

# God swears an oath

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] Well, good morning everybody and welcome to this pre-recorded service here from Calvary Church! on the 21st of February. Calvary Church is a small-ish independent Baptist church on the south! coast of England in Brighton. We're on the south coast just directly south of London.

Normally back as it were a year ago now in normal times we were a group of 70 or 80 people meeting together on a Sunday morning but here we are still in lockdown and meeting together by Zoom.

By God's help and God's mercy he's kept us and we are looking to him both for today and for all future days. My name is Philip Wells. I've been working for the church here for many years as a full-time pastor elder and this morning we're considering or considering we're continuing our series in the letter to the Hebrews and if you want to catch up on the past episodes of the series I think a wonderful link will appear as if by magic on this screen and it'll show you where the YouTube channel is and you can look back for the previous episodes. So we're going to be looking at that again this morning and the order of events is up here on the screen and we'll follow that through. So we've done the welcome and introduction and in a moment we're going to sing but let me read to you from Ephesians chapter 1 from verse 3 which is a good introduction to any Christian meeting and also a good introduction to the the song we're going to sing. This is the Apostle Paul, one of the first Christian missionaries, one of the people commissioned by Jesus Christ to speak the gospel into our world and he speaks about himself and his fellow apostles and he says, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ for he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the one he loves.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding and he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head even Christ. In him we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

[3:33] In order that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory and you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

So they believed as the apostle had believed and they had the same blessings as the apostle. Chosen, predestined, redeemed, forgiven, all these things to the praise of his glory and that's what this song says, come praise and glorify our God to the praise of his glory.

So let's sing this. Come praise and glorify our God, the Father of our Lord.

To the praise of his glory. He has in heavenly realms His blessings on us for For pure and greatness in His sight He destined us to be And now we've been adopted through His Son eternally To the praise of your glory To the praise of your mercy and grace To the praise of your glory You are the God who saves Praise and glorify our God Who gives His grace in Christ In Him our sins are washed away Redeemed through sacrifice

In Him God has made known to us The mystery of His will That Christ should be the head of all His purpose to fulfill To the praise of your glory To the praise of your mercy and grace To the praise of your glory You are the God who saves The praise of your glory and grace The praise of your glory and grace The praise of your glory and grace For we believe the world And through our faith we

have a seal The Spirit of the Lord The Spirit guarantees our hope Until redemption's done  
[6:39] Until we join in endless grace To God the free and one To the  
praise of your glory and grace To the praise of your mercy and grace To  
the praise of your glory You are the God who saves To the praise of your  
glory To the praise of your mercy and grace To the praise of your glory  
You are the God who saves So having sung to the praise of your glory  
Let's pray to the praise of your glory And let's do what we've become  
accustomed to doing When I've led in prayer That we should say the Lord's  
Prayer together Which is on the screen by my head here So let us pray

We come in praise to God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit The Triune God Who is  
before all ages The Alpha and the Omega The beginning and the end The glorious Creator The  
Maker of Heaven and Earth And all that's within And the Maker of people Even people like us And  
the Redeemer of people like us We praise you for your purposes To redeem sinners From their sin  
and lostness And bring them to be with you Restored in glory In time to come We thank you for your  
love For your church We thank you for this choosing Of people Not because they've impressed you  
Because we've done nothing but offend you

And not because we're particularly clever Or particularly beautiful Or particularly wise Or particularly  
strong Or particularly wealthy But you just chose us Because it pleased you To choose us And we  
thank you for that deep mystery That you chose us before the creation of the world To be holy and  
blameless in your sight We thank you that all this takes place in Jesus Christ And you have been  
pleased To work through him To save through him To redeem through him To heal through him  
And to bring all things To their appointed conclusion In the Lord Jesus Christ We thank you for  
making him The whole focus And source Of our salvation And indeed of our very life We thank you  
for Jesus Christ And all that he did Particularly for his death upon the cross

And his resurrection and ascension And we think of that awful death In which things were  
terminated In which things were finished And dealt with through death And as we come to you We  
ask that our old lives Our old selves Our old motivations Might be put to death There at the cross As  
it were And we pray that our lives Might be energised And motivated And derived from The  
resurrection power Of Jesus Christ That we might be found To be risen with him And living From  
the power Of his resurrection We pray that his new life Might be at work within us Powerfully by the  
Holy Spirit We lament the fact That even as the spirit of Christ Dwells within us So too sin Still  
dwells within us And this vexes us

Very very much And we look forward to the day When there will be no more sorrow No more sin No  
more sighing And all will be well In that day when you make all things new So we look up to you  
Lord With gratitude We lift our hearts to you In praise And thanksgiving And as you have brought us  
Into your kingdom We pray that your kingdom Will be extended We pray that your glory Will be  
more widely known We pray that you will be seen To be great And greatly to be praised And we  
pray that In our world We pray that For our nation And our nations We pray that In our town In our  
city We pray that In our homes We pray that In our own hearts And lives May your kingdom come  
And your will be done On earth As it is in heaven And even as we say that We come to pray that  
prayer

