with Christians moving from immaturity to maturity with a view to God remembering their works at the judgment seat, and the hope set before us. It has to do with our moving from milk to meat, from *the elementary things* concerning God's Word to the *word of righteousness*. And this word of righteousness has to do with an understanding of the person of Melchizedek, reflecting the future ministry of Christ in the Messianic Era.

Melchizedek was the king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He came to Abram after the war with the kings in Genesis chapter fourteen, blessed Abram, and served him bread and wine. This week we will take an in-depth look at this man, seeing what we can learn from him and what he represents for us. There is much we can learn from him. Please pray that God will teach you and allow you to move on to maturity.

### Day One — Our Hope

Today we will begin by re-reading the text of Hebrews 5:11-6:20, concentrating on 6:7ff. Please do that now.

We know that the "him" mentioned in 5:11 is referring to Melchizedek. After the author gives his readers the admonishment concerning their being ready for the meat of the Word, he is ready to tell a little more about this man, Melchizedek, who is only mentioned two prior times in all of the Scriptures. But first he must make sure that his readers have a handle on the promises God gave to Abraham. If we do not understand what is involved in the promises which God gave to Abraham, we will not be able to grasp all that is involved for us in the antitype of Melchizedek. (Be sure to grasp that last sentence.)

At the end of the third warning, the author speaks of the Christian bearing fruit (6:7,8). By way of the use of a metaphor, he tells us that some Christians will, in the end, be blessed for their fruit, while some will experience their fruit being burned up. (This is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ.) Then in v. 9, the author

encourages his readers by telling them that he is convinced of better things for them, *things that accompany salvation*. These *things* would have to be referring to something beyond the free gift, for nothing can be added to the gift which is complete and based upon the finished work of Christ. These “better things” refer to *things that accompany the salvation of the soul*.

Then the author speaks of God as not being unjust. In fact, God is very just, and He *will not forget* the fruit born *by His saints*, for the *sake of His saints*. And because this is true, the author desires that each one of his readers *shows the same diligence as those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises*, and in showing this diligence, they (we) might realize the full assurance of our hope firm until the end. The author reveals that his desire is that in this we see that diligence has to do with our hope.

But exactly what is *our hope*? The desire of God is that we are diligent to realize our hope. This is also the evident desire the author of Hebrews! And if we do not understand what our hope is, then what would motivate us to be diligent? Therefore, it is essential that we understand what our hope is.

Just to cause you to think it through, would you write out what you think our hope is?

Now, read the portion of Hebrews chapter six below and make the connection between our diligence and our hope.

#### Hebrews 6

**11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 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.” 15 And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 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, 18 in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**

What did you learn about our hope in this passage?

How is diligence connected with our hope?

Just so you can glimpse the other places in this epistle where the author mentions hope, read the passages below:

**Hebrews 3:6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.**

**Hebrews 7:19 for the Law made nothing perfect, and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.**

**Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;**

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Now that we have done a word study on the word hope in the Book of Hebrews, we will look to see what other New Testament authors have written about it tomorrow. Until then, think on these things.

See you tomorrow.

## Day Two — Other New Testament Writers' Perspective of Hope

Begin with prayer today.

For most, there is something about *our hope* that often appears difficult to grasp. One can be hard pressed to verbalize exactly what the hope is, for lack of understanding. Again if we do not have a handle on what our hope is, then what would motivate our diligence?

We have glimpsed some of the perspective the writer of Hebrews has on the *hope*. But let's see if other New Testament writers share the same perspective. (And shouldn't it be so, if the Holy Spirit is the Author of all Scripture?)

The following passages may prove helpful in our grasping the specifics of what the essence of our hope is. Read these verses thoughtfully. While reading through them, underline phrases which describe an aspect of *our hope*. There is space provided for you to make notes if you so desire. Also, feel free to look up the context of any of the verses in your Bible, to aid in your understanding them.

### I Peter 1

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... 13 Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ... 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

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**I Peter 3:15** but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence

NOTES:

In his second letter, Peter connects diligence with an abundant entrance into the kingdom. Underline specifically what he said in vv. 10 and 11.

## **II Peter 1**

**5** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; **7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal [Grk., *aionios*] kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Notice the word *diligence* in v. 5, and the word *diligent* in v. 10 here in II Peter. (Both words are the same Greek word used in Hebrews 6:11 and 4:11.) Connect the idea of being diligent in these things with the thought which is found in v. 11. What connection can you make there?

Do you see any connection between the reason for diligence in the epistle of Hebrews, and that in Peter's second letter? If so, what?

In Hebrews, the writer connects diligence with our hope. In his second letter, Peter connects diligence with an abundant entrance into the coming kingdom. Is *an abundant entrance into the kingdom* our very hope?

