



**When God Makes a Promise – Part 4  
His Pledge & His Historical Assurances  
Pastor Mike Fabarez**

As you're turning to Leviticus 16, I'm going to be the first this week to wish you a happy Yom Kippur. You might remember three years ago I preached a message called Happy Hanukkah. Any of you remember that? Well, I was going to name this one Happy Yom Kippur, but after a year of preaching in a Jewish temple, I was afraid that you might start to wonder about me. So I refrained and didn't call it that.

But it's appropriate because this weekend, next weekend, our Jewish friends at Temple Bethel and Jews all over the world will be celebrating, commemorating, more accurate term, the most holy day on Israel's calendar, Yom Kippur. *Yom* is the Hebrew word for day, *Kippur*, the word for atonement, also called Day of Atonement, is the Day of Atonement that is discussed right here in Leviticus chapter 16.

It's the most holy day on their calendar, and really, those of you who know something about this day, it's really not a day anyone would greet someone with the words, happy Yom Kippur in the Old Testament, because it was the one day in Israel's calendar where God actually called them to fast, to deny themselves. And we see a lot about fasting in the Bible, but this is the day that God called for it. Refrain from doing things that make you feel good. This is a day of sobriety. This is a day for you to step back and say, wow, this is serious stuff we're dealing with here. The Day of Atonement.

Look at this text and how it begins. It describes the Day of Atonement and how it is supposed to be approached and understood. Leviticus 16, verse number 1. Yahweh spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, who died, interesting phrase, when they approached Yahweh. They died when they approached Yahweh. Do you remember those two guys? Nadab and Abihu, there should be a cross-reference in your margin. If not, jot it down. Leviticus chapter 10.

These two guys, you might remember, tried to approach God the way they wanted to, in their own way. They did their own little ceremony, their own thing, and God said, no thanks, you're dead. And he zapped them both. Aaron's two kids killed. Why? Because they approached God however they wanted to in the tent of meeting. Meeting with who? Meeting ultimately with God.



And the text here says, now let's not repeat that mistake. Here's some prescription for you related to that. Verse 2. Yahweh says to Moses, tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the most holy place.

Do you know something about the ancient tabernacle? And ultimately it turned into Solomon's temple. And that is that it had, you know, the temple, of course, had outer courts and inner courts. And then there was the building and the sanctuary, the set-apart building, and then within that, there was one room, and that was called the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum, as the old radio show put it. It's that inner room, and in the inner room, there was nothing but this, the primary object was the box, the box of the promise, the Ark of the Covenant, which you remember from the movie, take the lid off, your face melts or whatever. That's the box. Sorry. I haven't seen that one for a long time. You should watch that one tonight.

The Ark of the Covenant was this special box that in it had the jar of manna from the wanderings. It had the tablets of the Ten Commandments. It had the rod of Aaron's that budded that showed that he was to be the chosen line of the priesthood. And on top, it had these images of these angelic beings. And on top of that, this mercy seat, they called it, was God's special presence.

Now, of course, Solomon said when he dedicated the temple, you can't put God in a box or in a house. Obviously, you can't build a house that God can fit into. Isaiah echoes the same sentiment. But the special building, the sanctuary, was a special place where God's presence was somehow visibly present. It was there. It was tangibly focused. And it was like, this is God's special place.

And if you're going to come in to meet with God, you can't do it whenever you want to. He says, don't just come whenever you want into the most holy place behind the curtain. The curtain was what separated it. No drywall, no timber. It was a curtain that separated the Holy of Holies, in front of the atonement cover on the ark. Or else, if you do, if you just come in any day you want, you're going to die. Because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. This is my focalized presence here on earth. Don't come in there whenever you want.

This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area. And as we'll see in the rest of this text, a certain day of the year, it was called Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. He is to come into the sanctuary area with a young bull. And that bull is for a sin offering. That is, he's going to be killed there. And the ram is going to be burnt up as a burnt offering.



He is to put on, not only is he to bring those sacrifices, he's to put on the sacred linen tunic. And you've got special underwear. Look at this, verse 4. Special linen undergarments next to the body. He's got to tie that with a linen sash around him. And he's got to put on a linen turban. These are the sacred. What's sacred mean? Holy, special, set-apart garments. So he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. Oh yeah, got to clean up as best you can, then put on the special holy garments here.

Verse 5. From the Israelite community he's supposed to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement, there's our word, the covering, to somehow take care of sin here, atonement, where am I, verse 6, atonement for himself and his household.

Verse 7. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before Yahweh at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Want to meet with God? Bring the goats. Then he's supposed to roll some dice, cast a lot, if you will, for the two goats. One for Yahweh and the other for the scapegoat. Here's where we get the concept of the scapegoat. What do you do with that?

Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to Yahweh and sacrifice it for a sin offering. That is for the whole nation of Israel.

Verse 10. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord. And he is to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.

Now, all you got to do is look at this from a New Testament perspective, even from an Old Testament perspective. And you scratch your head a lot, but you get the idea. If you're going to approach God, you can't do it however you want. You can't do it whenever you want. It's a special place. It's behind a veil, behind a curtain. And if you're going to go in there, there's lots of prep you got to do. You've got to clean up. You've got to put on this holy garment, this outfit, this uniform. Then you've got to kill a lot of animals to show that there's a problem with sin that deserves some kind of punishment.



And then you've got to take two goats, and one of them you've got to kill for the sins of the nation. And the other one, you've got to release into the wilderness, and off he goes, he's the scapegoat. And it's as though the sins of the people are taken away.

I mean, if you boil it down, just again, through the lens of the New Testament theology, if you're going to approach a holy God, you've got to somehow remove the sin, and you've got to be clothed in what is righteous and holy. See, the New Testament carries that theme out, doesn't it? Sin needs to be taken away, and we need to be clothed in righteousness. Because we've got two problems. We're not righteous enough to hang out with God behind the veil, and we're too sinful to get behind the veil and hang out with God. So we've got to get the sin problem taken care of, and the lack of righteousness, we need to have that on us.

