

Hebrews 13:20-21

A benediction is “a good word”; more specifically, in the Bible, a benediction is a blessing. In particular, at the end of the NT epistles, a benediction is the pronouncement of God’s blessing of peace upon His people.

Summary

In Hebrews 13:20-21, the author pronounces the divine benediction on his congregation, which is centered on Christ and God’s eternal covenant, so that the believers may be fully equipped to do God’s will and concludes with a doxology.

1. Christ Centered Blessing vs. 20

Christ is at the center of the closing benediction of the book of Hebrews. It is “through Christ” that every spiritual blessing comes to the believer.

Jesus is “the great shepherd of the sheep” (**Heb 13:20**). It is only by being in Christ and by being a part of His flock, that anyone attains the blessings of salvation. This great shepherd shed his blood and laid down his life for his sheep (**John 10:11; 14-16**) to obtain for them eternal redemption and to establish with them the eternal covenant that God had promised.

It was “by/through the blood of the eternal covenant” that God “brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus” (**Heb 13:20**).

It is through Christ that God makes covenant with believers.

Through the prophets, God announced his intention to establish an everlasting covenant with his people (**Isa. 55:3; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26**).

God’s covenant with his people will remain forever. That covenant has been sealed with Christ’s blood which was shed once for all (**Heb 9:26; 10:10**).

The new covenant in Jesus’ blood, which the author of Hebrews outlined in **Heb 8**, is eternal, and its benefits, forgiveness of sin, sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and fellowship with God, last forever. **Heb 13:20** focuses directly upon Christ’s work upon the cross, according to that eternal covenant. It was through His blood that He fulfilled His part of the covenant, having first appeared as a spotless lamb, perfect and without any blemish, and therefore able to offer Himself for others (**Heb 13:12**).

Many oppose the idea that God would require the shedding of blood in order to accomplish redemption for sinners. Yet it is with the shedding of his Son’s precious blood that God makes his most important and essential and final statements to this world:

First, the blood of Christ shows God's holy judgment on sin. Secondly the blood of Christ also shows the greatness of God's love for sinners. Thirdly, the blood of Christ proclaims that God is not distant and removed from our world but intimately involved in it.

2. Divine Equipping vs 21

The first part of the benediction is a summary of what God has done in Christ; the second reveals what God is doing in Christ's people.

First, the author speaks of God equipping believers to do his will. Earlier, the author encouraged believers to live a life that is pleasing to God (**13:15-16**) but they must look to God for help to live such a God-pleasing life. Because of the eternal covenant God has made with believers through Jesus Christ, the Lord grants us this assistance.

The author of Hebrews then pronounces that God works in believers to do that which pleases Him. (c.f. **Phil. 2:12-13**). The author spells out that it is through Jesus Christ that God, Himself, works in us and equips us to do his will.

Through Jesus Christ, therefore, we are in God, and God works in us (**John 17:21**).

3. Great Doxology vs. 21b

At the end of **verse 21**, this great benediction becomes a great doxology, a song of praise that is a fitting climax to everything we have learned in Hebrews (**13:21b**).

Since the Book of Hebrews has as its great theme the deity and the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ, who brings us to God, how appropriate it is that this doxology should be attributed to God, the Son. **Heb 13:20** speaks of His blood as the source of our salvation: it is from Jesus Christ that we gain all things with God.

Heb 13:21 tells us that Christians will be empowered to serve and please God through Jesus Christ, who is our great Shepherd and leader in salvation.

Then the last words of the benediction tell us that all this is also to Jesus Christ, who, as God incarnate, is the recipient of all our worship and praise.

The opening verses of the Book of Hebrews made the point that God's final and ultimate revelation to man is through his Son, who in His resurrection has received supremacy over all things. Since the Son is the revelation of the Father, far from stealing praise from God when we worship Jesus Christ, we are in fact worshipping God in the manner he has prescribed.

God the Father's first and chief love is His Son, and therefore it is God's chief delight that worship should be given to his Son our Lord.

All our salvation and all of our worship are from Him and through Him and to Him, all to the glory of God, the Father.