[11:46] We pray Our Father in heaven Hallowed be your name Your kingdom  
come Your will be done On earth As it is in heaven Give us today Our daily  
bread And forgive us Our sins As we forgive those Who sin against us And  
lead us not Into temptation But deliver us From evil For yours Is the  
kingdom The power And the glory Forever and ever Amen Well now we're  
going to have A reading From Genesis Chapter 22 Thank you Christopher  
Reading this to us This passage is quoted In the Hebrew section That  
we're going to look at And this passage Is a remarkable incident In the  
life of Abraham Who was a man chosen by God And who learnt To follow God  
In faith Not knowing where he was going to

But trusting that God Would lead him And in this particular Incident God tells him To trust him In the  
matter of Taking his son To offer him As a burnt sacrifice And Abraham says Okay I'll go along with  
that But in the end God intervenes As we shall hear And says No We won't have A human sacrifice  
That comes much later And Rather disappointingly We'll go back And have an animal sacrifice But  
one day One day One day But for the time being There's an animal sacrifice And as you Will hear

This ends up With God Making a Huge promise To Abraham And securing it By making an oath So enough From me Thank you Christopher For reading Genesis 22 Verses 1 to 18 Genesis chapter 22 Verse 1 Some time later

God tested Abraham He said to him Abraham Here I am He replied Then God said Take your son Your only son Isaac Whom you love And go to the region Of Moriah Sacrifice him there As a burnt offering On one of the mountains I will tell you about Early the next morning Abraham got up And saddled his donkey He took with him Two of his servants And his son Isaac When he had cut enough wood For the burnt offering He set out for the place God had told him about On the third day Abraham looked up And saw the place In the distance He said to his servants Stay here with the donkey While I and the boy Go over there We will worship And then we will come back to you Abraham took the wood For the burnt offering And placed it on his son Isaac And he himself Carried the fire And the knife

As the two of them Went on together Isaac spoke up And said To his father Abraham Father Yes my son Abraham replied The fire and the wood Are here Isaac said But where is the lamb For the burnt offering Abraham answered God himself Will provide the lamb For the burnt offering My son And the two of them Went on together When they reached The place God had told him about Abraham built an altar There and arranged The wood on it He bound his son Isaac And laid him on the altar On top of the wood Then he reached out his hand And took the knife To slay his son But the angel of the Lord Called out to him From heaven Abraham Abraham Here I am He replied Do not lay a hand On the boy He said Do not do anything To him Now I know That you fear God Because you have not Withheld from me Your son

Your only son Abraham looked up And there in the thicket He saw a ram Caught by its horns He went over And took the ram And sacrificed it As a burnt offering Instead of his son So Abraham Called that place The Lord will provide And to this day It is said On the mountain Of the Lord It will be provided The angel of the Lord Called to Abraham From heaven a second time And said I swear by myself Declares the Lord That because you have Done this And have not withheld Your son Your only son I will surely bless you And make your descendants As numerous as the stars In the sky And as sand On the seashore Your descendants Will take possession Of the cities Of their enemies And through your offspring All nations on earth Will be blessed Because you have obeyed me Thank you for that reading We're now going to sing We're going to sing A song Says by Thomas [16:49] Oliver's Based on a Hebrew Doxology The God of Abraham Praise Who reigns Enthroned above The ancient of eternal days And God of love So having thought about Abraham And his God And his faith in God We're going to sing this song This includes the verse Which says He by himself Hath sworn We on his oath depend We shall on eagle's wings Upborne To heaven ascend There we shall see his face His power we shall adore And sing the wonders Of his grace Forevermore So this is One nine nine The God of Abraham

Praise Who reigns Enthroned above The ancient of eternal days And God of love The Lord the great I am I earth at then confess We bow before his holy name Forever blessed To him we lift our voice At his supreme command On earth we rise To sing the joys At his mighty hand We all on earth For save His wisdom Faith and power The God of Israel We shall make Our shield And task Nature's strength And earth and hell Withstand At his command We fight Our way To Cain's land The walk free deep we pass With Jesus in our view And through the howling wilderness Our path pursues

He by himself has sworn We on his love depend We shall on eagles' wings Subboard to heaven ascend There we shall see his face His power we shall adore And sing the wonders of his grace Forevermore There dwells the Lord our King

The Lord our Righteousness Victorious over death and sin The Prince of Peace On Zion's sacred height His kingdom he maintains And glorious with his saints in light Forever reigns Triumphant hosts on high His thanks eternally And holy, holy, holy cry Great Trinity Tell Abram's God and us [21:59] What mighty hymn we raise For power and majesty be yours And endless praise And having sung about Abram Let's read this reference in Hebrews Chapter 6 verses 10 to 20 This refers back to the passage we read in Genesis And Vicki's going to read this to us So thank you so much Vicki for reading Hebrews 6 verses 10 to 20 God is not unjust He will not

forget your work And the love you have shown him As you have helped his people And continue to help them We want each of you To show this same diligence to the very end So that what you hope for