That's why in the New Testament, Paul loved to say things like this. We need to be clothed in Christ. We need to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And we need to have our sin somehow atoned for by the sacrifice, not of an animal or the blood of bulls and goats, but of Jesus himself.

Obviously, we see this from our perspective. We say, okay, we see that. It makes sense. We connect with that. What needs to be understood, though, is that there is a problem that exists outside of the Holy of Holies, separated by the curtain, but inside it's different. That's not a normal room. You can walk into your own house whenever you want, dressed however you want. You can't walk into God's living room however you want.

If you want to get in God's living room behind the curtain, it's a whole other ballgame. As a matter of fact, it is so clear if you read the rest of Leviticus 16, there is so much you have to think about if you're going to hang out with God in God's living room. To get behind the curtain, it's just not, it's a lot of work. And you've got a lot of prep to do. Why? Because you really don't belong there. And you can only go there one day a year. And you're just really representing the people of Israel. And you're in and you're out and that's it. And then next year, hey, we get to go in again. One guy to represent the nation.

There was a book written by a theologian slash philosopher, and he defines sin with some great words, a phrase that I think is so helpful for us because it resonates. It really captures the theology of sin and it resonates with us just in the vernacular, in the way that we speak. He says sin is basically this, just to put it in a summary form. He says sin is the way things shouldn't be. Things aren't the way they should



be. Sin is, in one sense, falling short of the glory of God, and all that is sinful, it's just less than what it ought to be.

And that phrase is great when you look at the distinction between outside the inner sanctum and inside the inner sanctum. Inside, everything is the way it ought to be. God dwells there. He is holy. Everything's right. Outside, sin, not the way that things ought to be. And all you got to do is look at the Bible or just, I don't know, the newspaper or your life and say, yeah, you know, life is full of things that aren't the way they should be, right? My life's not the way it should be. The world's not the way it should be. Church is not the way it should be. My garage is not the way it should be, right? Everything. My sock drawer, not the way it should be. Everything's messed up.

Oh, there's glimpses of the way things should be. Our hearts long for perfection. Our hearts long for what's right, but it's never right. Nothing in the world is right. That's the imagery here. Behind the veil, that's where you want to be. Problem is you really don't belong there. It's kind of like if you find the perfect church, don't join it because you'll mess it up. You've heard that one, right? Same thing. You find the perfect place where God is dwelling. Don't go in there because you'll mess it all up. So you have to go through all these ceremonies to just get there and represent the people for a day.

So how do we get there? Everything between Leviticus chapter 16, or I guess we could go back to Genesis 3, all the way to the end of the book, the end of Revelation, is a story of God's redemptive work and how he, not only through history and the sacrificial system, but most importantly in Christ, fixes the problem. So that we can one day live behind the curtain. We can live in the living room of God. We can live behind the veil where things are the way they should be.

As Isaiah put it, and I quoted it many times throughout this series, I mean, this is the hope of the Christian life, that we can live where the rough places are made plain and the crooked is made straight. It's the way it ought to be, see?

Let's get to the end of the book, just a glimpse of this. Revelation chapter 21. At the very end, look at the wonderful way it's described. And see, with this picture of the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur in your mind, if you can't tie this together.



And if you're thinking, what happened to Hebrews 6? I thought this was a Hebrew... We're getting there. World's longest introduction. We're going to get there.

Revelation 21, look at verse 1. Revelation 21:1, we're two chapters from the end. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Why does the old system go away? Because it wasn't the way things should be. Sin messed it up. Then I saw the, look at the descriptive term, holy city. This is the way things ought to be. The New Jerusalem, it's not like the old one. It's coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, now underline this phrase, now the dwelling of God is with men. This is the first time that happens. Okay. Now the dwelling of God is with men. Now people get to live behind the curtain, see. And he will live with them.

All you had in the Old Testament was symbolism of living behind the veil, and in the New Testament all we have is a spiritual relationship that gets in behind the veil, but we're not living there. We're still living in a place, wouldn't you agree, where things aren't the way they're supposed to be. But God says, I'm going to fix that. And one day, through the work of everything from between Leviticus 16 and Genesis 21, I'm going to be able to bring you into a place where you can live in a place where you dwell with God.

Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them, and they will be his people. And God, circle this word, himself will be with them and be their God. Not representative, not mediatorial, not through some priesthood or some guy with a funny hat and funny holy underwear and a sash around his neck or his waist. Not like that. This is God living with people and things will be the way they ought to be. He will be with them and be their God.

And he will wipe away, because here's the problem, when things aren't the way they're supposed to be, you cry a lot. There's all kinds of things like death and mourning and crying and pain, but he says he's going to wipe away every tear from their eyes. There'll be no more death, no more mourning, no more



crying, no more pain, for the old order of things, characterized by sin, the way things shouldn't be, they've all passed away.

And he who was seated on the throne said, I'm making everything new. And he said, write it down. For these words are, here's what the Hebrews 6 is all about, trustworthy and true. You can count on it, God says in the first century to John in the Revelation. He says, and he said to me, it's done. I'm the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To him who is thirsty, I'm going to give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. I'm going to do it, and it's going to be grace. And people that don't deserve to live behind the curtain are going to be made into a state of reality where they can live behind the curtain, and they can live there at peace with God, and everything will be the way it's supposed to be. And unlike the garden, where this was a temporary state, it will be a permanent state. The New Jerusalem, goes on to talk about at the end of Revelation 21, the beginning of Revelation 22, a place where we're going to want to be, where everything's the way it's supposed to be.

So throughout history, even since the coming of Christ, God is pulling people out from the ranks of humanity and saying, hey, come over here and follow Christ. And here's what you get, the hope of living behind the curtain. That's what you get, the hope of that. Because as soon as you become a Christian, you don't get sucked up like those tubes at the bank, right? Where you, there you go. Right up to the place where everything is the way it ought to be.

