

"Now The God Of Peace ..."

"... who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20f).

These two verses constitute a benediction -- a pronounced blessing through Him who is able to bless -- as none else can -- mankind. This benediction comes at the conclusion of this *"word of exhortation"* (as the writer later says, vs. 22).

Notice the writer enjoins the blessings through him whom he calls the *"God of peace."* This expression is common in New Testament writing -- with slight variations. Once the expression is the *"Lord of peace;"* once the *"very God of peace"* (1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:23). He is called the *"God of peace"* because He is able to give peace to man -- not necessarily peace as the world defines it, for Jesus indicates that He does not supply peace of that sort (Jn. 14:27; 16:33). But, God gives peace of the most important kind -- peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

This God of peace -- He who gives peace, is He who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, Jesus. Jesus called Himself the *"good shepherd."* Peter called him the *"chief shepherd"* (Jam. 10:11; 1 Pet. 5:4). The declaration that God raised Jesus from the dead is found here and elsewhere from the pens or tongues of Peter, Paul, and other New Testament writers. Jesus had part in His own resurrection because He is God and declared He would raise Himself from the dead (Jn. 2:19). The resurrection of Jesus is a cardinal point in our belief. Peter tells us that by Jesus' resurrection, Christians are begotten again unto a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3). If Christ has not been raised our preaching is vain, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins. Those who have died in Christ have perished and we are of all men most miserable (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

Jesus, the great shepherd, brought with Him the blood of an eternal covenant. There are several implications here. There must surely have sprung to the minds of these Hebrews the contrast the writer had made between the blood of animals and the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:4; 7:25): with the temporal, first covenant and the everlasting covenant given by Christ (Heb. 8:7-13; 10:15f). An everlasting covenant had been prophesied (Isa. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 37:26).

"The God of peace ... make you perfect in every good thing to do his will." God has promised to make us complete -- self sufficient -- with His provisions. He has granted unto us all things which pertain unto life and godliness, which involves the fact that the Holy Scriptures are so designed to make *"the man of God perfect in every good work"* (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16f). We lack nothing we need to have knowledge of what He requires of us to do His will. His revelation is sufficient for our needs.

He, through His will, works in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. By doing His will we have assurance that we can be pleasing to Him. Remember, *"None who trust in him shall be desolate"* (Ps. 34:22). The balance of Hebrews is largely personal: a final appeal that they *"bear with the word of exhortation"* (13:22). A revelation that *"Timothy hath been set at liberty;"* a confident expression that *"should Timothy come,"* the Hebrew writer would accompany him (13:23).

A customary, but meaningful "signing off" is seen in these words: *"Grace be with you all. Amen"* (Heb. 13:25).

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