

Sent: Wednesday, May 03, 2017 11:02 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Hebrews 13:18-25

"Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the Sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever! Amen!"

Wow! What a fitting and inspiring benedictory prayer and blessing the writer of the book of Hebrews gives in closing out this great treatise addressed to Hebrew believers--but just as applicable today to every believer and follower of Jesus Christ!

There are other great benedictions in other books of the Bible, some of which we often hear at the end of worship services--and perhaps fail to fully appreciate! How about this one, from Numbers 6:24-26: "The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace!" Or the one from James 24-25: "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy! To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever! Amen!" (this latter one in the language of the King James version--which is hard to beat!)

And yet, as the "wrap-up" for the book of Hebrews, nothing could be more majestic, and appropriate--and memorable--as Hebrews 13:20-21!

Reference to God as "the God of peace" is a depiction frequently used by the apostle Paul, one reason theologians (like Jesse!) often consider him to be the author of the book of Hebrews! In Romans 15:33, for example, he states: "Now may the God of peace be with you!" And in a closing statement of 2 Corinthians, he writes: "Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you!"

But, in Hebrews, peace is particularly relevant to all believers because God made peace, and reconciliation between God and man possible for all eternity because of the sacrificial death of Christ--"through the blood of the eternal covenant"!

And, of course, the reference to Jesus as the "great Shepherd of the sheep" is a metaphor running through both the Old and New Testaments! How about the 23rd Psalm! Peter notes how we sometimes "stray as sheep" but need to return to the "Shepherd and Guardian of our souls"! (I Pet. 2:25; 5:4). But, most significant of all, it was Jesus Himself who declared that He was the "Good Shepherd" and, in prophetic terms, said that "the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep"! Again, it's the apostle Paul who writes in Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

At the end, the writer of Hebrews (in 13:22) "urges" his readers to "bear with his word of exhortation," which is the way he himself described the book! But, in looking back on our study, I think we have seen that it is indeed more than that! In fact, we can probably agree with the conclusion reached by another writer, in this case the writer of the "Shepherd's Notes," who described the book as both "profoundly theological" and "deeply ethical"! Teaching us not only what to believe, but also how to live! And, like all Scripture, it is "inspired by God" and "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, correction"--and for "training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work!" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). And so, it is "fitting" once again

that the writer of Hebrews notes in his benediction that it's the divine purpose of God, the "God of peace," to "equip you (us!) in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever! Amen!"

"Shepherd's Notes" also notes that the book of Hebrews implies that Christians need help in knowing how to live while "seeking the city of God"! Which is exactly why we have our MOB studies!

Grace be with you all!

Lowell