

# Hebrews 13:20-21 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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## The Epistle to the Hebrews

INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE				DUTY

DATE WRITTEN:

ca. 64-68AD

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)  
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 13:20 **Now** 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**, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [O de theos tes eirenes, o anagagon](#) (AAPMSN) [ek nekron ton poimena ton probaton ton megan en aimati diathekes aioniou, ton kurion emon lesoun.](#)

**Amplified:** Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace], Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood [that sealed, ratified] the everlasting agreement (covenant, testament) ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** May the God of peace, who brought up from among the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, it is our Lord Jesus I mean, ([Westminster John Knox Press](#))

**ESV:** Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ([ESV](#))

**KJV:** Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

**NET:** Now may the God of peace who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV:** May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NLT:** Now may the God of peace-- who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood-- ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Now the God of peace, who brought back from the dead that great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, by the blood of the everlasting agreement, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Now the God of peace, the One who brought up out from among the dead the Shepherd of the sheep, the Great One, in the blood of an eternal testament, our Lord Jesus,

**YLT:** And the God of the peace, who did bring up out of the dead the great shepherd of the sheep -- in the blood of an age-during covenant -- our Lord Jesus,

**NOW THE GOD OF PEACE, WHO BROUGHT UP FROM THE DEAD THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP: O de theos tes eirenes, ho anagagon (AAPMSN) ek nekron ton poimena ton probaton ton megan:**

- **The God of peace:** Ro 15:33 Ro 16:20 1Co 14:33 2Co 13:11 Php 4:9 1Th 5:23 2Th 3:16
- **Brought up (resurrected):** Acts 2:24,32 3:15 4:10 5:30 10:40,41 13:30 17:31 Ro 1:4 Ro 4:24,25 Ro 8:11 1Co 6:14 15:15 2Co 4:14 Ga 1:1 Ep 1:20 Col 2:12 1Th 1:10 1Pe 1:21
- **Great Shepherd:** Ps 23:1 Ps 80:1 Isa 40:11 Is 63:11 Eze 20:37, Eze 34:23 37:24 Jn 10:11,14 1Pe 2:25 1Pe 5:4)

### A "POWERFUL" PRAYER FOR BLESSING

Someone has said (I cannot find the source of the quote) that these two verses in Hebrews 13:20, 21...

must rank among the most powerfully worded blessings found in the Scripture. They gather up the passionate concern of the writer for his readers' spiritual growth and stress the major factors that make such growth possible: the God of peace, the blood of the eternal covenant, the resurrection of Jesus, His Shepherd care for His sheep, the indwelling life of God Himself, the equipping of the Spirit, the aim to please God, and the eternal glory and Lordship of Jesus. It is all there in one glorious outpouring of good wishes and confident certainty. (And all God's people said "Amen! Thank You Lord!")

**Chrysostom** notes that the writer "first ask their prayers (He 13:18), then prays for all blessing on them."

Prayers are frequently found at the end of the Pauline epistles (another reason some feel Paul wrote Hebrews, although I think that is unlikely).

Spurgeon - As if to show that he did not ask of them what he was not himself willing to give, he utters this most wonderful prayer for them. He may confidently say to his congregation "Pray for me" who genuinely from his soul prays for them.

## THE GOD OF PEACE

**The God of Peace** - God is the Author and Giver of peace. In the context of what the writer has been expounding on the better priesthood of Christ and the better covenant (the new), this title for God is surely a reference to the peace such as Paul described in Romans 5 writing...

Therefore (Ro 4:25-note) having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Ro 5:1-note)

Paul uses this great title of God numerous times...

Now the **God of peace** be with you all. Amen. (Ro 15:33-note)

And the **God of peace** will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. (Ro 16:20-note)

**Comment:** This verse offers a clear allusion to the promise of Ge 3:15, anticipating the final victory of Christ over Satan, when the Seed of the woman will crush the head of that old serpent [see Re 20:2-note, Re 20:10-note]. In the meantime, believers, who also in a sense are the woman's seed, can achieve local victories over Satan and his wiles by resisting him "steadfast in the faith" [1Pe 5:9-note]. If we resist him with Scripture as Jesus did, testing and refuting his enticements with the Word (Mt 4:4,7,10), then he will flee from us [James 4:7-note], just as he did from Jesus, "until an opportune time" (Luke 4:13)

God is not a **God** of confusion but **of peace**, as in all the churches of the saints. (1Cor 14:33)

**Comment:** *Confusion* here refers to churches with uncontrolled and disorderly manifestations of tongues and supposed prophecies.

Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the **God of love and peace** shall be with you. (2Cor 13:11)

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the **God of peace** shall be with you. (Php 4:9-note)

Now may the **God of peace** Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Thes 5:23-note)

Now may the **Lord of peace** Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! (2Thes 3:16)

Note the many wonderful appellations of God in the New Testament. Not only is He "the God of peace" but He is also...

- **The God of Israel** (Mt 15:31)
- **The God Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob** (Mt 22:32, Acts 3:13)
- **(Not) The God of the dead but of the living** (Mt 22:32)
- **The God of glory** (Acts 7:2)
- **The God of patience and consolation** (Ro 15:5KJV, Ro 15:5NAS)
- **The God of hope** (Ro 15:13)
- **The God of all comfort** (2Co 1:3)
- **The God of love and peace** (2Co 13:11)
- **The God of our Lord Jesus Christ** (Ep 1:17)
- **The God of all grace** (1Pe 5:10)
- **The God of heaven** (Re 11:13, Re 16:11)
- **The God of the spirits of the prophets** (Re 22:6)

**Related Resources:** In Scripture **Name = Character**. For a life changing study consider studying the **Name of the LORD** (Note the "promise" in Pr 18:10-note ). You will discover a study of God's Names is essentially a "short course" on His Attributes and I can

assure you it will not be drudgery but a delight!

- **Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Summary**
- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Why Should You Study It?
- Jehovah: I Am
- Jehovah Ezer: The LORD our Helper:
- Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide:
- Jehovah Rapha: The LORD our Healer
- Jehovah Roi: The Lord is My Shepherd - Part 1
- Jehovah Roi: The Lord is My Shepherd- Part 2
- **Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts**
- Jehovah Sabaoth: Part 2
- **Jehovah Mekeddeshem: LORD Who Sanctifies**
- Jehovah Nissi: The LORD Our Banner
- Jehovah Nissi: Exposition of Exodus 17:8-16
- **Jehovah Shalom -Part 1: The LORD our Peace**
- Jehovah Shalom - Part 2
- Jehovah Shammah - The LORD is There
- **Elohim: My Creator**
- El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All
- **Adonai - My Lord, My Master**
- **El Roi: God Who Sees**
- EL Shaddai - God Almighty
- Our Stronghold sermon by C H Spurgeon on Pr 18:10

**Wuest** writes that "He speaks of God as the God of peace. The context here speaks of the substitutionary atonement of Messiah on the Cross, and the above expression reminds us of Paul's words in Colossians 1:20, "Having made peace through the blood of His Cross." That which separated a holy God from sinful man, namely, sin, was put away at the Cross. The death of Messiah paid for sin, satisfied the righteous demands of the broken law, and made it possible for God to bestow mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. We have an echo of all this in Ephesians 2:17, "And came and preached peace to you who are far off (the Gentiles) and to them that are nigh (the Jews)." ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Hebrews 13:20-21 rank among the most powerfully worded blessings found in the Scripture. They gather up the passionate concern of the writer for his readers' spiritual growth and stress the major factors that make such growth possible: the God of peace, the blood of the eternal covenant, the resurrection of Jesus, his Shepherd care for his sheep, the indwelling life of God himself, the equipping of the Spirit, the aim to please God, and the eternal glory and lordship of Jesus. It is all there in one glorious outpouring of good wishes and confident certainty.

For all mankind there is only one of two choices, either to know God as **a consuming fire**" (Heb 12:29) or to know God as **the God of peace**", for...

Outside of Christ there is no peace...

Only those in Christ know peace

**Peace** ([1515](#)) (**eirene [word study]** from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning conveyed by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension. Peace as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war.

