

**Lesson 20**  
**The Certainty of Salvation**  
**Hebrews 6:9-20**

Our last two sermons on Hebrews six have revealed to us the sobering possibility of apostasy. An apostate is one who has professed faith in Christ and has penetrated to some degree into the externals of Christianity, but he is not saved and will in time leave the Christian faith and go back into paganism or some false religion. Hebrews 6:1-8 tells us clearly that there must be a change of life which accompanies faith in Jesus Christ. No matter what a person professes concerning Christ, Hebrews six teaches that if there is no obvious change in our life style today as a result of our initial trusting in Christ, we have only been kidding ourselves. We are not Christians! Despite the religious activities we have faithfully performed in the intervening years since our professing of Christ, if we are still the same persons in disposition and attitudes, and if we have the same carnal relations and actions to other people as we did before we professed Christ, then we are not Christians. We are still without life - we are dead!

If this is your case, you may be on the verge of apostasy, and if you fall into apostasy, you can never be saved because you have hardened your heart to all the general wooings of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 6:1-8 is a stern warning and one of the strongest passages in the Bible to throw fear into the hearts of those who are mere professors of Christ. I am confident that the author of the Book of Hebrews became concerned that his teaching might discourage weak and baby Christians, causing them to doubt their salvation. Keenly aware of this possibility, the author balances the truth of apostasy with the truth of God's eternal salvation which is the possession of every true Christian. Hebrews 6:9-20 is one of the strongest encouragements to faith found in the whole Bible, and it teaches how the real Christian is secure in the love and grace of Christ.

PERSEVERANCE IN THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION - Hebrews 6:9-12

***“But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.”*** -- The author was convinced that the great majority of those to whom he was writing were not apostates but were genuinely saved. They are addressed as “beloved” because God had fixed His sovereign, redemptive love on them and that love continues forever. These Christians had genuine spiritual works to back up their profession of faith. They had “things that accompany salvation.”

The author is not teaching a works salvation, but is teaching about a salvation which results in works. Men are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ and this is a complete gift from God, but saved men and women have the Holy Spirit indwelling them and working a great salvation in them, and from their lives will flow spiritual good works to some degree. We do not work to keep ourselves saved but we work because we are saved.

***“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown towards***

***His name in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.***” -- God knows them that are His. ***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”*** (John 10:27). And those that are God’s depart from iniquity. ***“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let every one who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness’”*** (2 Tim. 2:19). God knows all the works of His people and He will not overlook even the smallest works done for His glory. These works are the unmistakable fruit that prove the reality of one’s faith, and one day every Christian will be rewarded for these works.

What were these works of the Hebrew-Christians? They ministered to the saints who were being persecuted for their faith, and in so doing were identifying themselves with Christ and His cause. They showed love and concern for others, expressed in deeds of compassion. They spoke words and backed them with actions, for they unselfishly helped others. ***“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death”*** (1 John 3:14).

***“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end ...”*** -- Remember, the great majority of the Hebrew-Christians were babes in Christ, being tossed about with every wind of doctrine and engulfed with doubts about the certainty of their salvation. The author tells them to be diligent or zealously eager in their Christian walk so as to realize the full assurance of their salvation. The “hope” here refers to the Christian’s confident assurance that the salvation he has in Christ is his for all eternity. The Christian has eternal life now. ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”*** (John 3:16). The Christian can have full assurance of this right up to the end of his earthly life. Right up to death a man can know he has eternal life.

Assurance of salvation, from the objective side, comes as we look at the person and work of Christ and realize what He has done for us in grace. Assurance, from the subjective side, comes from the spiritual fruit that flows from the lives of those who are true believers. If we see works, even to some small degree, it is proof that we are Christians. But it is possible to be a Christian and still be troubled by doubts, fears, anxieties and uncertainties about our relationship to Christ. This is why the author wrote Hebrews 6:13-20 -- to assure doubting Christians that they are eternally secure in Christ.

***“That you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”*** -- The way these Hebrew-Christians were to cure their doubts was to believe God and push on in the things of Christ. They were not to be sluggish, slothful and lazy but were to push on to maturity. Through faith and patient endurance, they were to hang in there and stay with their faith in Christ so they would inherit the promises. “The promises” refer to the Old Testament promises but most certainly include the promises of eternal life in heaven with Christ forever. Christians are to imitate the Old Testament saints, for they exercised faith and patience, inheriting eternal life after death. Those who have faith and patience inherit the promises. Those who are exercising faith and patient endurance will have a full assurance of hope.