May be fully realized We do not want you to become lazy But to imitate those Who through faith and patience Inherit what has been promised When God made his promise to Abraham Since there was no one greater For him to swear by He swore by himself Saying I will surely bless you And give you many descendants And so After waiting patiently Abraham received what was promised People swear by someone Greater than themselves And the oath confirms what is said And puts an end to an all argument But God wanted to make the unchanging nature Of his purpose very clear To the heirs of what was promised He confirmed it with an oath God did this So that by two unchangeable things In which it is impossible for God to lie We who have fled To take hold of the hope set before us

May be greatly encouraged We have this hope as an anchor For the soul firm and secure It enters the inner sanctuary Behind the curtain Where our forerunner Jesus has entered on our behalf He has become a high priest forever In the order of my Jesus' deck Amen The passage talked about certainty It talked about Where we can rest our souls As it were To find an anchor To find safety Security And certainty And we're going to sing a song Number 781 If you're interested in the hymn numbers In the praise book Which in English says Now I have found the ground Wherein my soul's Shore My soul's anchor Shall remain And it's translated by John Wesley But the original writer Was As I read it in English

Called Johann E. Roth But it might be completely different In the original language So I put up there The First line of the song Or what it's known as In In German The writer Was greatly affected By Revival In Germany He was To do with the Moravians And remember The Moravians Were people who influenced John Wesley We shall sing Number 781 Now I have found the ground Wherein Sure my soul's anchor Shall remain The wounds of Jesus

For all my sin Before the world's Foundation Slain Whose mercy Shall Unshaketh Stay When Heaven And Heaven Have Fled Away Father Your Everlasting Grace A scanty thought Surpasses Far Those Who Melts With Tejriness Your Arms Of Love Still Open Are Written In Sinners To Receive That Mercy They May Taste And Live!

[27:02] O Love Your Father Blessed Abyss Has Drowned My Sin Internally Covered Is My Unrighteousness No Spot Of Guilt Remains On Me While Jesus Blood Through Earth And Skies Mercy Repound There's Mercy Christ Jesus I Know Who Has Died For Me Here Is My Hope My Joy My Rest To If When Hell Assails I Flee In Him Alone I Shall Be

Blessed The Wasted Doubt And An An An Fear Mercy Is All That's Written There!

To! To Waves And Storms Break Overhead Though Strength And Health And Friends Are Gone Though Joys Are Withered All And Dead And Every Comfort Is Withdrawn Stead Fast On This My Soul Realize Father Your Mercy Ever Dies Based On This Ground I Will Remain Though Hearts They Fill And Flesh Decay This Anger Shall My Soul Sustain When Our Sound Nations Mered Away

Necessal Pilate Shall Prove Love With An Ever Lasting Heart So That Song Originally Translated From German Says This Is The Ground Wherein Sure My Soul's Anchor Shall Remain The Wounds Of Jesus For My Sin Before The World's Foundation Slain Whose Mercy Shall Unshaken Stay When Heaven And Earth Have Fled Away So It's Very Gospel Very Much Pressing The Button Of How Somebody Can Be A Christian And Where Their Soul Depends And Where Their Certainty Comes From So That's Really An Evangelical Gospel Song Well That's The Song And Now We're Going To Hear What's

Written In Hebrews So We'll Hand Over Well We're Going To Come To God's Word So Let's Pray God In Heaven Please Speak To Us So That We May Receive The Strong Encouragement That Your Word Has For Us May The Speaker Receive That Encouragement And May All Who Hear Receive That Encouragement In The Measure And Intensity That You Desire Help Us Oh Lord Amen Well We're Going To Think About This Passage It's Hebrews 6 From Verse 13 To Verse 20 And I Want To Introduce This By Asking This Question About Being Sure And Just Think About The Idea Of Being Sure And Being Certain Just Think About That In General First Of All How Can We Be Sure Well All

[31:17] Sorts Of Situations How Can We Be Sure That The Rolex Watch That I Brought Off Amazon For £34.99 Is Genuine Seems Very Cheap For A Rolex Watch How Can I Be Sure That The Vaccine Is Safe How Can I Be Sure Well Those Are Things But What About People How Can I Be Sure Of People And When It Comes To People It Particularly!