**Peace** was used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word shalom - "peace to you".

In 1555, [Nicholas Ridley \(martyr\)](#) was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. On the night before Ridley's execution, his brother offered to remain with him in the prison chamber to be of assistance and comfort. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need. So can we!

[Like a River Glorious](#)  
[play](#)

Stayed upon Jehovah,

Hearts are fully blessed;  
Finding, as He promised,  
Perfect peace and rest.  
--Frances Ridley Havergal

**Do you know the "God of Peace" as your Lord and Savior?** If not consider reading Billy Graham's online book entitled how to have [Peace With God](#).

**Charles Simeon** ([Don't recognize his name? Then see John Piper's excellent biographical sketch](#)) writes that

The very name which (the author) here assigns to God is deserving of particular notice—Under the Old-Testament dispensation, **Jehovah** was more generally called "**the LORD of hosts (of armies)**;" but, under the New Testament, He is commended to us rather under the endearing character of the "**God of Peace**." Between Him and us a **reconciliation** has been effected, by the mediation of His dear Son and so perfect is that **reconciliation**, that nothing but love is felt in His bosom towards us. In truth, every one of his attributes (See Summary of the Attributes of God) finds in this mystery its sublimest exercise; so that he is altogether a "**God of Peace**;" not having any more of adverse feeling towards us, than if mercy had been his only attribute.

### **PROOF THAT CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS WERE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD**

But what has He done to assure our souls of **peace**?" To death and the grave had Jesus been consigned as our Surety and our Substitute. And, if He had continued in the grave, however we might believe that He had undertaken for us, we could have no assurance that His sufferings had been accepted in our behalf. But Jehovah, having "**brought him again from the dead**," has given us a proof, that what the Lord Jesus has done and suffered for us, has been effectual for our complete redemption.

Now we see, that "**that great Shepherd of the sheep**," who "**had laid down his life for them**," (Ed: The Shepherd became a Lamb! Jn 1:29, cp He 9:28-note, 1Pe 2:24-note) is re-invested with His office, which during His imprisonment in the grave seemed to have been suspended; and "**all power is given to him**," to "**save to the uttermost**" (He 7:25KJV-note) all who are brought into His fold, and committed to His care. Now we know, that whatever they need for protection, for sustenance, for healing, shall assuredly be imparted to them in "**the hour of need**;" (He 4:16-note, Ezek. 34:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 24) "**the lambs shall be carried in his bosom; and he will gently lead them that are with young**;" (Is 40:11) and of those entrusted to Him, He will lose not so much as one: no power in the universe shall ever pluck them from His hands (Jn 10:27, 28, 29, 30). ([Hebrews 13:20, 21 Christian Principles Improved in Prayer](#))

**A REAL LIFE ILLUSTRATION OF "PEACE"** - Jim Walton was translating the NT for the Muinane people of La Sabana in the jungles of Colombia. But he was having trouble with the word **peace**. During this time, Fernando, the village chief, was promised a 20-minute plane ride to a location that would have taken him 3 days to travel by walking. The plane was delayed in arriving at La Sabana, so Fernando departed on foot. When the plane finally came, a runner took off to bring Fernando back. But by the time he had returned, the plane had left. Fernando was livid because of the mix-up. He went to Jim and launched into an angry tirade. Fortunately, Walton had taped the chief's diatribe. When he later translated it, he discovered that the chief kept repeating the phrase, "*I don't have one heart*." Jim asked other villagers what having "*one heart*" meant, and he found that it was like saying, "*There is nothing between you and the other person*." That, Walton realized, was just what he needed to translate the word **peace**. To have **peace** with God means that there is nothing--no sin, no guilt, no condemnation--that separates us. And that **peace** with God is possible only through Christ (Ro 5:1-note). Do you have "one heart" with God today?

