



# a word from Pastor Chuck



## Faith, Part 4: A Promise Secured With An Oath

*Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.*

Hebrews 6:17-18

When you base your faith on God's promises, you tie your future to the most solid foundation possible. God always stands by His promises. To highlight the complete reliability of God's pledges to us, the writer points out that God gave Abraham a promise and then confirmed that promise by taking an oath on His own name that the promise would surely come to pass. God, who cannot lie, wanted to affirm to Abraham—and to us—that what He promised would certainly take place. Throughout the Scriptures, we find the Lord swearing this or that would happen. And then we learn that whatever He said would happen, did happen—always. God confirmed His promise with an oath as an invitation to you and to me—that when difficulty rises, or when confronted with uncertainty, doubt, or fear, we can run to Him and find shelter from the storm. His name is sure and faithful. His Word is true. And He is a refuge to His children in their time of trouble. How do you access those promises confirmed by God's divine oath? You do it by faith. Everything God promises us is available by faith ... including the biggest promise of all.

### Salvation through Faith

The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk saw the rapidly deteriorating spiritual condition of his nation, yet God didn't seem interested in doing anything about it. That frustrated Habakkuk, and he let God know. "God," he said, "things are horrible around here and getting worse. You can't trust the leadership. They're lying to the people. Things

are really bad, Lord, and You're not lifting a hand to stop any of it."\* God responded, "Habakkuk, if I told you what I was doing, your ears would tingle."\* Then the Lord began to tell the prophet how He intended to bring the Babylonians, also known as Chaldeans, as His instrument of judgment against the nation of Judah. Habakkuk never expected to hear that and cried out, "Lord, wait a minute—that's not fair! We're bad,

As the apostle Paul put it: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Grace is unearned, undeserved favor. It is the blessing of God poured out upon people who could never earn it. You cannot possibly work hard enough or try hard enough or keep enough rules to earn yourself a spot in heaven. Salvation is a gift—

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yes; but they are much worse than we are. Why would You use a nation more wicked than Judah to punish Your own people?"\* Habakkuk concluded, "I don't understand this at all. I'll just go into my tower and wait to see what You do."\* As he sat in the tower, watching to see how God would act, the word of the Lord came to Habakkuk: *"The just shall live by his faith"* (Habakkuk 2:4b). Through these words, the Lord was explaining to him, "Habakkuk, you are going to have to trust Me. You're not going to understand. You're going to see things that will shake you—but the just shall live by faith." This great declaration of God—*"The just shall live by faith"*—is the very statement that set Martin Luther free when he read Romans 1:17. As a monk, he had been trying his best to mortify the flesh. He struggled to rid his life of sin, yet the more he struggled, the more guilt-ridden he felt. He tried to observe all of the works that the church had said would enable him to be perfected in the flesh. And he felt miserable. *"The just shall live by faith"* set him free.

pure and simple. It's a gift that none of us deserves. And since it is a gift given by God, it is a gift we can receive only through faith.

The rich young ruler who came to Jesus seeking the way to eternal life went away sorrowful because he valued his earthly riches more than the riches of heaven. Jesus turned to His disciples and said, *"It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."* The disciples looked at one another in astonishment and asked, *"Who then can be saved?"* Jesus replied, *"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible"* (Matthew 19:23b-24, 25b, 26b).

Aren't you glad God has provided eternal life for you by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ? You can't earn it. You can't work for it. You can only accept it by faith. ✨

\*Author's paraphrases of Habakkuk 1:2-4, 1:5, 1:13, and 2:1, respectively