Things To Not Just Things As They Are Now But How They Will Be What The Future Holds So How Can I Be Sure Of People How Can I Be Sure That Someone Will Turn Up For The Hoped For Meet Meeting That They Said They Would Turn Up To So It's There In The Diary I'm Going To Be There Are They Going To Be There Question Of Time And Future Time How Can I Be Sure Of The People From Whom I Bought My £99 Garment I Sent Them The Money But Will They Actually Send The Garment I'm Waiting To See Whether That Hoped For Garment Arrives I Suppose You Could Put It The Other Way Around As Well But The People Who Sold The Garment Are Waiting For The Payment To Arrive Depends Which Way Around You Do It There's An Agreement! So A Handshake Picture There And Then A Much More Trust People And Here's A Particular Thing How Can I Trust That My Husband Or Wife Won't Cheat On Me In The Future And Then You Might Ask Well What Was The Nature Of The Agreement That There Was To Begin With Was There A Covenant Was There A Commitment In The First Place That I Can Rely On Or Look To So How Can We Be Sure Of Things And Of People What Are The Answers To Those Sorts Of Questions I Mean On Amazon You Perhaps Look On The Feedback Record The Track Record What Have Other People Said About This Seller And Their Wares So That Brings Us Back To People What Have Other People Experienced Over The Course Of Time The Vaccine What Do People Say Who See And Are In A Position To Make

A Judgment On This People Who Have Evidence Of Things In Action So You Would Be Looking For A Wide Variety Of Qualified People To Act As Witnesses In The Sense Of Witnesses Credible People That You Have Some Standing That You Can Believe What They Say They Got The Right Experience They Are Reliable That Sort Of Thing Is What You Need That Is What The Scientific Community Is Supposed To Be Is A Community Of Witnesses That Are Credible Experienced And Reliable And When It Comes To The Spouse Well You Would Ask The Question What Sort Of Person Are They What Is Their Track Record What Sort Of Character Do They Have And Is This A Character In Which I Can Trust And We Never Get Away From The Idea Of Trust Putting Faith There's Always A Bit Of A Risk In Faith Isn't There It's Not Looking Backwards To What's Happened It's Looking Forwards What Shall I Trust For The Future And Then If You Think Of The Garment Seller Well

In The End You Can Go Back To The Law So We Have A Consumer Protection Act And I Don't Know I'm Not A Legal Expert Am I I'm Just Using Common Sense Knowledge That We All Have There Is A Legal System And There Is Recourse To The Courts Of The Land In The End You Could Take Them To Court And Say Well You Know Paid For This Where's My Garment So Let's Take Those General Thoughts And Think How Can We Be Sure Of God And God Does Want Us To Be Sure Of Him He Is Not A Stuttering God Who Finds It Difficult To Express Himself He Is A Speaking God Who Says Things That We Can Be Sure Of And For Example He Invites Us To Look At His Track Record He Says To His Old Testament People And To Us Look What I Did In Egypt That Shows The Sort Of Person I Am I Redeemed My People

[35:40] From Slavery From Egypt I Took Them Into The Years Of Wandering I Promised Them Rest And I Gave It To Them And I Showed Them That There Was More Rest To Come And I Gave Them That And There Is Still Rest To Come And In The New Testament We Have This Extra Advantage Of Being Able To Look Back At The Cross And The Resurrection And To See The Love Of God The Character Of God The Glory Of God Portrayed At The Cross On Golgotha And We Can Also See The Empty Tomb That Action In History Which Shows Who Jesus Christ Is And To Be Sure God Has Given Witnesses You Are My Witnesses He Said To Ancient Israel You Will See The Way I Redeem You Will Experience It You Will Tell About It With Credibility

And Experience And Reliability He Said It To Israel And The Same Thing Came To The Apostles You Are My Witnesses Said Jesus To Them I Chosen You I'm Going To Show You Things It's Your Job To Pass That On With Reliability And Credibility And In A Secondary Sense Christian People Give Witness To Jesus Christ Don't We Talk About Christian Witness And We Pass On What

We've Experienced And Known In Our Lives And God Shows Us The Sort Of Person He Is And In Many Ways Which I'm Not Going To Go Into Just Now He Impresses Upon Us His Particular Strengths Of Character If I May Put It That Way He Specializes In Chesed And Emet Love And Faithfulness That's Who He Is He Is The God Of Steadfast Love And Faithfulness And That's The Sort!

That We Can Trust And In My Earlier Examples I Mentioned Recourse To The Law The Legal System And Having Said Those Things About God And Given That General Introduction This Is Where We're Going To Focus This Morning On The Legal System So I'll Put Some Scales There To Denote The Legal System Now What Sort Of Things Does A Legal System Have Now I'm Sure It Varies From Country To Country And System To System But The British System Which Is The One I'm Familiar With Certainly Has Echoes And Has Had Influence Across The World In Lots Of Ways So A Legal System There Are Serious Statements Things Said With Care And Carefully Chosen Words Things

That You Really Mean So We Sometimes Watch Some Of These American Dramas Criminal Dramas And People Get Deposed Which I Think Means You Get Set In Front Of A Camera To Say Statements A Deposition Something That You Really Have Thought About You Really Careful What You Said And You Really Mean It And You Stand By It And I Think We Have Something An Affidavit Again I'm Not An Expert On This But An Affidavit Is Surely Something You've Written Down It's Reliable And You Can Sign It Have It Witness This Is What I Mean This Is What I Saw This Is My Commitment And I Stand By This So The Legal System Depends On These Serious Statements And Just Taking That Thought A Little Bit Further If You Go Into A Court You Swear On Oath I Think I've A Little Picture Of Somebody Holding Up Their Hand And Swearing On Oath Raise Your Hand Hold The Bible Raise Your Hand And