**Phil Newton** - We would be foolish to think that every person is concerned about peace or understands it. William Bates, a 17th century Puritan pastor that was ejected with 2500 other ministers due to their non-conformity to church law, preached his final sermon to his church on this text. Difficult days lay ahead for him and his church, and he knew they all needed to rest in "the God of peace." With the Day of Ejection there was not only loss of position but also loss of income and stability. Some 3000 nonconformists were put to death and 60,000 families faced ruin with the ironclad rule of Charles II and his demand for all England to conform to the rituals of the Book of Common Prayer. Many of the ministers were destitute because of this, but not without peace. Bates remarked, "There is a false peace which doth not arise from the knowledge of a man's happiness, but from the ignorance of this misery" [i.e., presumption toward God and the misery of not knowing the peace of God]. And then he explains, "They are only capable of true peace, by the knowledge of that which is false" [Farewell Sermons, SDG, 165]. ([Hebrews 13:20-25 A Benediction for the New Year](#))

**Brought up from the dead** - Commenting on this phrase **Marvin Vincent** writes that this is "The only direct reference in the epistle to the resurrection of Christ. Heb 6:2 refers to the resurrection of the dead generally. **Anagein** of raising the dead, only Ro 10:7. Rend. "brought up," and comp. Wisd. 16:13. **Ana** in this compound, never in N T in the sense of again... The verb often as a nautical

term, to bring a vessel up from the land to the deep water; to put to sea."

**Brought up (321)** (**anago** from **ana** = up, again + **ago** = bring or lead) literally describes movement from a lower to a higher point, in context clearly a description of the [Resurrection](#). In ancient Greece, **anago** was used as a nautical term meaning to put out to sea, to set sail (See Acts 13:13; 28.11 Lk 8:22; passive voice = to be carried up). In Acts 7:41 **anago** is used of offering up a sacrifice, which is fascinating for in the present passage the author uses **anago** to describe the **raising up** (resurrection) of the slain Sacrifice Who was once for all time **offered up** as the Sacrificial Lamb! Paul uses **anago** as an allusion to the resurrection in Ro 10:7-note.

**From the dead** (ex nekron) - Jesus died a real death and was for a time among the dead.

**Spurgeon** - We believe that Jesus assuredly died, and that He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, but that on the third day He rose again and departed the tomb, no more to die. This we most firmly believe to be a matter of fact; not a fiction, or a piece of poetry, but a matter of fact, like any other reliable history, and we accept it without question.

**Henry Morris** - The same Greek word (**anago**) is used in Acts 16:39. As the magistrates brought out Paul and Silas from the prison, so did God bring forth the Lord Jesus from death and the grave. This is the only direct reference to Christ's resurrection in the book of Hebrews, although inferences and applications of that great event abound throughout the book. ([Hebrews 13 Commentary Notes - Defender's Study Bible](#))

**JESUS IS...**  
**Our Good Shepherd**  
**Our Chief Shepherd**  
**Our Great Shepherd**

**Spurgeon** - He is not the great Shepherd when He dies; He is the good Shepherd. He is the great Shepherd when He is brought again from the dead. In resurrection you perceive His greatness. He lies in the grave slumbering; He is the good Shepherd then, having laid down His life for the sheep. Life appears again in Him, the stone is rolled away, the watchmen are seized with terror, and He comes out the risen one, no more the dying—now He is the great Shepherd. In the covenant we are the sheep; the Lord Jesus is the Shepherd. You cannot make a covenant with sheep—they have not the ability to covenant. But you can make a covenant with the Shepherd for them, and so, glory be to God, though we had gone astray like lost sheep, we belonged to Jesus. He made a covenant on our behalf, and stood for us before the living God. It is very beautiful to trace the shepherds through the Old Testament, and to see Christ as Abel, the witnessing shepherd, pouring out the blood that cried from the ground; as Abraham, the separating shepherd, leading out his flock into the strange country where they dwelt alone; as Isaac, the quiet shepherd, digging wells for his flock, and feeding them in peace in the midst of the enemies; as Jacob, the shepherd who is surety for the sheep, who earns them all by long toils and weariness, separates them, and walks in the midst of them to Canaan, preserving them by his own lone midnight prayers. There, too, we see our Lord as Joseph, the shepherd who is head over Egypt for the sake of Israel, of whom his dying father said, "From there is the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel" (Gen 49:24). Head over all things for His church, the King who governs all the world for the sake of His elect, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who for their sakes has all power committed unto His hands. Then follows Moses, the chosen shepherd, who led his people through the wilderness up to the promised land, feeding them with manna and giving them drink from the smitten rock—what a wide theme for reflection here! And then there is David, the type of Jesus, reigning in the covenanted inheritance over his own people as a glorious king in the midst of them all. All these together enable us to see the varied glories of "that great Shepherd of the sheep."

