

(9) Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things --- things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His Name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

(13) For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” And thus, Abraham, having waited patiently, obtained the promise.

(16) For people swear by something greater themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So, when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

(19) We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Think on these things:

- 1) Vs. 9 is a bit like a “therefore” statement, calling to mind the discussion of faithfully saved or unfaithfully lost, God’s productive crop or Satan’s thorns and thistles, in verses 4-8. “Though we speak in this way....” What about “your case, beloved,” what does the writer say about them? What are the “better” things (a Hebrews theme)? Do you enjoy these as a believer?

For these beloved... _____

Better things belong to... _____

- 2) Since we are not saved by good works, does God care about them? Consider Ephesians 2:8-10. Remember Hebrews 4:9-10, where to enter “God’s rest” we must stop advancing our own works before Him. Good works are a service --- not a means to become saved --- a proof of our faith. Check out James 2:14-18.

- 3) What is the desire of the writer for these readers (two concepts, v. 11), to keep them from becoming “sluggish” in living their faith? Who are they encouraged to imitate?

Desire 1 - _____

Desire 2 - _____

Imitate? _____

- 4) We all know the story of Abraham and his patience to receive God's promise for his life. Let's see if we can calculate the years. How old was Abraham when he left his homeland? How old was he when Ishmael was born through Sarah's servant girl, Hagar? How old was he when Isaac was born to Sarah at an impossible child-bearing age? How many years between leaving home to Isaac's birth (test your math skills)? See Genesis 12:4; 15:4; 16:16; and 21:5 for the answers.

How old leaving his homeland? _____ How old with Ishmael's birth? _____

How old with Isaac's birth? _____ How many years from leaving home to Isaac's birth? _____

- 5) How much "faith" would it require from you to wait this many years for God to keep His promise to you? What is a good descriptive word to hold on this long to God's promise? Sometimes, the stories on the pages of the Bible camouflage the passage of time...!

- 6) Why do people swear oaths? We have to look carefully to find the two unchangeable things about God's promise to Abraham's descendants through Isaac (v. 18). God desired to convince the Israelites about the "unchangeable character of His purpose" (v. 17).

Why do we swear oaths (v. 16)? _____
Unchangeable #1 (v. 17b) - _____
Unchangeable #2 (v. 18a) - _____

- 7) God's character and word are unchangeable. See Romans 11:1, 28-29 and Hebrews 13:8. How should this truth impact us who have turned to God for refuge in this life (v. 18b)? What imagery is presented in v. 19a to describe its effect on our souls?

- 8) Our hope here allows us to enter what place (in prayer, Hebrews 10:19-23), which in Tabernacle days was only open to the High Priest? Are you **bold** and comfortable enough to do this?

People and situations I want to pray for this week: