

- c. What vision does Revelation 7:9 give us of the end God had in mind when he made the promise? (📖 Gen. 22:18)

5. What enabled Abraham to believe God's promises? (Heb. 11:8)

What enables us to believe God's promises? (2 Cor. 1:20-22)

6. What sorts of situations come to mind when you hear this passage speak of giving a sworn statement or taking an oath?
7. The act of swearing doesn't add any truth to a statement or make it *more* true, and God didn't need oaths to prove his word true or his character reliable.
- a. Why was God in his mercy willing to confirm his promise with an oath as a person would? (v. 17; Ps. 103:13-14)
- b. God's gracious gift of his oath is not meant to be for only Abraham. Who else benefited from his oath? (vv. 17, 18b)

Unchangeable

"The two unchangeable things are God's promise/purpose and his oath."¹

8. Reread verses 17-18. With these verses in mind, read and meditate on Numbers 23:19. What effect does meditating on God's trustworthiness have on you?

9. Anchors hold ships firm and keep them from drifting, especially through strong currents, rough waves, and storms.
- What hope “anchor” did Abraham have in the storm he faced? (Rom. 4:18–22)

- What hope “anchor” do we have that we will inherit what has been promised to us? (Rom. 4:13–17, 22–24)

10. In verse 20 Jesus is called “our forerunner” and “a high priest.” A forerunner is “one who goes on ahead in order to open up the way for those who follow after.”³ Where has our forerunner and high priest gone ahead of us? (vv. 19–20)

11. Why is it now safe for us to follow our forerunner into the holy of holies, or Most Holy Place? (Heb. 10:19–23)

Forerunner

The word translated “forerunner” in verse 20 has its roots in Greek sailing terminology: “The picture is that of an ancient sailing vessel finding its way through the narrow entrance to a harbor. This was one of the trickiest maneuvers the captain of a ship had to make...To minimize the risk, the olden-day skipper would lower the ship’s anchor into a smaller boat, which would then be rowed through the narrow entrance of the harbor. The anchor would then be dropped and the ship, with sails down, would be pulled past the obstacles, through the narrow opening, and into the safety of the harbor.”²

The Inner Sanctuary behind the Curtain

When the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus has entered “the inner sanctuary behind the curtain” (v. 19), he is referring to the part of the Jewish tabernacle or temple known as the holy of holies (“the Most Holy Place” [Lev. 16:2]), which was separated from the rest of the building by an enormous veil or curtain. Only one person—the high priest—was ever allowed to enter this holiest of places, and even he could go only once a year. In the book of Hebrews, this physical holy of holies is considered a copy of the original, heavenly holy of holies (Heb. 9:24), and in our passage it is this “spiritual holy of holies, in the heavenly temple”⁴ that the writer is referring to. “Jesus the forerunner... dedicated the heavenly sanctuary (9:23–28), so that his followers could join him in the full presence of God.”⁵

12. What hope is ultimately ours because of the work of our forerunner and high priest, Jesus?

(Rev. 21:1-3;  Heb. 11: 8-10, 16; 12:22; Rev. 21:10-27)

13. Our passage emphasizes the certainty of God's promises and the sureness of our hope in Christ, a hope that is depicted as a "firm and secure" anchor (v. 19). This week, place a picture of an anchor somewhere where you will see it several times a day. Each time you see it, remind yourself of the sure hope you have in Jesus, your forerunner and high priest.

* For further study

¹ J. Ramsey Michaels, *Hebrews*, in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 378.

² Walter A. Henrichsen, *After the Sacrifice: A Practical Study of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 83.

³ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 236.

⁴ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 649.

⁵ Keener, 655.