

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN LIGHT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

X. God's Encouragement To Overcome Spiritual Hardness

(Hebrews 6:9-20)

I. Introduction

- A. A number of the members of our Church have come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, and they often seek support in Biblical truth to counter the strong, errant indoctrination they experienced in their past.
- B. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to counter the errant traditionalism of first century Judaism that was similar in theological thrust to much of Catholicism, so we study Hebrews for edification in this matter.
- C. Having warned against spiritual hardness in reverting back to errant Judaism in Hebrews 6:1-8, the author in Hebrews 6:9-20 encouraged his readers to overcome such hardness (as follows):

II. God's Encouragement To Overcome Spiritual Hardness, Hebrews 6:9-20.

- A. After warning his believing Hebrew readers to avoid the hardness of reverting back into errant Judaism, the author of Hebrews stated that he and other Christian leaders were convinced of better things and "salvation" in the sense of their victory over reverting to errant Judaism, Hebrews 6:9; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 796.
- B. God was righteous and would thus not forget the readers' work and love exhibited in Christ's name in that they had ministered and still ministered to fellow Christian believers, Hebrews 6:10.
- C. The author and his associates desired that each reader might show an earnestness to remain committed to Christ that they not be sluggish in continuing to remain immature and vulnerable to the temptation to revert to errant Judaism, but through faith and patience be rewarded by God for their steadfastness, Hebrews 6:11-12.
- D. To illustrate this point, the author of Hebrews referred to the Hebrew patriarch Abraham "who received an oath from God, the promise that assured the multiplication of his seed," Hebrews 6:13-15; *Ibid.*
 1. God's promise to multiply Abraham's seed mentioned in Hebrews 6:13-14 was given in Genesis 22:17-18 after Abraham had offered up Isaac in accord with God's order and the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, had kept Abraham from slaying his son on the altar on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1-14).
 2. Thus, "after Abraham had patiently endured (the test involving Isaac), he obtained the promise" of the great multiplication of his seed, *Ibid.*, p. 797. The words "patiently endured" (v. 15 KJV) render the Greek term *makrothumias*, "the ability to hold one's feelings in restraint without retaliation against others," *Ibid.*
- E. The author of Hebrews then shifted from the illustration of Abraham as a model of living by faith to discuss the oath God had made with Abraham for the encouragement of Christians in general, Hebrews 6:16-20 *Ibid.*:
 1. Significantly, God's Genesis 22:18 promise to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham's seed carried "messianic aspects," an important point for all Christians, Hebrew and Gentile alike (*Ibid.*).
 2. Thus, the author "affirmed that the promise entailed was sure, not only to Abraham, but also to the Christian heirs of what was promised," an encouragement for his Hebrew Christian readers to go on in the Christian faith with no need to revert back to errant Judaism, *Ibid.* The author explained that "in human affairs an oath puts an end to all arguments, so too there can be no argument about this expectation" of messianic hope for all believers of all nations "since God confirmed it with an oath," Hebrews 6:16-17.
 3. However, going beyond just the stability of that promise that was made by an absolutely truthful God, the Lord confirmed that promise by taking the oath by His own name, Hebrews 6:17b with Genesis 22:16!
 4. In summary, then, by two immutable things, (a) the impossibility of God to lie, and (b) by His giving His oath by His name, we believers in Christ have a strong consolation in God's assurance of His promise to Abraham about His "seed," Messiah Jesus, that provides great blessings for *Christians*, Hebrews 6:18.
 5. This great, encouraging hope is a hope we *Christians* have as an anchor of assurance to the soul, a hope that is personified in Christ Who has entered within the veil of the heavenly tabernacle to make atonement for our souls as our Forerunner and eternal High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, Hebrews 6:19-20.

Lesson: *The author of Hebrews encouraged his Hebrew Christian readers to overcome the temptation of spiritual hardness to revert back to errant Judaism by following the example of patriarch Abraham. Father Abraham endured the test of offering up his son Isaac and received God's great promise of Messianic blessings in his "seed." That promise is secured by (a) God's truthfulness (b) along with His oath in His own name that we might have full confidence of God's richest blessings in Christ in not having to revert to some errant theological system.*

Application: *May we be encouraged to mature in Christ instead of reverting back to some other faith, for God's full blessings are assuredly and only in our Lord Jesus Christ.*