Now let's check to see what the Apostle John said:

**I John 3:3** And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

NOTES:

And now, the Apostle Paul in several of his epistles:

**Romans 5**

...2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

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**Romans 8**

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

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**Romans 12:12** ...rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer...

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**Romans 15:4** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

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**Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

NOTES:

**Ephesians 1:18** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

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**Ephesians 2:12** remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

NOTES:

**Ephesians 4:4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

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**Colossians 1**

**3** ...praying always for you... **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel. . .

**20** and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. **21** And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, **22** yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach — **23** if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

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**I Thessalonians 5:8** But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

NOTES:

**II Thessalonians 2:16** Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal [aionios <166>] comfort and good hope by grace,

NOTES:

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**Titus 2:13 ...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;**

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**Titus 3:7 ...that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal [aionios <166>] life.**

NOTES:

Before you end for the day, go back to the beginning of yesterday's work and reread Hebrews 6:11-20. Compare what you have learned from the other New Testament writers and what you learned from Hebrews. After seeing these verses concerning *our hope*, can you now write a more specific definition of what our hope is?

Meditate on these thoughts while you go about your day. See you tomorrow.

## Day Three — The Promises Made to Abraham

In the past two day we have studied what our hope is. Today and tomorrow we will be looking at the promises given to Abraham, and will see how these promises are interconnected with our hope. Spend a few minutes praying that you will gain insight into these things, as God would want you to.

What were the promises made to Abraham? And what do these promises have to do with Melchizedek? And why does it say that the promises are something to be *inherited*? Do these promises have anything to do the inherited salvation which is mentioned in Hebrews 1:14?

To be refreshed on what is said about the promises, reread Hebrews 6:11-20 from Day One of this week's homework.

The promises made to Abraham were progressive. While we cannot turn to one place in Genesis and find the entire scope of the promises, we can see that God gave them to him progressively. The foundation of the promises was given in Genesis chapter twelve, when God called Abram out of Ur. Read through this passage and list out what the different facets of the promises were initially. (We will be adding items to this list as we work, so there is additional space here.)

**Genesis 12:1-3**

**1** Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; **2** And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; **3** And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

## **The Promises God Gave to Abraham**

The next time God spoke to Abram was when Lot and Abram separated companies. Read about it below, adding any additional things you see concerning God’s promises to Abram.

**Genesis 13**

**4** And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **15** for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. **16** “And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. **17** Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”

List out any additional facets to the promises in the list you began above.

Continuing on in Genesis, chapter fourteen reveals Abram’s nephew, Lot along with the other citizens, as being caught up in a war between several small kingdoms (city-states), and being taken captive. When Abram heard the news that his nephew had been captured, he gathered a small company of men and came to Lot’s rescue. By



God's provision, Abram defeated the previously victorious kings who had taken Lot and others captive. Abram's victory gained the release of Lot, and gave freedom back to the previously defeated kings and their people. It is at this time, after the victory, when Abram met Melchizedek, the King of Salem. God used Melchizedek, king of Salem, to verbalize a few more facets of these promises.

**Genesis 14**

**18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all.**

**21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' 24 I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."**

What did Melchizedek say to Abram?

Melchizedek blessed Abram saying that God Most High, who possesses heaven and earth, desires to bless him. In other words, the Most High God, Who created everything in the heavens and on the earth, and Who owns everything in the heavens and on the earth, would bless Abram. It is as if Melchizedek was saying, "Now understand this, Abram, the GOD Who created all things, and Who owns all things would bless you from the abundance of what He created and owns. Abram, do you understand the scope of these blessings? God will bless you, Abram, from His abundance *in the heavens* and from His abundance *on the earth*."

And then as a test, one of the kings for whom Abram had gained victory, was there to offer Abram a reward from what the king had gained back in this victory. Abram could see that it would be only earthly possessions. Melchizedek had already told Abram of blessings from One who not only owned *everything* on earth, but also owned everything in the heavens. Look back in vv. 22-24 and write out what Abram's response was.

## Day Four — The Promises Made to Abraham, con't.

Begin with prayer.

You might want to briefly review yesterday's homework so we can pick up where we left off.

So impressed was Abram with the blessings which Melchizedek bestowed upon him, that Abram swore not to take any earthly possessions from the hand of the kings for whom he restored their kingdoms. He turned down the offer of the king of Sodom, and *in faith*, chose to *patiently wait* for the blessings which God offered through Melchizedek (6:12, 15).

Abram was intensely focused on what Melchizedek said. And while we are not privy to all that Melchizedek told Abram about the blessings that God, Who possessed all things in the heavens and all things on the earth, would bestow upon him, Abram must have known it was worthy of his fully pledged heart to wait upon these promises. Abram must have known that these promises had not only earthly blessings and benefits, but also heavenly blessings and benefits. And so Abram swore not to take anything from the other kings...only what God would choose to bless him with. The *result of* Abram's pledge follows in Genesis chapter fifteen. As you read this section in Genesis, pay special attention to what God says in v. 5. Hang on to this fact, because it will come into play again.