Christ, through His death and resurrection, has already gained the victory for every Christian.

Christ and heaven are ours right now. We have an inheritance and in time it will be ours, but while we wait to inherit heaven we must exercise faith and patient endurance. We now know that we can progressively defeat sin as we persevere in this life. We are motivated to push on because we know that Christ has already won the victory. It is like the army that hears the enemy is in retreat. This gives new motivation to pursue the enemy because the victory is in sight. Knowing that the victory is ours in Christ, we push harder to experience Christ in the life.

#### ABRAHAM'S PERSEVERANCE IN THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION - Hebrews 6:13-15

***“For when God made the promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.’”*** -- The author picks one Old Testament saint, Abraham, to show how he, through faith and patient endurance, inherited the promise of eternal life. Abraham is called “the father of the faithful” in the New Testament, so to exercise the same kind of faith Abraham exercised is to become children of Abraham and heirs of his promise. God made both a promise and an oath to Abraham, indicating that God’s word can never be broken. First, God promised Abraham when he was about 75 years old that he would have a physical seed that would form a great nation. ***“And I will make you a great nation”*** (Gen. 12:2). God reiterated His promise of a seed, and Abraham believed God.

***“And He (God) took him (Abraham) 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.’ Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness”*** (Gen. 15:5-6).

At the time the promise was made, Abraham had no son. Abraham waited 25 years before he and Sarah had Isaac, God’s promised physical seed. For 25 long, weary years Abraham waited for the fulfillment of God’s promise before it came about. What makes it more amazing is that both Abraham who was 100 years old and Sarah who was 90 were past the age of procreation and children for them was a human impossibility. But God in a supernatural way made it possible for Abraham to impregnate Sarah and the result was Isaac.

Abraham did not see this promise fulfilled immediately. He did not believe this promise because he saw immediate results. Why then did Abraham believe this promise? He was convinced that God could fulfill His promise.

***“In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, ‘SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.’ And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform”*** (Rom. 4:18-21).

Abraham knew God was able, and he rested back in the character of God -- His omnipotence and sovereignty and faithfulness. Abraham believed God and patiently endured for 25 years before

he saw this promise fulfilled. But through it all, he hung on to the character of God. Second, God made an oath to reconfirm His promise to Abraham. When Isaac was a young lad, God put Abraham to a test to see if Abraham really believed God's promise. Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, and Abraham was prepared to do it, knowing that God would fulfill His promise even if He had to resurrect Isaac from the dead. God stopped Abraham at the last moment from sacrificing Isaac, and God gave an oath to Abraham.

***“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, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your descendants (seed) as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies”*** (Gen. 22:16-18).

Abraham proved and demonstrated the reality of His faith by this act of obedience, and God swore on His own character to fulfill this oath.

***“And thus having patiently waited he obtained the promise.”*** -- The Abrahamic Covenant included more than just Isaac in the promise. This covenant was to include physical Jews, Jesus Christ and all the spiritual seed of Abraham who believe whether they be Jew or Gentile. The spiritual aspects of this covenant are fulfilled in Christ and His spiritual seed, and this includes the promise of eternal life to all who believe in God's promise of Messiah.

Abraham believed and patiently endured, and while he did not see all the development of God's promises to him, he did obtain the reality of eternal life at death.

Human reasoning says, “Seeing is believing,” but no greater lie was ever foisted upon the human race by the Devil than “Seeing is believing.” No! The Bible teaches that believing is seeing and without simple faith we have nothing. The man who sees no longer needs to believe, but a Christian walks by faith and not by sight.

GOD'S PROMISE AND OATH CONCERNING THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION - Hebrews 6:16-18

***“For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute.”*** -- Men make oaths to settle disputes and put their character behind them. If they are not kept, a penalty is meted out against the oath breaker.

***“In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath ...”*** -- God desired to prove to all the heirs of promise (that is, all true believers in the Old Testament and New Testament) the unchangeableness of His sovereign purpose. God gave a promise and an oath to Abraham and also to us who are the spiritual seed of Abraham. God has promised from the eternal councils and through His covenant to Abraham to save forever those who come to Jesus Christ by faith.

***“In order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie ...”*** -- God's promise and oath guarantees the eternal salvation of all true believers in Christ who are “heirs of

the promise.” God cannot lie and He is faithful to His Word. As believers in this present age, we not only have the promise but we have the reality of God’s love in His Son. We have the promise that Christ died for our sins and the oath or pledge that Christ rose from the dead. God saves all who come to Christ and He cannot lie.

A few years ago I was dealing with a man about his need of Christ. I had shared the gospel with him and he wanted to receive Christ. This was one of those occasions when I felt that I should have this man pray to receive Christ. He did, but he kept saying that nothing happened to him. I said to him, “Can God lie? Can God go back on His Word? Is God not trustworthy?” I said, “God has promised to save you and you have in simple faith trusted Christ.” Then a big smile came across his face and his eyes lighted up and he said, “I see! I see!” It was at that moment in my opinion that he was genuinely saved.

***“We may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.”*** -- True believers have supernatural encouragement that once they have truly come to Christ, they will never be cast out. Knowing that we are saved forever, we must persevere in the Faith until we have the total reality of Christ either at death or Christ’s coming.

Weary, tired, disillusioned, sin-sick sinners we were before conversion, but someone came and told us that Jesus Christ could give us eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. We in faith fled to Christ for refuge, trusting only in His holy person and His death to save us, believing He gave us eternal life, and the total reality of that will be sometime in the future. We have a certain hope that we shall be with Jesus in eternity. What a glorious hope for us who are pilgrims and strangers on this earth! What a great incentive to persevere unto the end that we might have full assurance of our so great salvation.

#### THE CHRISTIAN’S CERTAINTY OF SALVATION - Hebrews 6:19-20

***“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast ...”*** -- The certain hope of our salvation does not rest in our perseverance but in Christ and He alone is the anchor of our souls. The anchor of our soul is attached to an immovable object, which is the throne of God. Christ, our anchor, keeps us from drifting and stabilizes us in the stormy sea of life. Just as an immovable anchor can keep a ship from floundering on the rocks or being carried out to sea, so Christ, our anchor, keeps us sure and steadfast in this life as we long for our heavenly home.

***“And one which enters within the veil ...”*** -- Now the author does a strange thing. He combines the figures of the anchor with the veil of the temple. The veil separated the holy place from the holy of holies, which was the place where God dwelt in the temple. When Christ died, was resurrected and ascended, the veil was rent and Christ went into the presence of God forever.

In ancient times, large ships could not sail into the harbor without endangering the ship, so the anchor of the ship was put into a rowboat. The ship would be in the mouth of the harbor. The anchor chain was fastened to the ship and the rowboat would take the anchor deep into the place in the harbor where the ship was to permanently anchor. Sometimes they stretched the chain for hundreds of yards. Then those in the rowboat would secure the anchor on some immovable object and those on the ship that was still at the mouth of the harbor would begin to turn a huge

crank and in so doing would slowly pull the ship to the anchor, which was securely fastened. It took strength, courage and discipline to turn the crank but the ship finally came to the right place in the harbor. Christ, our anchor, has gone through the heavens into the presence of God. He has anchored us at God's throne and we know that one day we will be there with Him. Our anchor chain runs from our hearts on earth to heaven and day in and day out we must crank up our chain, knowing that one day we shall be with Christ. It takes strength, courage and discipline but we know one day we shall land safely in the harbor of heaven.

***“Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*** -- Christ is a “forerunner” in that He has gone ahead to heaven before us. The word “forerunner” means “a pioneer” or “a scout” and his job is to prepare the way for others. Christ has already gone to heaven to the very presence of God, and He is preparing the way for others to follow. Who are these? True believers in Christ or heirs of the promise.

## CONCLUSION

God has promised to save forever those who come to Christ through faith. He will do this according to His sovereign purpose, and Christ will not turn away one sinner who acknowledges his sinfulness before a holy God and flees to Christ as his refuge of salvation.

God has declared He will grant the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who trust Christ. God cannot lie. He will be faithful to His promise! Will you reject Christ and call God a liar? Or will you receive Christ and find that God's promise is true? There is certainty of salvation for all who truly believe in Christ!