No, you get left down here. And Jesus says, bye-bye to his disciples. See you later. In this world, you'll have tribulation. But take heart. I've overcome the world. But I'm coming back. See you. And off they go. Off he goes and they're left. And so are we. We heard the message of the disciples. We said, well, this makes sense. This is right. God pulls our heart into this. And we say, yeah, I'm going to follow Christ. I'll trust in Christ. And then what? We're left with nothing but hope.

But a hope that, according to Hebrews 6, let's turn there now, that he says ought to be so certain in your mind. You ought to be sure of this. You ought to bank your life on it, because there are reasons to believe it. This is not just some religious quote-unquote faith that's some kind of by-and-by dream. It's not a pie in the sky and I hope it happens and I'm kind of trusting and hoping. No, trust in the Scripture and hope in the Scripture is a certainty of things unseen. It's a confidence in it. Why? Because there's evidence.



And in this text, he's been trying to convince us. Consider the nature of God. That's what we looked at last week. Consider God's dealings with Abraham. We looked at that two weeks ago. Consider the way God keeps his promises. God is faithful. He's been trying to tell us when God makes a promise, he keeps it. You ought to be sure of that. You ought to be confident about it. And then he gets to the center of the Bible, the person of Christ.

He starts it this way in verse 19. Remember the motive, verse 18, just to review for a second. It's all about giving us a great encouragement because we have hope that's resolved. Now look what happens. He says this. We have this hope, look at this phrase, as an anchor for the soul. It goes down and just grabs it. It is firm and secure. And it's like I'm immovable.

Remember chapter 2, long, long time ago, when we talked about drifting away, going down the Colorado River and everything's going. No, you've got to hold on to this hope. And there's an anchor, an anchor for the soul. Now, this is where the metaphor crosses. Watch the metaphor cross. It enters in the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. Huh?

See, you boat people. That's not what you call them. Boaters. There you go. There's another word that sounds better than that. But you boaters, you know what this is all about. I don't. I'm out on boats. I'm often out with... I'm not... I'm often out on boats. When I go out on boats, I'm out with somebody else on a boat. Vacations or whatever, except for this summer, I rented a boat. You remember that, right? I rented a boat and Dad was the captain.

Okay. Now we got to a place, we found a little cove. We want to let the kids swim. And so we were going to drop anchor. Now we had one. I'd never used one. I'd watched people use them before. My family didn't know this. I acted like I knew what I was doing. Yeah, let me just drop anchor here. So I got the anchor out, made sure it was tied up. I knew that much. Throw it out there.

Now there's a current going on in this lake that we're at, but I threw the anchor down there, and you know what? I was like, wow, it works. Because we, I mean, the boat kind of turned, and we were there. I didn't act like I was surprised because I wanted my family to think I do it all the time, I drop anchor. But I was like, wow, it's cool, it works.



The idea, though, is if I'm going to drop anchor, where do I drop it? Into the water. Got to catch something down there. I don't know how it all works, but it hooks on something and our boat stays. Okay? I don't drop it into a room.

Look at what it's saying. We have a hope. It's like an anchor for the soul. It's firm and secure. Now look where it goes. It's like it's cast out by a rope. It enters where? Into the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. And that anchor, it gets in there behind the curtain. Is that a bizarre metaphor? Yeah, that's where the anchor goes. My hope is an anchor and it's behind the curtain.

Do you see what we're saying here? It gets into the access of the presence of God. It gets to be where everything is the way it's supposed to be. It's a hope that's out there, but it's solid. Now look at the parallel. It enters into the inner sanctuary. Look at verse 20 now. Behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.

Now how providential that this week is the week of Yom Kippur. That's exactly what we're talking about here. Jesus did that. He went into that place. And I love this phrase, who went before us. He was our forerunner. You know what that means? We get to go too.

In Israel, could you ever go behind the veil into the inner sanctum? No. Not unless you were the high priest and got to go in there once a year. But this high priest goes in and he says, one day you're going to get to go behind the curtain with me. You're going to get to live behind the curtain with me. I'm going to go behind the curtain and you're going to come behind the curtain.

But right now, I will be like an anchor to you. Your hope will go behind the curtain just like I went behind the curtain. See the parallel? The anchor goes behind the curtain. Christ goes behind the curtain. Then it says this, and he has become, bottom of verse 20, a high priest forever. Well, he wasn't from the Levitical tribe. How does he get to be a high priest? Because he's a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, right? Before the 12 tribes. That's all in our next series. Don't worry, that's coming.

It enters into the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus, same place, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. The anchor is our hope, but the anchor really is analogous and parallel to Christ who entered into that place behind the curtain.



Here's the thing. We, from a New Testament perspective, get to look back at the ministry and work and historicity of Christ and see him do something there that should allow our hearts to anchor into that thing that he did. And then we get to hold steady and hold confident and hang on to that faith and say, I know where I'm going. I'm going one day behind the curtain because of the work of Christ.

And what that does for us is something that the Old Testament saints could never have. And that is that we get to look back on something that secures our future. They were looking forward to it. When it came to their future hope, all they could do is hang on the promises of God. We have the promise of God like they did, solidified on oath. And then on top of that, we have the historicity of the ministry of Christ.

I'll put it this way in your outline. Number one, if you're taking notes, if you found the worksheet in your worship package, jot this down. Number one, we must realize that my future, it depends on his past. My future depends on his past. Did you catch that now?

I know that right now, that besides just a promise, I have something, a hope that is predicated on something that already happened in history.

Put my house on the market yesterday for sale. Moving close here to the church, Lord willing. Put our house on the market. Had a guy that drove by, I don't know, six, seven months ago. And he said, if you ever want to sell your house, you call me. Got his phone number and I had it. And I kept that thing right where I keep my sunglasses in my car. Right? It's been up there for months.