Repeat After Me I Declare That The Testimony I Shall Give Will Be The Truth The Whole Truth And Nothing! Speak And They're Sworn In They Swear On Oath To Tell The Truth Now They're Saying Something Quite Special And They're Involving Something They're Involving Themselves In Something Quite Serious When They Swear On Oath Let's Say It's A Murder Trial So Somebody's Life Or Death Could Hang On The Truthfulness And The Accuracy And The Completeness Of Such A Statement And You Notice So In Swearing Like This The Person Is Saying Well If I'm Telling The Wrong Thing I Expose Myself Explicitly To The Full Penalty Of The Higher Power Before Whom I Speak Upon

[40:36] Whom I Depend Was What I Was Going To Say Before Whom I Speak I'm Speaking Conscious That A Higher Power Is Watching And Listening And If I've Got It Wrong That Higher Power I Give Them Permission To Visit On Me The Penalty For My Wrong Speech And Here's Another Thing In A Legal System A Dispute Resolution So You Bought Something Off Ebay For 99!

99 Or You Bought Something From An Online Seller And I Paid The Money But I've Got No Garment So The Dispute Resolution Has To Establish These Facts Did You Pay The Money Well We Saying I Didn't Receive The Garment And I Suppose That Depends On The Sort Of Society You Have Whether People Are Generally Inclined To Tell The Truth Whether They Have A Conscience About This Whether A Society That Respects There Being A Higher Authority And People A Little Bit Conscious

Of The Need To Tell The Truth And I Guess If There's A Society That Doesn't Have Much Respect For Higher Authority That People Might Try And Get Away With That Anyway Bit Of An Introduction About A Legal Context Now The Passage In Front Of Us Is Full Of Legal Vocabulary!

I Found This Out By Looking In The Commentaries And I Think The Guy Who Wrote The Commentary Knew What He Was Saying There Was Lots Of Evidence For It He Backed It Up With! Of References So What Legal Vocabulary Have We Got Here So First Off Verse Thirteen This Idea Of Swearing When God Made His Promise To Abraham Since There Was No One Greater Of Him To Swear By He Swore By Himself That's Verse Thirteen So There's A Swearing And In Verse Sixteen Men Swear By Someone Greater Than Them So Swearing In Verse Sixteen And In Verse Seventeen Isn't It Or Perhaps I've Got The Verses Mixed Up Because God Wanted To Make The Unchanging Of His Purpose Very Clear To The Heirs Of What Was Promised He Confirmed It With An Oath I Picked Up On Oath We'll Come Back To That Word In A Minute!

Yeah There We Are The Word Oath So Swearing An Oath Two Related Thoughts And Indeed Related Words Legal Vocabulary!

[44:03] By Someone Greater Than Themselves So This Idea Of Swearing By Someone Or Something And I'm Going To Pause A Little Bit I've Got Some More Things To Say About Legal Vocabulary But Let's Just Pause A Little Bit And So What's The Difference Between Swearing And Saying So I'm Just Going To Pause For A Minute Going To Come Back To Legal Vocabulary But Let's Just Stop On This Matter What's The Difference Between Swearing And Saying Now God Said In Verse 14 He Said Something But He Said It In The Fashion Of Swearing An Oath Now What's The Difference Between Swearing And Saying It Seems To Me That Swearing In This Technical Sense Involves Calling Upon A Higher Authority And It's Calling Upon A Higher Authority With The Consciousness That They Can Exact

A Penalty If What Is Said Under Oath Is Incorrect So You Promise To Somebody I Promise! So There's Somebody Holding Up To Swear And I Think Also To Swear In A Sense Has The Possibility Or A Degree Of Linkage With The Idea Of Curse So There Are A Number Of Places In The Bible Where Somebody Says Something Of An Oath Nature And It Involves A Curse So Eli Says!

To Samuel May God Deal With You Be it Ever So Severely If You Don't Tell Me What God Said To You So He's Sort Of Calling A Curse On In The Form Of This Oath Ruth Chapter 1 Verse 17 May The Lord Deal With Me Be it Ever So Severely If Anything Separates You And Me So She's Making An Oath Of Commitment But Making It In The Sense That May There Be A Bad!

Penalty On Me From God If I Don't Keep It The Time When King Saul Rashly Swore An Oath And Bound His Soldiers By An Oath That Nobody Should Eat Anything Until Certain Phase Of The Battle Had Been Reached And Soldiers Said To Jonathan Your Father Bound The Army Under An Oath It Was Oathed The Army Under An Oath It Was One Of These Duplications Of The Word An Oath Squared Lest Be Any Man Who Eats Food Today So Again An Oath Linked With A Curse And Here's The Thought That When God Swears Which Is What He Does Here He Binds Himself By The Highest Possible Authority Which Is Himself And He Puts Himself In Line For His Own Curse If There Is Default In Swearing As It Were God Calls On Himself!