**Shepherd (4166)** (**poimen**; A T Robertson says poimen is from a root meaning to protect) (See verb **poimaino** = to shepherd) literally describes one who cares for a flock. One who herds, feeds, and tends a flock. A herdsman. A sheep herder. The main responsibility of the shepherd was to keep the flock intact, to protect and to provide for the sheep.

Metaphorically **poimen** described one who assumes leadership or guardianship over a group of believers. As alluded to above, this title is applied to Jesus in several passages (Mt 26:31, Mk 14:27, Jn 10:11, 14, 16, 1Pe 2:25).

A **shepherd** is one who carries out oversight, protecting, leading, encouraging, discipling, guarding, guiding and feeding ("feed and lead"). English dictionaries say that "**to shepherd**" means to guide, direct or guard in the manner of a shepherd.

**Eadie** commenting on poimen in Ephesians 4:11 says "The image of a shepherd with his flock pictures the relation of a spiritual leader to those committed to his charge.

**Barclay** comments that "**Pastor** is the Latin word for a **shepherd**. At this time the Christian Church was no more than a little island in a sea of paganism. The people who came into it were only one remove from their heathen lives; they were in constant danger of relapsing into heathenism; and the duty of the pastor was to shepherd his flock and keep them safe. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))



**Related Resource:** [Dictionary article on Pastor](#)

Ephesians 4:11 applies **poimen** metaphorically to the shepherd leader or **pastor** (NAS, ESV) of a flock of believers.

Webster says that our English word pastor is derived from Latin pastor herdsman, from pascere to feed. The more conservative 1828 Webster defines pastor as "*A minister of the gospel who has the charge of a church and congregation, whose duty is to watch over the people of his charge, and instruct them in the sacred doctrines of the Christian religion.*" Nelson's New illustrated Bible Dictionary defines pastor as "*the feeder, protector, and guide, or shepherd, of a flock of God's people in New Testament times.*"

Although not using the actual noun **poimen**, the implied shepherd in Lk 15:4-7 (cp Mt 18:12-14) is a figure for God Himself.

**Larry Richards** writes that "The verb **poimaino** means "to act as a shepherd," "to feed and care for the flock." In the Judaism of the first century, the occupation of a shepherd was considered demeaning, and shepherds were generally despised. However, the NT itself reflects the attitude of the OT, and the metaphor continues to be used to represent God's love for his people. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

In the Near East the citizens in a country were referred to as **herd**" and the king as "**shepherd**," and the OT and NT pick up this imagery. Because shepherds were the sole source of provision, protection, and control for sheep, in ancient Near Eastern usage "shepherd" came to be a term descriptive of political leaders. The law codes of Lipit-ishtar and Hammurabi each refer to the ruler as the divinely appointed shepherd of his people.

Jesus is the ultimate example of a "**Good Shepherd**" Who leads the sheep and protects the sheep (Jn 10:1-13) even to being willing to lay down His life. Jesus' willingness to die for His flock contrasts with hirelings who don't care for the sheep and will depart when the wolves come, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and destroyed. Jesus passes the responsibility of shepherding the flock to Peter (see John 21:15-17 = "Shepherd My sheep") and Peter passes on this same command to the leaders in each church.

