

Sunday October 16<sup>th</sup> 2011  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Twenty One

1). Heb 6:17 *Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

a). We had seen last week that God had determined to demonstrate over and above that which was necessary the ‘immutability of His counsel’.

b). And we had seen how this phrase referred to the unchangeable desire of the Trinity in counsel together to give to Abraham the promise of rulership of the earth. Something which of itself is completely in line with God’s stated purpose for the creation of Man in Genesis 1:26.

c). And the immutability of His counsel was to be demonstrated ‘to the heirs of [the] promise’ – those eternally saved Christians who are looking for the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham which is theirs through faith – Ro 4:13 *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

d). So in order that the promise to Abraham, that came through His counsel, should be absolutely sure He ‘confirmed it by an oath’.

e). Both the promise and the oath are ‘immutable’ – impossible to change – and both bear witness of God’s intent by establishing every word – ‘By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established’.

f). Because the promise and the oath establish every word, and because the promise and the oath are immutable the ‘heirs of promise’ would have absolute assurance that ‘it is impossible for God to lie’. God cannot deny Himself – 2Ti 2:13 *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

g). Nu 23:19 *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*

h). 2Co 1:20 *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.*

i). This absolute assurance then in the faithfulness of God through ‘the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie’ provides ‘strong consolation’ for those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them.

j). What we would see then from v18 is that the ‘strong consolation’ is for those who have made the conscious choice to flee for refuge, for the purpose of laying hold of the hope that is set before them. The ‘strong consolation’, although potentially available to all, is specifically provided for those who are clinging to the hope.

k). This is a picture we have seen in foundation many times - Ru 1:14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. 19 ¶ Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem.*

l). Those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope and the heirs of the promise would be one and the same individuals – again in the strictest sense all Christians, because of their eternal salvation are potentially heirs according to the promise, but as we have already seen in Romans 4:13 the promise is only to be realized ‘through the righteousness of faith’ - Ga 3:7 *Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

m). Only those who are Christ’s, who are ‘of the faith’ can be counted as Abraham’s seed – And being Christ’s and ‘of the faith’ would not refer to our positional standing ‘in Christ’ which is common to all Christians, but would rather take us to what we read in – Joh 15:4 *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

n). It is through the righteousness of faith as a result of abiding in Christ that we shall bear much fruit, and only through the bearing of fruit will we, in that Day,

ask what we desire and it shall be done for us - Ru 3:8 *Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9 And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative." 10 Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.*

2). Jas 2:23 *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

a). As we have probably gathered by now, it is believing God with respect to the promise that He gave to Abraham, that which we now know as the Word of the Kingdom, that He confirmed with an oath, that is the key to unlock the door to gain entrance into the Millennial Kingdom. This is what 'the faith' is all about, and this is why Abraham is the father of faith and the father of all those who believe in like manner - Ro 4:16 *Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 ¶ (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 ¶ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

b). Now in God's own commentary on Abraham we see that Abraham 'contrary to hope, in hope believed', we see that he was not 'weak in faith'; 'he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith.....being fully convinced that what He promised He was also able to perform'.

c). And if we 'are of the faith of Abraham' then we also would not be 'weak in faith', and we would 'not waver at the promise of God through unbelief', and we would be 'fully convinced that what He promised He was also able to perform' 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

d). And what have we seen again this morning, but that God has provided for us two immutable things in which it is impossible for Him to lie that we might have 'strong consolation' – that we might have a fortress against doubt and discouragement. God's promise and God's oath demonstrating the immutability of His counsel should afford us all the protection we need against the apostasy we are warned about in - Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

e). The physical descendants of Abraham committed just such an apostasy at Kadesh Barnea, and those who are the descendants of Abraham by faith may do exactly the same, and if we should do exactly the same we would show ourselves to be sons of the bondwoman and not sons of the free - Ga 4:22 *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman...30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

f). We would show ourselves to be an Orpah Christian and not a Ruth, and would find ourselves in fulfillment of that which we read in - Heb 12:8 *But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.*

3). Again, speaking of Abraham - Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

a). It is without doubt that Abraham was fully aware of the New Jerusalem with respect to the promise he had received and in like manner it is, metaphorically speaking, the New Jerusalem that is the city to which we have fled for refuge. It is

the very idea contained in this City that speaks of our hope – the hope of the Kingdom which is to come, the hope of a position of rulership with Christ in that Kingdom, the hope of the salvation of our soul, the hope of our inheritance, the hope of our involvement in all that is promised in Christ's return.

b). And we have fled to the New Jerusalem in order to lay hold of that hope after a similar fashion to Ruth making the journey to Bethlehem to lay hold of the hope of the kinsman redeemer and after a similar fashion to those who fled to the cave of Adullam to be with David in the hope of the overthrow of Saul's kingdom 1Sa 22:1 ¶ *David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. 2 And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.*

c). David had already been anointed to be king of Israel in Saul's stead and God having declared this to be so David, and those who were with him, had to do no more than patiently endure until God would bring to pass that which He had said. And it is that which God had said concerning David and the earthly realm of the kingdom of Israel that we could see as the anchor of David's soul – 1Sa 26:8 *Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!" 9 And David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?" 10 David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11 "The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed.*

d). We can see here that it is David's complete trust in the Lord's ability to perform that which He had promised that keeps him from taking matters into his own hand and giving in to the desires of his flesh.

e). In the same way we have our hope as an anchor of the soul that is both sure and steadfast, knowing that God is absolutely able to perform that which He has promised that will restrain us from trying to help God out and keep us from giving in to the desires of the flesh as we patiently endure under the trials and tribulations of this life - Heb 10:36 *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

f). Our hope that is the anchor of our soul cannot be made to falter no matter what test is brought against it as it was forged in the council chamber of the Triune God of the incorruptible metal of the promise and the oath and has its mooring in the Rock of our Salvation, Who enters the Presence behind the veil.