[47:21] The Curses That He Could Bring If He Were To Default On What He Is Swearing It It's Quite A Thought Isn't It So We Just Stopped To Think About Swearing An Oath We Were Looking At Legal Vocabulary!

In The Passage And Let's Carry On With That So It Says In Verse Sixteen It Puts An End To All Argument And I'm Told That This Is Actually A Technical Term A Disputation A Legal Disputation You Know A Tribunal That This Whatever It Might Be That This Matter This Procedure Is The End Of Such Dispute Resolution You Actually Get To The End Of It And Settle It Through This Method And Then There Is Here The In Verse Sixteen The Oath Confirms What Is Said Or In A More Clunky Way Unto Confirmation The Oath This Again I'm Told Is A Legal Wording This Is The Legal Guarantee That Would Be Used By Sign A Contract And It Would Say

At The Bottom Unto Confirmation Of This Oath Da Da So Again This Is Saying You Can Be Sure In This Legal Fashion And In Verse Seventeen It Says He Let Me Just See What Does It Say In Verse Seventeen He Confirmed It With An Oath So Another Couple Of Words Here The Confirm Word Word Is Translated Confirm Usually Means To Step In And Mediate But When It's Used In This Connection It Means To Intervene To Settle The Matter With An Oath To Intervene To Settle The Matter With An Oath And In Verse 17 Because God Wanted To Make The Unchanging Nature Of His Purpose!

Very Clear So Again To Make Something Clear In Normal Speech Would Just Be To Show But In Legal Terms It Is To Make Such An Argument As To Make Something Crystal Clear To Set This Out In Totally Clear Water Tight Terms And That So I'm Told Is The Thought Behind This Expression In Verse 17 God Wanted To Make The Unchanging Nature Of His Purpose Very Clear To Make Clear And Then Another Legal Term Unchangeability So we Have It In Verse 17 The Unchangeable Nature Of His Purpose Or The Unchangeability Of His Will And Then In Verse 18 You Get Two Unchangeable Things So again Technical Language Immutability

Irrevocable Something You put In A Contract That Nobody Can Come Back Later And Renegotiate Nobody Can Come Back Later And Say Oh I Didn't Really Mean That Or We're Not Going To Bother With That Or Annull It You Can't Do That As I Might Have Said The Other Time Just Inherited Something From Auntie And It Is Possible To Change That So That It Could Be

Reassigned To My Heirs So That Could Be Changed And Hopefully The Solicitor Won't Charge Too Much For Doing It To!

[51:30] do that. I'm not going to change these particular things. These are things I've sworn to.

God will not renegotiate his purposes, or the purposes that he's swearing to here are of that particular nature, that they're not going to be renegotiated, not going to be annulled, not going to be wriggled out of. God says, this is it, signed on the dotted line.

So what are these two unchangeable things? The two unchangeable things. Now, I'm going a bit off on my own here because I haven't found this in the books, but I'd like to suggest that we have the oath to Abraham, and we're going to come to Melchizedek very soon, and maybe that is the second unchangeable oath type thing. So we had to Abraham, which was read to us, and we'll come to that in due course. Blessing, I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply you. But we do have another oath, which is in Psalm 110, to Melchizedek. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. And that's something, isn't it? God is saying this isn't just something that might possibly happen, and there's a bit of a hint of this. But he's saying, this is a definite thing.

Here is something you can really hang your soul on. There will be such a priest. I'm not going to change my mind on this. So a couple of things there about an unchangeable oath. And lastly, as we're thinking about the legal context of this passage, perhaps I'm stretching this a little bit, but it seems to me that there's a place of legal appeal mentioned here. So in the English system, I believe we have a Supreme Court like the Americans have. It used to be the House of Lords, but I think now we have the Supreme Court. I'm sure somebody can correct me on that. But this is a place that you go to. This is your final hope. Obi-Wan Kenobi. Anyway, verse 19. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. A hope, an anchor, and again some words here, firm and secure. Firm is a negative. It doesn't fail. It's not like something that gives way. It does not give way. It's firm and it's secure.

And that's another confirmation word. Reliable. You can depend on this with your entire soul. You can rest your life on these promises. And of course, the place that he's referring to is not anywhere on earth. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. It takes place in heaven. So we've just tried to fairly briefly go through and see the legal background and the legal vocabulary here. And we conclude from this brief survey that God is, in this passage, saying something in a very definite and very insistent way.

[55:16] And he's saying that the things that he has said, the contract that he is discussing, the promises that he is making, are made with the greatest possible seriousness and can be completely relied on and won't be wiggled or wriggled out of. And so much so, says God, that the highest power in the universe, the highest court in the universe, is called in to adjudicate in this case. There is nothing more certain. There is no contract more definite than this, because the very highest, the very highest authority in the universe is called upon in this case. And the thing is, it involves us.

