

“He Sware By Himself”

“For when God made promise unto Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise” (Heb. 6:13-15).

The word “for” in the beginning of this quotation ties these three verses to the preceding ones. In the preceding passage an appeal was made to the Hebrews that they not be sluggish but imitate others who through faith and patience inherited the promises. He then gave a specific instance of one who inherited promises given through just such faith and patience: their father Abraham! The specific, quoted promise which Abraham received had to do with material promises: God would bless Abraham and multiply his seed. The passage is found in Genesis 22:16f. The Genesis passage includes the promise of the Messiah but the abbreviated quote in Hebrews speaks of Abraham’s natural seed. It was twenty-five years from the time God made His promise of children to Abraham before Isaac was born and while Abraham did not live to see his posterity reach the numbers they did in Egypt at the Exodus, the birth of Isaac and then Jacob assured Abraham that God’s promises would be literally fulfilled.

Abraham wavered not and the promises were secured to him just as God had said. This was a demonstration to the Hebrews that God would fulfill His promises to them; promises which were also incorporated in God’s promise to Abraham, the Messianic promise.

“For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. Wherein God, being minded to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath ...” (Heb. 6:16f). Again, “for” appears in the text which indicates that the material which follows still is linked with the subject presently being dealt with: patience in service in order to receive the promise. In this latter instance the writer alludes to a common practice of man to insure certainty and confidence in taking of an oath. In relationships between two parties, certain matters are regarded to be true and either will be done or not done by the invoking of an oath which binds a party to his word. When men take oaths, it is recognized they are swearing by someone greater than themselves (let atheists take note) by the calling of the third, higher person to witness the oath they have made. Because men are assured by the receiving of an oath, God yielded to this infirmity of man, swearing to Abraham that He would fulfill His promises. However, in the case of God, there is none greater, so He

swore by Himself. we see frequent reference of God's oaths to men commonly appearing thus, "*As I live, saith the Lord.*"

"That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to the take hold of the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18). The word "*immutable*" indicates something unchangeable, that which cannot be voided. Here two immutable things are mentioned, in which in both things, it is impossible that God lie. Those two things are: 1) His promise, and 2) His oath. God will keep His word! He did for Abraham. He promised He would for the Hebrews. He will for us!

These two immutable things are our encouragement and the foundation of our hope. This hope is the anchor of our soul, and is an anchor which will hold in the storms of life, so long as we have confidence in God's promises and His oath!

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