

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR SEPTEMBER 21, 2012

THE END OF THE ARGUMENT

Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. (Hebrews 6:16, NIV 1984)

IT IS CERTAINLY NO COMPLIMENT WHEN WE SAY OF A GOLFER THAT “he talks a good game.” The plain implication is that he does not *play* a good game; he just doesn’t know it.

In no aspect of life do we laud the character of those who overspeak their own abilities or cannot keep their promises. When someone’s words and work do not match, we are reluctant to give them our trust, even in the simplest projects.

In the midst of his theology-steeped letter, the writer of Hebrews considered this very topic. What does it mean for a man to keep his word? And what does it mean when God makes a promise?

The writer begins with today’s opening verse, putting forth an example from culture. Men will argue, he wrote, until one of them swears an oath. The effect of this oath is significant. It ends the argument then and there. Why? Because no one can say a word until the oath-maker proves himself. Has he vowed to pay all debts by the first of the year? Then let’s see if it is done, and we will know what kind of character he really possesses.

From here, though, the writer then moved forward into the oath God took in promising to Abraham that he would make him the one through whose descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God gave his promise *and* he swore by himself “so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we... [may] take hold of the hope offered to us” (v. 18).

And what was left for God to do after his oath? The same as for a man—to prove himself! This he did, the writer explained, by providing eternal hope through the work of Jesus. This is Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph, the descendant of Jesse and David and thus of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through the risen Jewish Savior, all people are granted the opportunity to seize upon salvation. Through the blood descendants of Abraham, God made good on his promise and his oath that we might become faith descendants of Abraham, whoever we are and wherever we live.

Keepers of promises

Read Matthew 5:33-37 and James 5:12. How is honesty emphasized in these passages? How is the keeping of promises reflective of God’s own character?

Descendants in faith

Read Romans 4:18-22 and Hebrews 11:11-12. What was the sole act of righteousness that counted in Abraham’s life? Why do you think this was most important to God?

Read Romans 2:28-29 and 4:9-17. How does our own faith connect us to Abraham and to the promises of God given to him?

Faith-filled endurance

Read Hebrews 6:9-12 and 12:1-3. How do these passages encourage us to endure in faith?