I got a letter from my solicitor this morning. It came in quite a different sort of envelope. I thought, oh, this looks a little bit tough. I wonder what this is. I always wonder if it's a traffic violation.

Anyway, I opened it. It was a letter from my solicitor to me.

And it's unusual, isn't it? Because usually you write letters to solicitors. Why don't you get on and do so and so? But here the solicitor is writing to me, dear Philip. And this contractual discussion is aimed at us. It involves us. Something has taken place and is taking place in the courts of heaven, which involves us. So now I'm going to do a Tim Keller thing and just try and bring it all together in three things. So what am I to be sure of? How can I be sure?

And where can I be sure? It's not quite as good as Tim Keller, is it? But it's after the style of what can I be sure of? How can I be sure? And where can I be sure? So let's try and wrap this up by looking at those things. So what am I to be sure of? What promises and commitments and contracts are we actually talking about? Well, in verse 13, when God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, I will surely bless you

and give you many descendants. And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

It was a promise consisting concerning many descendants. And if you look back, which is what we read earlier, through your seed, all the nations on earth will be blessed. That's a definite thing.

[57:43] All the nations on the earth will be blessed. And there will be many descendants, not a few, or as we've got it here, blessing, I will bless you. Multiplying, I will multiply you. Blessing and multiplication. And we're told that Abraham received that after waiting and testing. Well, he certainly waited because the particular context of it was the birth of Isaac and the offering of Isaac. So that was certainly testing. And that was certainly waiting. And through the process of waiting and testing, Abraham received, well, a degree of the promise. He didn't receive the whole thing.

And what I want to say is that in that promise, not just terminating on Abraham in his lifetime, but going on into the future, on globally, in an explosive fulfillment, this is the promise that catches us up. If we belong to Jesus Christ, this is the promise that has swept us into its purposes.

This is the promise that we're believing. This is the exact promise that comes to believers through Christian, through Jesus Christ. This is Christian salvation he's talking about. And without wishing to go too far off track, this is what Paul says about this. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that by faith we might receive, and he says it's the promise of the Holy Spirit. It's more than that as well. But this is Christian salvation. He says this is what we're talking about here. This is the thing that you can be certain of.

How can I be sure? How can I be sure? Well, what I want to say is in verse 17, because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised. See, it wasn't just Abraham that was meant to be, sure. Abraham was a person listening, and God promised to Abraham, but the writer here says it doesn't just affect Abraham. It affects the heirs, the followers of Abraham, those who are children of Abraham, and plural, heirs of what was promised. And it says, and we thought quite a bit about the structure of this sentence, because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised.

He abundantly wanted, he really, really, really wanted to make this abundantly clear to the heirs of salvation, crystal clear to us if we are believers. So insert your own name in the contract there. He wants to make it abundantly clear believer to you. Put your own name in there. He wants you to understand this and to be in no doubt about it whatsoever. That we are heirs if we believe the promises in the same process as Abraham via waiting and testing. If we are believing through waiting and testing, we are heirs of that promise. And he says, don't doubt it. I want to make this abundantly clear. I don't want there to be any room for doubt. And you see, well, learning to trust God is a lifelong experience, isn't it?

[61:37] There's so many things that put us off trusting God. So many things that fog us up in the brain department and in the faith department. Our circumstances. Well, how can God be for me?

How can God be promising me anything for my circumstances? Look at what we've all been through. How can God be promising me anything? Look at my sin. Look at what I've done in my life. Look at even the sin that still dwells within me now. And sigh. Look what I can see. What I can see on the surface of things. In just about every department I look, there's something which just puts me off believing that God really means what he says. And this says, I want you to be abundantly clear. How sure can we be?

Very sure. Let's come to another answer to this question. How sure can I or we be? It's verse 18. God did this so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. I just want to think about greatly encouraged. What it actually says is to have strong encouragement. And that strong is a sort of strength word. You know, it's a sort of working out word, you know, training with weight word. That sort of strength. And God says, I don't want just to express sympathy with you. I mean, God is sympathetic. And he says, I know what you've been through. I know what it's like. But he's not just saying, oh yeah, I know what it's like. He's not just commiserating and sitting down next to you and saying, yeah, awful, isn't it? He's not just commiserating, but he is offering strong

encouragement. This is sort of muscle encouragement. This is steel cable encouragement. This is reinforced concrete under your feet encouragement. This is strong coffee encouragement. This is stimulus encouragement so that we may have strong encouragement. And the encouragement is the paraklesis word, getting by your side, not just to put an arm around, although that's a great thing that the Lord puts his arm around us. But who says, yeah, now, come on, make strong those wobbly knees and weak ankles. Get up. Press on. Fight on. Strong encouragement.