So, you know, list this thing on the MLS, got the pictures up there on the internet, looks better than it's ever looked there. You know, wow, it's a nice house. Like to buy it. Oh, that's mine. You know, nice. It's all cleaned up. So I called this guy. Hey, you know, you said you might want to buy my house when I'm ready to sell. I just put it up, you know, let's talk. You want to buy it?

The guy talked to me for 40 minutes. Yeah, man, the house, what about the neighborhood? The kids, the yard, the cul-de-sac, yeah, what's the square footage, the bedrooms? Oh, 20 minutes into it, I'm like, you're going to buy it or you're not going to buy it? I'm tired of talking about my house. Get off



the phone. I mean, he went on and on and on. And literally, I'm there saying, oh, just, do you want to buy it or not?

Oh, he was jabbering all about the house. When it came down to it, and we said, fine, you want it? Let's go. I want money on the table. Write a check. Get us going. Well, I might buy it as an investment, and I might buy it... Buy it. Buy it. Or get off my phone.

At the end of the day, he said, well, you know, I don't know. I have to think about it. Here's the thing. And you know how this is. People say to my Dad used to say, put your money where your mouth is, right? I'm tired of hearing about it. Until you're ready to write a check, put something on the table. When you put something on a table, it's called a down payment. Then we take you seriously, right?

In real estate, I know it's all complicated, got the escrow and all that, but the bottom line is we want to see something. If you're serious, don't just talk about it. Do something. Here's the great thing about us. We're looking to get behind the curtain and live in a place where everything's the way it ought to be. We can look back that God didn't just make a promise. Hey, yeah, I'm going to buy your house. No, Jesus came on the scene and here it is, already paid for it.

As a matter of fact, he used an accounting term on the cross and he cried out on the cross *tetelestai*. What does that mean? You know it, paid in full. Paid in full. Done. Paid for. The atonement has been paid for. Therefore, everyone now has all the credits necessary to live behind the curtain.

Oh, I'm not... As a matter of fact, I'm going to wait to increase the gathering. So we're not going to do it now, but the living behind the curtain has already been paid for. Paid in full. He didn't just write a down payment for our future home. He paid for it in full. That's why Peter said it's guaranteed. It's been paid for by the blood of Christ himself. It is reserved in heaven for us. It's paid for. He didn't just give them a credit card number where they put a little down payment on it. It's been paid for. He bought the hotel. It's just waiting for us.

The bottom line is we better study that whole ministry thing of Christ. We better look at the historicity of Christ. We better figure out what this is all about, because my future hangs on what he says he did. So I need to understand it.



Now, in light of the biggest picture of Scripture, from Leviticus 16 to Revelation 21, let's read a few words of Christ that you and I memorized as kids, and let's see it in the biggest possible sense. And you might see the Day of Atonement slip right into this. Let's turn to John chapter 14, some very familiar words that most of us learned as little kids if you grew up in church or Sunday school. But see if you can't see the big picture here.

The point of Jesus going to the cross, which, by the way, is the discussion he's beginning here. The second half of the book of John, he's describing what's going to happen as he goes to the cross. He's preparing to go to the cross, and he's talking about him going there. Now, that whole ministry of his life is going to lead up to this week, and he's about to go there, and here's what he says about it.

John chapter 14. You remember these verses, verse number 1? Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust also in me. Can you see that? I don't want you to be doubting. I don't want you to be, you know, driven and tossed. I want you to be solid, confident, firm about your future, about yourselves and where you stand with me. Trust in God, trust in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms, many, you know, you've studied this in Sunday school, many dwelling places, lots of place for people to be. I know that little inner sanctum in the temple and in the tabernacle. It was pretty small, and it looked like it just had room for one. But, you know, where God really lives, there's a lot of place for people to live. In my Father's house, there's many dwelling places where things are the way they ought to be, in the presence of the holy God, the dwelling place of God. There's a lot of space there. There's a lot of room for people there. If it weren't so, I would have told you. If it was just me and, you know, the Father and the Holy Spirit, I would have told you that's all there was room for.

I am going there, look at this, behind the veil, to prepare a place for you. He's going there to prepare this place. And if I go and prepare a place for you behind the veil, I will come back, here's the great hope as the forerunner, and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. Where's that? Behind the veil, in the presence of God.

And live with God. Where's Christ right now? Living in the presence of God. Where are we going to be? One day we hope to be in Revelation 21, living where the dwelling place of God is among men and



everything that's wrong is made right. He says I'm going there to make that place for you. I am going to prepare that way for you.

How's that work? The high priestly work of Christ. What is that? For him to give himself as the sacrifice and then take his righteousness and clothe us in that. He becomes the scapegoat, if you will, and he takes sin out of the way and he clothes us in his meritorious righteousness. And I say meritorious not because we earn it, but because it is now credited to us. He earned it and now gives it to us. And then he says, you know what, I'm going to come back and pull you right into the living room of God behind the curtain. And that's a picture of Yom Kippur right there.

He says, you know the way to the place where I'm going. What way would that be? The sacrifice of his life. He taught all about it. I'm going to go, they're going to, you know, I'm going to be betrayed, delivered up into the hands of evil men, and I'm going to be killed and crucified, and on the third day I'm going to rise again. And he's saying you know that. And Thomas goes, dude, I don't remember.

"Lord, we don't know where you're going. We don't know what you're talking about. We don't know anything." That's what he says in verse 5. "How can we know the way?" We don't know. And Jesus said, "I am the way. I'm the way. I'm the truth. I'm the life. And no one comes to the Father except through"—the high priestly work of Christ—"through me. You got to come on my coattails. You got to hide in the shadow of the high priest. I will give you my righteousness. I will take sin out of the way. You can live behind the curtain where everything's the way it ought to be."

The way that he was providing was his life. My future depends on his past. We ought to become experts in the ministry and life of Christ. What did he do? What did he claim to do? What was this all about? And the more we learn it, the more it becomes, here's the imagery, the anchor of our soul.

