

Why Would God Bind Himself with a Oath?

[Hebrews 6:13-20](#)

Hebrews, Day 21

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 patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than 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. 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. - Hebrews 6:13-20, ESV

"Go ahead and let go. I've got you. I promise I won't let you go."

"But I'm scared, Daddy. I can't."

"Trust me, Son. I swear, I won't let you fall. I promise."

Conversations like this used to take place between my now-14-year-old son and me when he was younger and terrified of coming down ladders. He sometimes wanted to go into the attic of our new house in South Carolina, and he would never have a problem going up into the attic. Coming down was a different story. He was paralyzed with fear, as was my now-11-year-old son. I would have to vow oaths and make promises to get them to trust me, to get them to release their death grip and let me help them.

After reading the first 12 verses of Hebrews 6, you may be feeling afraid. If you take seriously the warning of the opening verses and then consider yourself in light of the three-fold test of the middle of the chapter, you may be feeling very uncertain. How can you know you are truly in Christ and bearing fruit, and not just in the covenant community, fitting in with those around you but not really united to Christ? Perhaps you see your own struggles with sin and your lack of fruitfulness, and you are scared.

What can you do with your fear? Thankfully, God answers our anxiety. He tells us to flee to Him for refuge. He invites us to bring our confusion, our doubt, and our fear and flee to Him. But how can we be sure that if we flee to God for refuge, He will accept us? How can we be sure He will save us and keep us?

To give us assurance, to strengthen our confidence, God binds Himself with an oath. Think about that for a moment: God doesn't owe us a refuge. He doesn't owe us anything but judgment and condemnation for our sin. Yet far from condemnation, He offers us not only a refuge but a refuge secured by strong confidence by binding Himself with an oath to save all those who come to Him by faith in Jesus Christ.

God has no one higher than Himself by whom he can swear, so He simply says, "Surely, I will . . ." God first makes a promise, and then he guarantees that promise with an oath. The oath referred to here is probably the covenant ceremony God performs for Abraham in Genesis 15. But the oath God makes in Genesis 15, He fulfills on the cross, where Jesus hung bloody and torn for us. God has made a promise and guaranteed it by the blood oath of His Son!

The certainty of God's promise and oath - two things in which it is impossible for God to lie - should give us strong confidence. God's promise and oath, fulfilled in Jesus, should give us such strong hope that it anchors our souls. When I brought by boys down that attic ladder, I was not going to drop them or let them fall. Knowing that allowed them to let go and come down. Will we let go of our anxiety and rest in Christ? Will we trust Him to be the sure and steadfast anchor for our souls?