



## 31: The Benediction

We've come to the end of the Book of Hebrews. Apart from a final personal appeal to pay heed to what's been said, news that Timothy has been set free and that he and whoever wrote the book are coming for a visit soon, and a greeting from those in Italy, all that's left is for the benediction to be pronounced.

"The God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:20 – 21

- ◆ *What is a benediction?*
- ◆ *Give some examples of other benedictions in the Bible.*

Verse 20 tells us three things about God, who is being invoked in this benediction.

### He's The God of Peace

The God of peace is a name that's given to God in at least four other places in the New Testament. It's a reminder both that God is at peace and that God gives peace to those who have faith in Him (see, for example, Philippians 4:4 – 9). For readers from a Jewish background the concept of peace would have extended beyond tranquility. They would likely have thought of the Old Testament word "shalom" which is translated "peace" in English but refers to the future state of perfect wellbeing that God promises to His people.

"I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for peace (shalom) and not for evil."

Jeremiah 29:11

- ◆ *Why do you think God is called the God of peace in this benediction?*

## He Who Brought Up Jesus From The Dead

It is said that God brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead. That's a clear reminder of the power of God demonstrated in the resurrection but in addition, to a Jewish mind, it would have stirred thoughts of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt: of Moses being brought up from Egypt and, as their shepherd, leading the people to the Promised Land (see Isaiah 63:11). Whilst God may have delivered his people by the hand of Moses Jesus is the *great Shepherd*.

- ◆ *What does the reminder of the power of God demonstrated in the resurrection add to this benediction?*
- ◆ *What are the similarities between what God did by the hand of Moses and what Jesus, our great Shepherd, is doing today?*
- ◆ *What are the differences?*

## He Did It Through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant

"God... brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead... through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

Hebrews 13:20

The writer reminds us too that Jesus was raised through the blood of the everlasting covenant. He is, of course, referring to Jesus' own blood shed on Calvary and, more specifically, what that blood represented and accomplished.

- ◆ *In what sense was Jesus raised through His blood?*
- ◆ *What is the everlasting covenant?*
- ◆ *Why does the writer describe Jesus' blood as the blood of the everlasting covenant?*

## Two Things Asked

In verse 21 we have the blessing that is being asked of the God described in verse 20 — the blessing the writer of the Book of Hebrews would pass on to his readers. Two things are asked.

The first:

"[May God] make you complete in every good work to do His will."

Hebrews 13:21

We know from how it is used elsewhere in the Bible that the word translated complete means to perfect, to equip, to fit out (as God fitted out the world at creation), to make good or to mend (as fishermen mend their nets), to repair, to make useful.

- ◆ *What might it mean for God to "equip you with everything good that you may do His will." (ESV).*

The second:

"[May God] work in you what is well pleasing in His sight."

Hebrews 13:21

What's being asked is that not only will you be made able but also that God will work in you to make you do what is pleasing to Him.

- ◆ *What, in you, would have to change if God were to work in you what is well pleasing in His sight?*

## Through Jesus

The writer concludes his benediction by reminding us that these blessings must come about, "Through Jesus Christ." and that all glory must always be His.

- ◆ *On Sunday I concluded by saying that you can take this benediction as a promise. Do you agree?*