I know that we picture that because we have them on our SUVs, the little *ichthus*. That's like the universal Christian symbol. But do you know that the first universal Christian symbol was not a fish? It was an anchor. As a matter of fact, the earliest first-century tombs and headstones that they have in a cemetery they've uncovered, archaeologists have uncovered, called St. Priscilla. In that place, the earliest first-century markings that showed that people were Christians when they died, anchor from this text right here.



As a matter of fact, if you've ever been to Rome, you've been to Rome, been down in the catacombs, some people can't handle it, they're claustrophobic, but I went down there, looked around. If you go through the catacombs of Rome where the persecuted church had to live underground, people would die, they would bury them in there. You know what they have all over the walls? You'll see all kinds of things, including ships and anchors. Lots of anchors because of this text.

As a matter of fact, there is a cemetery that they uncovered that dates between the first and third century that has 70 head markers they've uncovered, and all of those 70 head markers have an anchor on them to show that these people were Christians. Anchor.

What's the point? Our whole concern ought to be, how sure are we about what's going to happen after we die? How sure are we about that? And the Bible says it's the ministry of Christ, like an anchor going in behind the veil, Christ has gone in there. Man, that's our only hope.

Therefore, you ought to be an expert in the life of Christ. We ought to be studying it. We ought to be richly diving in to the ministry and life of Christ all the time. My future depends on his past. And if I got his past all messed up or it's just a flannel graph story or it's just a funny principle to live by and just keeps me out of trouble, then I've got no hope for the future. But if his life was what he claims it to be here in John 14, then you know what? Then I do have hope.

That's why, jot this reference down if you want to, but in the end of Matthew 27, this is the chapter of the crucifixion, you remember this? It says, when Jesus lifted up his voice, he cried out with a loud voice and gave up his spirit, there was something interesting that happened not far away inside the city gates, actually around on the temple mount, inside the temple. You know what happened? Weird statement, we pass over it. It says the curtain of the temple was torn in two when Jesus cried out and gave up his spirit.

What's that mean? Yom Kippur. The way and entrance into the Holy of Holies has been accomplished and paid for, not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the life of Christ himself. My future depends on his past.



As we look back on the historical work of Christ, our assurance, beyond just a promise, it's a real tangible life. God has provided some tangible assurances that if we trust in him and ride in on his coattails, we'll get to live behind the veil.

Let's look at a few of those. Jump back, if you would, or just look on your worksheet at Hebrews chapter 6. And let's think through this. The metaphor, it's rich, is like an anchor that goes into the temple, into the Holy of Holies, and there I'm confident that I'll get to live behind the veil because he went before us. And like John 14, where he is, one day he's going to come back and take me where he is. And I get to live behind the veil too, out of a world of sin.

He's entered in there on our behalf. He's become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. Now, the difference between Christ and the high priest of Leviticus 16 and every generation thereafter was that Christ, according to the book of Hebrews, as we'll see, was sinless. He could walk in, not on the symbolic sacrifice of an animal. He was perfect and holy. He walks in on his own merit because he's God. And he there, if you still have John 14 open, this is the best place to illustrate it. He there says, I can accomplish redemption because I can step in beyond the veil.

Jot this down and then we'll ask some questions. What we need to do is ask some questions about this. Let's just logically make sense of this behind-the-veil ministry of Christ.

Number two on your outline, ask questions like, okay, three pointy fingers on your worksheet. Letter A, pointy finger number one. We need to ask this question: did Jesus really have access to the Father? If I'm going to follow on the coattails of Christ into a place where I get to live in the dwelling of God, where he's going to do something to me that's going to make me worthy and adequate to live there, and I get to live in a place where things are the way they're supposed to be, I need to make sure that he's got access there. Because most people come on the scene and talk about a holy God, and he's wholly other and transcendent. I need someone, if I'm going to ride on his merit into the Holy of Holies, I need someone who is holy.

So I've got to figure this out. Does he really have affinity and access and oneness with the Father? If you're still in John 14, look at the next verse. He just said he's the way, the truth, and the life, right? Take a look at this.



Verse 7. Jesus goes on and he says, “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.” Just look at that statement. If you really knew me, you’d know my Father. Why is that? He says, “From now on, you do know him and you’ve seen him.”

Now, Philip is really confused. His head is spinning around. And he says, “Lord, show us the Father and that’ll be enough for us.” And Jesus said, “Don’t you know me, Philip?” Don’t you know who? Don’t you know me? “Even after I have been among you for such a long time, anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me?”

Do you see that? He is claiming to live ontologically behind the veil. He is the one behind the veil. He says, and if you know me as the high priest, the incarnate God himself, I can take you in behind the veil. “Man, if you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father. The words I say to you,” middle of verse 10, he says, “are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or,” now here’s what I want to capture, “or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.”

That’s an important phrase. Or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. Now, you want to have a hope that you get to live behind the veil where everything’s the way it’s supposed to be? Then you’re going to have to trust that somehow Jesus has the right to be there and can bring you in. And he says, “Philip, don’t you know that I and the Father are one? Don’t you know that by now?” And I’m thinking, that’s a huge claim. That’s why the Pharisees want to pick up stones to throw at him.

But he says this: even if you don’t believe what I’m saying, can’t you believe it based on the evidence of what I’m doing? Now, this is a big topic. All we can do is scratch the surface right now. We have preached on this before, and thankfully on the back, there’s some references for you. You can go a little deeper.

But remember this about the Bible. From the very beginning, God has been presented to us from the very first verse as the Creator who creates things out of nothing. That’s how powerful he is. In the beginning, what’s Genesis 1:1 say? “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” He speaks it and there it goes. Out of the word of his mouth, he speaks worlds into existence. Nothing’s there and he goes, and there it goes.



Jesus comes on the scene, unlike anybody else, and starts to, from the very beginning, show people that I can create something out of nothing. Think this through. He takes water and turns it into wine. That was pretty impressive. It's not just changing the color. This now is wine. As a matter of fact, when they were tasting it, they said, well, who kept the best stuff back? This is good.

And then he goes to sick people. And he doesn't heal migraine headaches. He doesn't heal hidden tumors. He heals in a way that shows without any kind of dispute for those that watched it, that he is creating things that weren't there. Guys with their eyes sunken back in their head, just eyeballs that are completely unusable. And he steps up and blind men see.

People that can't walk. And you know what they look like. My daughter is paralyzed from the knees down. You know this. She has no calf muscle here. It's completely atrophied. She can't move her foot like that. See, but Jesus comes on the scene and a guy who's been crippled from birth and he says, "Rise up and walk." And they stand up, and places where there was no muscle tissue, boom, ripe, strong muscle tissue.

Guy with the withered hand. Think about that. You've seen people, it's just two bones between elbow and wrist, and then God, boom, heals them instantly. Okay, this isn't the kind of thing that goes on on the stages today where people are seeing things and "I feel better now." It's not about that. It's about people that are dead, Lazarus, and he "stinketh, Lord." Remember the verse, right? "Oh, Lazarus, come forth," and out comes the dead guy. "Oh, it stinks. Get this off of me." Dead people living. People that can't walk stand up with strong muscles in their legs. People with a sunken-in eye socket now see with nice glossy eyes. Arms that have no forearms, and now they're healed.

Jesus was proving time after time, I am the Creator of heaven and earth. If you don't believe that I and the Father are one just because of what I say, at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. This ain't happening down the street. I know they go for different things to see stuff happen, but it ain't that. It'd be on the front page of the *Register*. He is creating things out of nothing with an appearance and history of age that it never had.

That's what God does. He creates Adam and Eve and five minutes later, they're looking like 20, 30-year-old people. They're only five minutes old. That's what Jesus kept doing.



On the back of your worksheet, I put some references there for you. And all I can do is whet your appetite, but you've got to study this topic. If you want a pithy, intelligent introduction that's readable in a paperback, just start with C.S. Lewis's book *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. Oxford scholar can talk to you about miracles and just say, hey, let's rethink this thing. And let's look at the evidence in the documents. I preached that sermon up at the top 0425 you can get through our tape window back there, *A Brief Study of When God Breaks the Rules That He Made*. I mean, we've got to study this thing.

The miraculous that Jesus did was incredibly telling because he was trying to say something about who he was. If you don't believe that I and the Father are one just because of what I say, at least believe because of what I'm doing. I'm doing the God work here. Believe me. You want to know if I've got access behind the veil and I can go and prepare a place for you in my Father's house, and I've been there, and if it weren't so I would have told you because I'm living back there until I came to earth. Believe me because of the miracles. I'm doing the God miracles here. A bunch of other books. If you want to get into some other ones, Geisler's book, that's a readable one. There are others that are a little fatter and more in-depth and philosophical, but we've got to study this concept.

If we want our confidence sure, we better look at the historical record and think through this concept of the miraculous and the claims of Christ and what he's done, because he's hanging his qualifications on the miracles that he did in verse 11. And they weren't done in a corner, they weren't done in a back room, and they weren't migraine headaches that he was healing. Tangible, verifiable miracles.

Secondly, we need to ask this question. If we start thinking, okay, Christ has access behind the veil. He is one with the Father. He is perfect. He can live behind the veil. And now I'm going to ask the question, as it relates to the logic of redemption, I want to ask the question of this, number two, pointy finger number two, letter B: would Jesus really sacrifice himself for me? Would he do that? Does that even make any sense?

I mean, I'm thinking what makes sense is he creates people, Genesis chapter 1. He tells us about the great place they're living, Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 3, they decide to rebel and sin. Genesis chapter 4, he zaps the world and it's dead. It's a really short Bible, paperback version. That makes sense to me. Tosses them into the eternal trash compactor. They're done. God judges the world, says we're on to something else. Earth done, Mars next. I don't know. He moves on.



Does he do that? No. As a matter of fact, by the end of Genesis 3, he's talking about a redemptive plan that's going to come through the woman one day to redeem these people, crush the head of the snake. What's that all about?

Last week, we looked at some of the attributes of God that should help us be sure about our future. We looked at his power, his knowledge, his immutability. You were with us last week, right? There were a couple of things about God's attributes that we never touched on. Things that are equally assuring, because as God defines himself in Scripture, and even as my mind responds to the innate knowledge of God in the universe, I start to recognize there's something true about God that is revealed in nature, it's revealed in holy Scripture, it's revealed to me that makes complete sense that God would reach down and save people like me and like you, sinful people that don't deserve it, because that's the way that God works.

There's two attributes of God. We can combine them into one if you want, but let's just separate them by words. God is loving and God is gracious. God ceases to be God if he's neither one of those things, and he wants to demonstrate it to the utmost. We are objects of his mercy so that he can demonstrate to everyone trophies of his grace that he is a God who is loving and gracious. And therefore, redemption makes sense.

Why would Jesus bring us to a place that where he is, we can be also? How come? Because God is loving. First John 4, you know the passage. We sang it in Awana after memorizing John 14:1. We sang 1 John 4, remember? 4:7 and 8. Remember the song, right?

Beloved, let us love one another.  
For love is of God, and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God.  
He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.  
Beloved, let us love one another.

John said that because he said we ought to be somehow reflecting the pale reflection of God's love because God is love.

And in the chapter before it, in 1 John 3:16, which is a good parallel to John 3:16, 1 John 3:16 said this, no greater love has anyone than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends. This is how we know the love of God. Not that we loved him, but that he loved us and that he laid down his life. He



sent his one and only Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. There's no greater expression of God's love.

God shows his attributes to the utmost, and he created a scenario by which he could demonstrate his attribute of love in the most supreme and extreme way, in that he would redeem sinful people.