4). *20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

a). And it is here in v20 that the imagery of the earthly tabernacle becomes the revolutionary reality of the Heavenly Tabernacle.

b). Within the service of the earthly tabernacle it was the high priest alone who was able to enter the holy of holies and he would do this once a year on the Day of Atonement. There were 12 onyx stones on the shoulders of his priestly garment and 12 onyx stones on the breastplate of the same garment inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel. The high priest was their representative and this was the closest any other Jew ever got to entering into the presence of God. He was their representative, entering where no one else could follow.

c). And in our scripture in v20 here is Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek entering the presence of God behind the veil as a ‘forerunner’ – as the One who has blazed a pioneer trail into the presence of God for all who will have the courage and humility to follow in His steps.

d). This shows a radical departure from the experience of the first century Jew, and makes absolutely clear that the earthly tabernacle was but a shadow of the reality that exists in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven.

5). *Heb 10:19 ¶ Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

a). Jesus as the forerunner has ‘consecrated for us’ [lit. ‘initiated for us’] entrance into the Holy of Holies in the Heavenly Tabernacle and He has done this by providing a ‘new and living way...through the veil, that is, His flesh’.

b). The word translated ‘new’ is a compound word in the Greek language that means ‘newly-slain’ – the word ‘living’ demonstrates not only the resurrection, but also that only through ‘death’ can there be ‘life’ in the power of the Spirit – the word ‘way’ is the Greek word ‘hodos’ which means a road.

c). So with this in mind perhaps we can hear again the Lord’s words in –

Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

d). Our Lord then has provided the road that we are to follow that will take us into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God where our hope, which according to that which we read in 1 Peter 1:3 is - *a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*, will be realized.

e). The veil that we must pass through into God's presence is described as 'His flesh' because it is only through that which is pictured in His suffering in the flesh, dying in the flesh and having the flesh of His side opened on the cross that we can enter into the presence of God in that Day.

f). It is through the tearing of the flesh of the Son of Man, Christ in His humanity, that the road to the salvation of the soul is opened to us.

g). Mt 27:50 ¶ *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,*

h). It is following the Lord yielding up His spirit that the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom demonstrating that, that which was merely a shadow of that which was to come had now been fulfilled in Christ. For the first time, in the temple in Jerusalem, it was possible for anyone entering the temple to see behind the veil, signifying that all who would follow Christ would now have access to the Holiest of all.

i). And for ourselves here we see that it is only by following Christ that we will enter the presence behind the veil - It is only through the death of our flesh, that must be 'newly-slain' each day as we present ourselves a living sacrifice that we may have access – it is only through the death of self now that we will find life then.

j). And all of this or course has a spiritual reality now as by faith we come boldly to the throne of grace, '*having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,*' that in that Day will have a literal fulfillment as in bodies of flesh and bone we will stand in the Heavenly Tabernacle and if called out from the called we will stand in the presence of God in the Holy of Holies as a joint heir with Christ.

k). And as we see, Christ has been able to initiate this new and living way as He has become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

6). Heb 7:1 ¶ *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now*

*consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.*

a). And here as we begin Chapter 7 our writer now demonstrates the superiority of the reality of Christ's Priesthood, according to the order of Melchizedek, over the priesthood according to the order of Aaron, which merely pointed to that which was to come.

b). The account that our writer is referencing here can be found in –  
Ge 14:18 *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the 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 tithe of all.*

c). This whole incident is a picture of what will happen at the end of the Tribulation, when the One who Melchizedek pictures will come forth after the battle with the kings of the earth and bless the descendants of Abraham with respect to rulership of the earthly portion of the Kingdom - Lu 22:18 *"for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

d). But for now we will concentrate on that which God wants to teach us through this enigmatic character who we know as Melchizedek.

e). What we know then is that he was 'a Priest of God Most High'. His name literally translated means 'king of righteousness' and He was also king of Salem [Jerusalem] – king of peace. He is then a king/priest.

f). Now as those we have come to call the Semitic nations all have their origin in Abraham, then Melchizedek would have to be what we would classify as a Gentile.

g). By giving Melchizedek a tenth part of the spoils of war Abraham acknowledges that Melchizedek is a priest of God and also acknowledges his superiority to himself.

h). The blessing Melchizedek speaks over Abraham has to do with rulership of the heavens and the earth - *"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and demonstrates the faithfulness of God in bringing this about And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.*

i). And Melchizedek's bringing out bread and wine inevitably takes us to the night of the last supper and that which is symbolized in the bread and the wine, His body and His blood, that Jesus shares with His disciples

j). And it is these very elements, the bread and the wine – His body and His blood that speak of Christ's access to the Holy of Holies and the means by which we may all enter into that same place.

k). And this same Melchizedek is described as - *3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.*

l). This is needless to say an intriguing description that has given rise to much speculation about him – however, our understanding of exactly what is taught here will have to wait until next week – if the Lord is willing.