#### Genesis 15

**1** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

**2** And Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** And Abram said, "Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

**4** Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." **5** And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

**6** Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. **7** And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it."

Add any new facets of the promises to your list on page 142.

At this time the Lord cut a covenant with Abram, the details of which are found in the remainder of Genesis chapter fifteen. God spoke more of His intention to Abram. He revealed to him that his descendants *would be strangers in a land that is not their own, where they would be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years*. But then God would *judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possession* (Gen.15:13ff). God also confirmed to Abram the exact geographical location of the land He promised would be Abram's and his descendants.

We will skip through Abram's life concerning Hagar and Ishmael, although if you like, you may read about this in Genesis chapter sixteen.

In Genesis chapter seventeen, God appeared yet again to Abram.

#### Genesis 17

**1** Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. **2** And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."

**3** And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, **4** "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5** No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. **6** And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. **7** And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. **8** And I will give to you and to your

**descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."**

List out any additional facets to the promises in the space provided. Many of the same facets are repeated throughout God's dealing with Abram.

Then in Genesis chapter twenty-one, Abraham and Sarah were blessed with the birth of Isaac, the son of promise. Some years later, God gave Abraham one last challenge, or test. When Abraham successfully passed this most difficult test ("*offer up your son, your only son, the son whom you love*" [Gen. 22:2]), God made an oath concerning all that He had promised Abraham, adding a few final details. Read it below, underlining the phrase, "By Myself I have sworn."

**Genesis 22**

**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 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."**

List out any additional facets to the promises in the space provided on page 142.

Now there are some things in this passage of which we need to take note. This is the final portion of the revelation of the promises to Abraham. Note how God began this final portion: "*By Myself I have sworn...*" This is where God swears on oath as mentioned in Hebrews 6:13-18 (note it on page 136). And it is this culmination (in the promises made to Abraham), wherein God swears by His Own Name, to which many, many subsequent passages refer (Ex. 17:16; Deut. 7:8; 13:17; 19:8; 28:9; 29:13; 31:7; Neh. 9:15; Ps. 110:4; Jer. 11:5; Micah 7:20; Acts 2:30, 7:17). **God swore concerning these things, and He will not change His mind.**

Remember that Melchizedek blessed Abraham with the blessings of God Most High, Possessor (Creator) of heaven and earth. Evidently now Abraham had all he needed to come to the understanding of how God might bless him *in the heavenlies and on the earth*. This promise has to do with his seed and their enemies! Notice v. 17. God says,

**"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. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..."**

What will be the two locations wherein his seed will possess the gates of their enemies?

Abraham's seed (both heavenly and earthly) will *possess the gates of their enemies*. This refers to his seed gaining governmental control over a designated territory (*cf.*, Gen. 19:1; Ruth 4:1), in this case, both in the heavens and on the earth. And it will be through this possession of the gates of their enemies (governmental control in both realms [in the heavens and on the earth]), that all the nations of the earth will be blessed through Abraham's seed.

In Hebrews 2:5, the author mentions a coming time when this inhabited earth will no longer be subjected to angels. This would be referring to the time when Abraham's spiritual descendants (the ones *in Christ*) will possess the gates of their enemies, and rule from the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, over the earth; and his physical descendants (descendants through the blood line of Isaac and Jacob) will possess the gates of their

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enemies and will rule from the *earthly* city Jerusalem over the earth. Both realms of descendants will possess the gates of their enemies, and all the nations of the earth will realize blessings through this ministration. This is what the Bible refers to when it mentions *the kingdom of the heavens*. (This is a good thing to keep in mind as you peruse the Bible.)

One last thing before we close for the day. Read through the list you made of the promises God gave to Abraham, then read again Hebrews 6:11-20. See if you are coming to understand more about *the hope of our calling*, and the promises made to Abraham! We should sing praises to the God of Glory, Who is holding for us an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of Glory, if we will but hold fast to this most glorious hope — **the hope of an abundant entrance in the kingdom of God!**

And that is our hope! Think about that for a bit.

### Day Five — Review

I have left today open for review. The things that you have learned this week will aid you in understanding the next several chapters in Hebrews, so it is quite important that you have a good handle on these things. Therefore, I would like for you to spend the day of study in review of this lesson. Learn it well and realize the blessing in it.

At the end of your review, I would like you to turn in your Bible and look up two verses. Write out how these verses relate to what you have learned from this week's lesson. (I know! This may be stretching you. But it is so good for you!)

Romans 4:13

Hebrews 11:8-10

How do these two passages relate to what you have learned this week?

If you are doing commentary work, here is your assignment according to which book you are reading:

Arlen Chitwood's book — Continue with last week's assignment.

Philip Mauro's book God's Pilgrim, continuing reading chapters eleven and twelve.