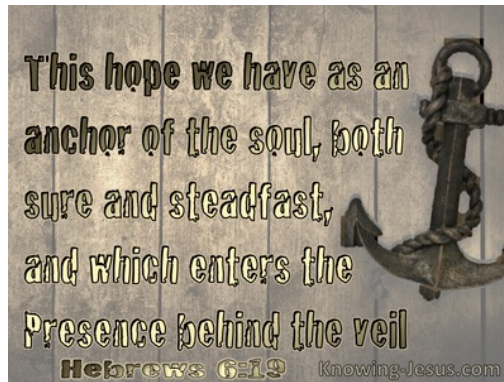


Chapter 4:1-11**"AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL"**

Today's lesson covers **Chapters 6:13 to 7:28** in the book of Hebrews. It focuses on the following:

- 1) God's oath regarding His promises;
- 2) Hope as the anchor of our souls;
- 3) The priesthood of Melchizedek; and
- 4) Jesus as our High Priest

Last week Shirley shared a wonderful lesson on the six foundational truths found in Chapter 6 and gave us a detailed explanation from the word of God on why we, having truly accepted Christ as our Savior, can be assured of not losing our salvation.

In **vs. 6:13-18**, we're told about the oath God swore to Abraham. As we know, an oath is a confirmation of an agreement. During the traditional marriage ceremony, the bride and groom swear an oath to each other before God. We've all heard oaths sworn in court before someone is to take the stand to testify always followed by the words, "so help me, God." When God made an oath with Abraham, He swore by Himself, God, because there is no greater authority on which to swear. And while it's true that Abraham had to wait 25 years to see the promise of God come true, nevertheless, God had confirmed His promise to Abraham with an oath, and He was faithful to that oath. It is not unusual for there to be a lapse of time between God giving a promise and the believer seeing it come to completion. Waiting on God can be a trying time, but it can also be an exercise in faith and patience, which can only serve to build character in the believer who is able to persevere, stand firm and endure.

*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint."* *Isaiah 40:31*

The *"two immutable things"* mentioned in these verses are God's word and His oath. The fact that God never changes and it is impossible for Him to lie are a source of great encouragement and consolation for us. They allow us to have that hope spoken about in **v. 19**. In Numbers 23:19, we read, *"God is not a man that He should lie ..."* In Titus 1:2, Paul, in addressing his letter, says he is an apostle of Jesus according to the faith of God's elect *"in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began ..."* God cannot lie ... the promises He has given us in His word are true, and they are what we can place our hope on; that hope becomes the anchor of our souls.

In **v. 20**, we read where Jesus is described as the *"forerunner"*. The Greek for this word was descriptive of smaller boats that would be sent ahead into the harbor where the larger ships could not enter. These little boats would carry the anchor through the harbor and then drop it there, thereby securing the larger ships. This is a picture of Jesus acting as OUR anchor ... He goes before us, entering where we cannot go on our own and, once there, He secures our anchor so that we are able to follow Him.



Because this life is full of unexpected trials in which we're like ships often tossed to and fro on a sea of turbulence, we need an anchor ... we need Jesus to be that anchor. He's the only One that can keep us on a steady course and protect us from the dangers of violent storms and everything else the world throws at us as we sail toward our goal ... heaven.

Poem: "The Anchor of My Soul" by Connie Campbell Bratcher

Most of **Chapter 7** deals with the priesthood of Melchizedek. We'll begin with **vs. 1-9**. This is the only book in the New Testament that mentions Melchizedek, but we know the story in the Old Testament of how Melchizedek went out to meet Abraham upon his return from successfully rescuing Lot after he had been taken captive, as well as all the goods and servants which had been seized. Abraham acknowledged him as king and a true priest of the living God and even gave him a tithe. The account is in Genesis 14:18-20.

"Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tithe of all."