Do we deserve it? No. As a matter of fact, that is one of the biggest myths of 21st-century evangelical Christianity, and that is that somehow we sit around thinking, well, we're kind of likable, you know, we're not perfect, but you know, we're kind of cute. God kind of thinks, yeah, well, cute little people. You know what? There's nothing in us according to Scripture. Here's a great passage to jot down: Job 25 verses 1 through 6. Bildad, you remember him? Came in to talk to Job, and he calls all mankind, here it comes, sorry for your self-esteem here, but maggots. Right? He says the whole earth, all of us, are... Man, if he says if the stars and the moon aren't pure and bright in his sight, how much less are we? Can the son of man be perceived as righteous in the eyes of a holy God? Bildad says no. It doesn't make any sense. Of course not.

See, the whole thing about redemption is God is demonstrating through a very dark backdrop the precious nature of his grace. And so it makes sense that Jesus would come and he would reach out and extend his hand to us and say, hey, trust in God and trust also in me, because you know what? In my Father's house there's lots of dwelling places. And you know, if it weren't so, I would have told you. But it's true. You trust in me. You trust in my Father. Here's the thing: I'm going to take you there. I'm going to go there and prepare a place for you. The whole process of the cross. I'm going to get behind the veil. When I get behind the veil, I'm going to come back one day. I'm going to take you to be with me, that where I am you can be also. Revelation 21. Live behind the veil.

Now the dwelling place of God is among men. Does it make sense that he would do this for me? Yes. It makes sense because God is a God of grace. It doesn't make sense because we don't deserve it. It's all about grace. As Romans 3 says, we are justified freely by his grace. He looked for the opportunity, he created the opportunity for him to demonstrate it to the fullest.

Ask the question, did he really have access to the Father? He's going to bring us behind the veil. He's got to have access there. Why would he do it? Well, because he's loving and gracious.



Third question I think we should ask, which is probably the most pertinent, particularly for the person who's stumbling around, waiting for some assurance from history: we've got to ask this question. Was there any proof of his success? Thirdly, was there any proof of his success? What does the Bible have to say about the work of Christ on the cross? If that is really the opening up of a way into the Holy of Holies, to live with God, not just relationally here and now, but physically one day in a place where things are the way they ought to be, then what's the proof that it really worked?

Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1. Let's turn there for just a quick sec. The New Testament writers love to point out these three things, and gratefully, they're all right here together in Romans chapter 1 in the first few verses. Paul is writing to the Roman church, and he mentions in the first six verses all three of the things that the New Testament writers over and over preach about. They preach about these things that should prove to us in our hearts as we examine them that the work of Christ on the cross was acceptable to the Father and that we have a place in the eternal kingdom living behind the veil where things are the way they're supposed to be.

Romans chapter 1. Paul says, "I, Paul, servant of Christ Jesus," Romans 1:1, "called to be an apostle, one who is sent, set apart for the gospel of God." Then he starts talking about the gospel.

Verse 2. "The gospel he," underline this, "promised beforehand," which is kind of a bit of a miracle for us. Because you know what, we can't even figure out, you know, foretelling the weather, right? We can't figure out what's going to happen. But according to Isaiah 44, God should have no problem with that. God tries to prove his divinity to the nation of Israel by saying, hey, who else can foretell the future? I'm doing it all the time through my prophets. And he says this: hey, the whole redemptive plan, it was foretold, promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures regarding his Son.

Then he gives one example: "who was, as to his human nature, a descendant of David." You know, yeah, I guess. You could be. You've got a one-in-twelve chance, I suppose, of being of the tribe of Judah. Well, you know the stories. Micah 5:2, what city he'd be born in, what tribe he would be from, what kind of life he would lead, what kinds of things he would say, the kind of death he would die, Psalm 22, the kind of resurrection that would take place, Isaiah 53. And we go on and on and on.

The Scripture went and talked about the coming of this one who would live this kind of life, be born of this tribe, do these things. That kind of predictive prophecy, here's the big clincher, is not found in any



other religious book or religious system in the world. No one else calls it like that. You've got to study predictive prophecy.

Now, again, we can't elaborate on all that, but on the back of your worksheet, I've got a few things here that may help you. Even Kaiser's book, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, everybody should read that. What did the Old Testament expect the Messiah to be? What was Jesus? Wow, they seem to match perfectly. How does that work? Predicted prophecy. We ought to be sure that Christ accomplished it because he was the fulfillment of predictive prophecy. Jesus said, I didn't come to abolish the law. I came to do what? Fulfill it. So watch my life carefully.

Verse 4. You still in Romans 1? "And who, through the Spirit of holiness, was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead." Any proof of his success? Well, there was Old Testament predictive prophecy that he fulfilled. There was then this little thing called the physical resurrection from the dead. That was a pretty neat trick, see?

And the Bible says this: if the wages of sin is death, if the wages of doing wrong is the punishment of death, then we ought to see Christ, if he's going to fix this thing called sin and send it away and clothe people in righteousness, we ought to see that he has the ability to take death and get rid of it, to destroy the enemy of death. Now, he could have waited. The resurrection could have been a 2,000-year thing, but it was a three-day thing so that he could verify for us. Why? Because he wants us to be strongly encouraged about our future.

He rose from the dead. If you haven't studied that from every angle, I don't know how you want to explain this away, skeptic, but you've got to study that. Did he rise from the dead? What is the evidence? What about the eyewitnesses? How did this work? What about these people when they were oppressed with their testimony? We've preached on this a hundred times, but we've got to examine that. If Jesus really rose from the dead, that's a big, big deal, because he said, you kill me, I'm going to rise from the dead. Why? Because that was in keeping with Isaiah 53 and the rest of Scripture about a redemptive servant who would come and redeem the people.

