



Conducted by
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"I am a young Christian and have recently been reading the Hebrew letter, but I find some things difficult to understand. Could you please tell me what the two immutable things are which are mentioned in Heb. 6:18?"

There is absolutely no doubt at all in my mind that Christians both young *and* old need to understand the Hebrew letter if they are to understand the superiority of Christ over the Law. If we are to enhance our faith then we *must* understand the significance of the atonement and the intercessory work of the Son of God.

Before we begin, we must explain one or two terms used. When reference is made to the two immutable things, the scripture continues, "in which it was impossible for God to lie." Now this does not mean that at some time there is the *possibility* that God *will* lie; indeed, we read in Titus, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that *cannot* lie, promised before the world began." (Titus 1:2). We should rather look upon God as *guaranteeing* the things which He has said.

Immutable has the meaning of 'changeless.' When we refer this to the counsel of God, as in Heb: 6:17, it means that those things which God has said, together with the promises He has made, are absolutely and irrevocably changeless.

The two immutable things

We now know that the two things, whatever they are, cannot and will not be changed. If these things are beneficial to the human race, and particularly to Christians, then we should have a strong consolation.

In Heb. 6:13 we read of a promise made to Abraham. This takes us back to the time of Abraham when he was about to offer his only son Isaac. God said, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Genesis 22: 16-18).

This question of God's oath is quite interesting. The writer of Hebrews says, "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife" (Heb. 6:16). In other words, the oath helped to *show more fully* the irrevocable nature of God's promise, and because He could find no one greater than Himself, *He interposed Himself* by an oath. That should end all strife on the matter; God's will must inevitably be done.

The two immutable things, then, are the promise made to Abraham and the oath by which He confirmed it. It seems to me, though, that the question cannot end here.

The ratification

The strong encouragement to hold fast is based on hope which is as "an anchor to the soul." Hope is not to be viewed as an affair of chance; true hope is the realisation

of final destiny. This hope is based on Jesus, who has been our advance guard into the Holy of Holies and into heaven. To enter the Holy of Holies He must have been a high priest, but He was not as the Levitical priesthood; they, "having infirmity," offered sacrifices for *themselves* as well as for the people. The Son, being sinless, offered *Himself* for the people.

It is my considered opinion that the promise and the oath imply two other changeless things, namely, the eternal kingship and priesthood of the Son. Jesus is both priest and king. The Hebrew letter says, "he was made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (6:20). Melchisedec was both King (of Salem) and priest of the most high God, and as such he was the type of Christ. "He was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (7:3). This is a negative way of saying that he was eternal; this again is typical of Jesus.

We must fully understand the offices of king and priest, and realise that these are not two independent offices. Jesus has power and authority to save those for whom He died; the nature of His throne emphasises not only His authority, but also the efficacy of his priestly office; it is "a throne of grace." (Read Heb: 4:14-16). We see in Jesus, then, our Saviour and our Intercessor. Not only did He offer Himself to relieve us of our sin, but "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." The Writer to the Hebrews challenges the traditional Jewish belief, namely, that the Law was perfect; "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the Law) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order (rank) of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron." (7:11). The law was imperfect because it had no power to cleanse, sanctify, and bring people to God; a change was needed, and so the writer goes on, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of law also" (7:12). As Paul puts it in his Roman letter, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The new law was to be after the new creation; the old law was weak through the flesh and could never achieve that which Christ achieved by His expiatory sacrifice through the priesthood which He Himself enjoyed.

Conclusion

There is obviously much more which could be said relative to this subject, but it seems important to me that we should understand that the promise which God made to Abraham so long ago, and which he confirmed by an oath or guarantee of Himself, that these two unchanging things should find their true expression in the unchanging Christ of God, Jesus our king and great high priest. As Paul taught the Corinthians, "I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor: 2:1,2). Further to this, I would advise a detailed study of the Hebrew and Roman letters.