Just who was Melchizedek? The name means, "My King is righteous." Many scholars have had various theories such as: he was an angel or the Holy Ghost, or the son of Noah, and some even entertaining the thought that he was Jesus Himself. The most popular opinion, however, is that he was indeed a Canaanite king who reigned over the land of Salem (later renamed Jerusalem), that he worshipped the one true God, and that God had placed him in that position to be a type of Christ, thereby earning the title, *"priest of the Most High God."* We know that Abraham recognized him as such. He represents both priest and king, just as Jesus is our High Priest and King. Let's look at the ways Melchizedek is a type of Christ:

Melchizedek was a king, ruling over and governing his people	Jesus is our king, anointed by God, Who has placed the government of His people upon His shoulders
His title was King of Salem, which means "peace"	Jesus is known by one of His names as The Prince of Peace
The name Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness"	Jesus is our righteous king; He has become our righteousness
He was priest of the most high God	Jesus is our High Priest, and it is only through Him that we can have reconciliation with the Father
He met Abraham after his battle, refreshed him with bread and wine and then blessed him	Jesus meets us in our times of conflict, refreshes us with His spirit and blesses us
Abraham gave him a tithe .. "a tenth of all" as an expression of his gratitude and in recognition of his righteous superiority	When we give our tithe, it, too, is an expression of our gratefulness to Jesus for all He has done and as a sign of our subjection to Him as King

The rest of this Chapter 7 deals with the need for a new priesthood – not from the lineage of Aaron and the Levites, but in the form of Jesus, according to the order of Melchizedek.

Let's begin with **vs. 11-17**. The Hebrews were struggling with the idea of returning to the laws and rituals of Judaism. They still thought that maybe, just maybe, the law under the guidance of the Levitical priesthood could somehow help them achieve perfection. This is what they had been taught but, as the author of this letter points out to them, if the law had been able to perfect them, there would have been no need for a Messiah. The priesthood had to change; in other words, the Levitical law was out, and Jesus had come to replace it. Jesus, however, was not from the lineage of the Levitical priests, but from the tribe of Judah – Judah, from whom it had been prophesized that the Messiah would come. *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh* comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."* Genesis 49:10 *Shiloh is another word for "the One to whom all royal authority belongs" and, of course, this refers to Jesus the Messiah. Also, in reading the genealogy of Jesus in the third chapter of Luke, we find references to Judah in the lineage of Jesus.

In the first chapter of the book of John, we have the account of how Jesus found and called His first disciples. In Chapter 1:40-42, we read one of those accounts: *"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus."* As we read that, we can only begin to imagine the excitement there must have been – the long awaited, long promised Messiah was here, and the disciples couldn't wait to tell others. In sharing the gospel with non-believers, it's good to remember that air of excitement. We have each experienced finding Jesus the Messiah, and He has washed us with His blood and sealed us for eternity. We, too, should be excited to bring others to Him. We are sharing Jesus with them ... Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the One who can forgive their sins and bring purpose to their lives ... the One and only One who can lead them to the Father and give them eternal life!

In **vs. 18-20-22**, we have an explanation of why the old law did not and could not work in bringing us to relationship with God, and why Jesus is the better hope for drawing near to the Father.

The law, with all of its goals toward perfection, was wrong because it placed demands on people to show their religiosity in an external manner – it was all for show; it was fleshly. As we've discussed before, it was not possible for people to keep all the rules and rituals of the law. When Jesus came and established his new covenant with us, he did so under the auspices of God Almighty. In Psalm 110:4, the Lord speaks to Jesus and says, *"The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."*

Vs. 23-25 make another distinction between Jesus and the other Levitical priests. According to Levitical law, when a priest died, his position was passed down to his eldest son, and that son would pass it on to his son, and so on. This is not the case with Jesus. Jesus lives forever, and He is our Priest forever; that never changes. He never changes. He lives forever, and our hope is to live with Him for all eternity.

The chapter ends with **vs. 26-28** giving a summary of why Jesus is far superior to any priesthood. He has no need to offer up sacrifices as the Levites did. He not only offered the sacrifice – HE WAS THE SACRIFICE! Unlike priests who were made up of men with weaknesses, Jesus, our High Priest, was perfect: sinless, undefiled and without blemish, he was our perfect sacrifice ... obedient to do His Father's will.

"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25