And we need strong encouragement, don't we? Because each of us could say, well, here's my story. Here's the life I have. Here's the life I've had. And you just fill in a blank here. You say, look at my background. Look at the family that I started off with. Look at the sins that I've had done to me or the sins I've done to other people. Look at the bad experiences I've had.

[64:57] Look at the disappointments I've lived with. Look at all the letdowns. I mean, those are negative things. You could be saying, actually, lots of positive things in my life. But it's the negative things that get to us, isn't it? And we could go all through those and say, well, that's, you know, that's the situation. And God says, OK, well, I'm not going to argue with you about those things.

But I want you to know, I want you to absolutely sure that not a single one of those things affects the depth and certainty of my promises to you in the slightest.

None of those things affects the depth and certainty of my promises to you in the slightest. I want you to have strong encouragement and be abundantly clear on this.

So how sure can I be? I don't know whether I mispronounced it earlier. How sure can I be? Where can I be sure? Where can I be sure? Well, certainty has a place where the buck stops.

Let me just try and explain what I mean by that. So something's gone wrong in your purchase on eBay, on your online purchase or something like that. You say, well, what can I do about this?

[66:18] And you look on the website, the bit where it said terms and conditions that you just clicked through and you said yes. Without reading, you go back and read them. And you say, OK, now, I'm sure this can be sorted because it says it on the website.

And the website has a link to the Dispute Resolution Centre. And the Dispute Resolution Centre is under the law of, well, it used to be the EU, but now it's going to be the UK, isn't it?

And the law of the UK is linked to, well, where it used to be the House of Lords. I think it's now the Supreme Court. Somebody put me right there. And I have a chain that I can follow through.

And the end, I can get justice. If I can't get it here or here or here, I'll get it here. And you will find me on my knees outside the House of Lords or the Supreme Court saying to my lawyers, you get in there and I'm counting on you to uphold my case in the highest court of the land.

And that's where my hope is. That's where the solid ground is under my feet. That's where my anchor is. And for the believer, we're told that it's not the Supreme Court or whatever court it is.

[67:39] But it's in verse 19. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.

He has become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. So it's our anchor, our final place where we rest our case is outside this world.

It's inside the curtain in the holy temple in heaven. It's at the right hand of God. That's where Melchizedek is, isn't it? I sit at my right hand and my lawyer, my advocate is the priest king, also known as Melchizedek.

And this is Jesus, my forerunner, my advocate gone into heaven for me. Where can I be sure? I can be sure where Christ is at the right hand of God.

Well, that's our thoughts on Hebrews 6, 13 to 20.

[68:50] And I'm always ready for that question. Did he say anything this morning? What did he say? Did he say anything this morning? Well, I think he did say something this morning.

Well, to be more precise, the passage says something. God is saying something. And he's saying to the waverer, oh, wavering, shall I, shan't I?

Was this for me or not? You can't be sure of God's promises in love for you. Believe them. You can be abundantly sure.

This is confirmed stuff. There is nothing surer than this. And this passage speaks to the downcast. You can be sure of God's purposes in love in Christ for you.

Oh, yeah. You feel low and down. And God says, I totally understand that. And the Lord Jesus, who feels for us, says, I totally understand that.

[69:52] But that is not an excuse for not believing the promises of God. You can and should be sure of God's purposes in love in Christ for you.

And even to the guilty conscience, the person saying, you know, my sins just come home to me and I feel foul and disappointed and conscience struck.

And like in the prodigal son, the father waits for the sinner to turn back.

Yeah, come back. Turn again. Get back up. You can be sure of God's purposes in love in Christ for you.

You can be sure. Amen. Well, we've heard God's word. And let's pick up that theme of an anchor.

[71:03] Let's pick up that theme of solid hope. Let's pick up that theme of trust in the name of Jesus. The song we're going to sing is 779.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. No merit of my own, I claim, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

His oath, his covenant and his blood support me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.

And it also says, in every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds and will not fail. Great song to close with number 779.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood.

[72:18] And it also says, in every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds and will not fail. And it also says, in every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds and will not fail. No merit of my own, I claim, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

When darkness fails, his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace.

In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds and will not fail.

Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Savior's love.

Through the storm, he is Lord, Lord of all. He loves his covenant and his blood.

[73:30] Support me in the rising flood. When all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.

I trust his righteous character. His counsel promises and power.

His name and honor are at stake. To save me from the burning rain.

Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Savior's love.

Through the storm, he is Lord, Lord of all.

[74:42] When the Lord comes, his voice shall sound. Oh, may I then in him be found.

Known in his righteousness alone. Known in his righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.

Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Savior's love.

Through the storm, he is Lord, Lord of all.

Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Savior's love.

[75:48] Through the storm, he is Lord, Lord of all.

Let's close with a prayer. May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant, brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

And may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Amen. Good to be together, even in this peculiar way. But I'll just now say goodbye. Goodbye from me. Bye.

Bye.