Was there any proof of his success? Did he really provide us a way? Well, he fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. His resurrection was a pretty big deal. Which, by the way, isn't it interesting in Matthew 27, we talked about the weird thing of the temple curtain ripping when Jesus cried out and gave up his spirit, remember that? Do you know what the next verse said right after that text? After the temple



curtain was ripped, it said there was a great earthquake, he said, and people who were dead in Jerusalem came out of their tombs and walked around in the city.

Can you imagine that? I mean, that's just a little side note. Oh, yeah, and by the way, all those people were resurrected. He dies, and the minute he dies, a bunch of dead people come out of their tombs. Unwrap them. Wow, what was that? What's going on? Hey, what's happening here? Well, Jesus died. I didn't know that. I've been dead for a few days. You know, I've been dead for a week. Well, what's going on?

These people who trusted in Christ, who had died, probably during the ministry of Christ, were popping out of their graves. Because it makes total sense. If he took away the sin problem, he's got to take away the death problem. And he did it with tokens, not only of people in Jerusalem, but they guarded him with Roman soldiers and a big fat rock, and he walks out of there three days later and leads this victorious team who used to be a cowering team of fishermen. Now they're a powerful team leading a church in Jerusalem that grows to 5,000 people, and they're willing to die for it. And the eleven disciples, the eleven apostles, they did, with the exception of John. They all got beheaded, skewered, burned at the stake, crucified upside down. You know the stories. Why? Because these guys were changed, which brings me to the third thing.

Was there any proof? Yeah, look at the next verse. He says in verse number 5, "Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to," underline this, "the obedience that comes from faith." Now, that's an interesting phrase. I trust in Christ, the great high priest who's providing a way for me to relate to God one day perfectly in the New Jerusalem. And the Bible says, what comes from that if I trust in him? Obedience. There is a natural following, a connection, the sine qua non of real faith. What comes with that? Obedience comes with that. People are changed.

As a matter of fact, he then looks at the Romans and he says, "And you also are from among those who are called to belong to Christ Jesus." Lives are changed. That reminds me, and you might want to mark it in the margin of your Bible, 2 Corinthians 5:17. Any man's in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things pass away, new things come. Why? Because God changes lives.

And I know you can blame people's change on a lot of little methods or AA or whatever, but you do know there is an entire contingent in this world whose lives have been changed. Now, I bet we could bring these people up here behind this microphone right here to talk about how their lives were



radically and permanently changed because they put their faith in Christ. That's tangible external evidence. It happened in the first century, and it's happening today.

Did he really accomplish this for us? Absolutely.

I know we platformed off of Hebrews 6, and forgive me for that, but let's go back to Hebrews, and I want to show you, after he discusses the high priesthood, the Melchizedekian priesthood, the temple service, he gets to chapter 10, just before this long list of heroes of faith in chapter 11, and look at what he says as he sums up this whole argument in chapter 10. And see if this doesn't resonate with the whole point of the last four weeks of studying Hebrews 6.

Hebrews chapter 10. He's gone to great lengths to make us certain. The historicity of Christ and his ministry should make us certain. And look how he ends this whole argument. By the time he gets to chapter 10, he says, verse 19, Hebrews 10:19, "Therefore, brothers, since we have"—great word, circle it—"confidence to enter," look at the imagery, here it is again, "the most holy place by," not the blood of bulls and goats, "but by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body. And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, then you know what we should do?"

Verse 22. "Let us draw near to God," I love this phrase, "with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." There's some transformed lives for you.

Then what do we do? "Let us hold unswervingly," I love that English word, unswervingly, "to the hope that we profess, for he who promised is what? He's faithful. He's not going to break this promise. Let us consider how we can spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing. Let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching."

The more we look around, the more we see we are closer to God consuming or bringing this whole consummation of the ages to the forefront. We ought to be so excited about living behind the veil. We're closer now to it than we've ever been. And God says, I'm bringing you to a place where everything is right. And what he's telling us to do is to be sure about it.



Because you'll be no good for Christ, I guarantee you'll be a fruitless person. You will have very little impact on this world until you can say in your heart of hearts, I'm sure. I'm confident. I know where I'm going. I know why. I know what I believe. I know why I believe it. I'm on my way to living with God. That's critical. That's first-step stuff.

And I hope through this series, maybe just stepping back and saying, why should we believe all this? At least get a little glimpse of that. It'll change our lives. It'll change our relationships. It'll change our ministries. Let's be sure and let's pray.

God, your heart revealed in this text has been so positive that you hope for us to be greatly encouraged, to have a hope that is like an anchor for our soul, for our lives, one that is firm and secure. God, it is your hope that we would be filled with a confident assurance of faith, not because we're kind of crossing our fingers and wishing for something, but because we know intimately the ministry of Jesus Christ. We understand the historicity of the accounts. We know something of what the miracles were all about and how and why they happened.

We see the God who made the rules breaking the rules to prove to us that he is the King, the Lord of heaven and earth, and that he can make the sea stop its waves. He can take people that have bodies that are damaged and messed up, and he can fix them. God, you did that to show us that Jesus Christ is God, has the credentials. And because you are a loving and gracious God, he has a reason to bring us into a place of relationship with him, that he might bring us into the holy city, the New Jerusalem, behind the veil where the dwelling place of God is.

God, I just pray that our hearts, through just even contemplating these topics and these truths in the last hour, would really be encouraged so that our lives might be fruitful and productive. Because God, if we're sitting around just kind of trying this out, sampling it, we're not going to be any good. We're not going to be useful. We're really not going to make a difference.

God, I know it's important for us to research, and some people may be on the fence, but for those of us that claim to be followers of Christ, let us be so certain about these issues that our hearts are just on fire to do whatever it is you'd like us to do in this world, that we don't equivocate, we're not doubting, we're not tossed here and there by the wind of every doctrine and teaching, but we're firm and solid on what your word says.



God, we thank you for all the evidence and the great lengths to which you've gone to provide assurance to our hearts. We love you for doing that. May we grasp it, may we realize it in our daily lives this week especially. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.