**Ralph Earle** writes that a shepherd/pastor not only feeds, but also tends "the flock in every way... So a pastor should not only feed his flock each Sunday on the Word of God but tend his flock during the week... it is a great responsibility!... Homer, in his Iliad, refers to "pastors of the people" (*poimena laon*). The pastor is to be the shepherd of his flock... For pastors we would like to suggest a series of three sermons. The first would be on Psalm 22, depicting the Good Shepherd (John 10) who gives His life for the sheep. The second would be based on Psalm 23, where we see the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20) caring for His sheep. The third would be on Psalm 24, the Chief Shepherd in glory. (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**Wayne Detzler** writes that shepherding was usually "delegated to a slave according to Josephus, who wrote about the time of the apostles. Earlier, in the writings of Homer, the word was used to describe royal rulers, who cared for and "shepherded" their people. In fact Homer said: "All kings are shepherds of the people." His authority supposedly rested on his ability to care for the people. Plato picked up the same idea, and asserted that the rulers of the emerging city states must "shepherd" their people. In the Septuagint Greek Old Testament this word is applied to leaders of every kind. The famous patriarchs of the Old Testament were shepherds, as is seen in the lives of Job, Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph. Furthermore, David was the model of a shepherd-king. From his pen came a great description of Jehovah as the Shepherd of His people (Ps. 23). The Messiah would also be the Shepherd of those who follow Him (Ezek. 34:23)... In one of the most famous discourses in the entire New Testament, Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18). The teaching implicit in this discourse is profound. It forms the whole concept of the Good Shepherd in the New Testament. The sheep willingly follow the Shepherd, but they will not come after a false shepherd (Jn 10:5). He protects them by lying down at the door of the fold (Jn 10:7). They follow Him, because they know His voice (Jn 10:4). All pretend-shepherds are dangerous, but the Good Shepherd died for the sheep (Jn 10:7-14). There are still sheep to be brought into His fold (Jn 10:16). The entire program of Christ, from the Cross to the crown, is summarized in this discourse. (New Testament Words in Today's Language).

**TDNT** - The Palestinian Shepherd. Tending flocks and herds is an important part of the Palestinian economy in biblical times. The sheep and cattle have to roam widely, and caring for them is an independent and responsible job that can even involve danger. The Ancient Near East. Shepherd is a common designation for rulers and combines a number of associated tasks or attributes (e.g., in Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt). The gods may also be viewed as shepherds; thus Amun is a strong drover who guards his cattle. The OT. God is early called the Shepherd of Israel who goes before the flock (Ps. 68:7), guides it (Ps. 23:3), leads it to food and water (Ps. 23:2), protects it (Ps. 23:4), and carries its young (Is. 40:11). Embedded in the living piety of believers, the metaphor brings out the fact that the people is sheltered in God.

**Marvin Vincent** has a lengthy note on the related verb **poimaino** writing that "The word involves the whole office of the shepherd — guiding, guarding, folding, as well as feeding. Hence appropriate and often applied to the guides and guardians of others. Homer calls kings "the shepherds of the people." To David the people said, "The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed (as a shepherd) my people Israel" (2 Sa 5:2; compare Ps. 78:70, 71, 72). God is often called a shepherd (Gen. 48:15; Ps. 23:1; 77:20; 80:1; Is. 40:11;

Ezek. 34:11–31). Jesus calls himself the good shepherd (John 10:11). Peter, who is bidden by Jesus to shepherd his sheep (John 21:16, *poimaine*, Rev., *tend*), calls him the Shepherd of Souls (1 Peter 2:25- note), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4-note); and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 13:20-note), he is styled the great Shepherd of the sheep. In Revelation 2:27 ([note](#)), rule is literally to shepherd (Revelation 19:15-[note](#)); but Christ will shepherd his enemies, not with the pastoral crook, but with a sceptre of iron. Finally, Jesus will perpetuate this name and office in heaven among his redeemed ones, for “the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall be their shepherd (Revelation 7:17-[note](#)). In this verse the word governor is in harmony with the idea of shepherding, since the word *hegoumenos* originally means one who goes before, or leads the way, and suggests Christ’s words about the good shepherd in John 10:3, 4: “He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out... He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him.” ([1Peter 5: Greek Word Studies](#))

**Poimen** - 18x in 17v in **NAS** - pastors(1), shepherd(13), shepherds(4).

Matthew 9:36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a **shepherd**.

Matthew 25:32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the **shepherd** separates the sheep from the goats;

Matthew 26:31 (cp Mk 14:27) Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE **SHEPHERD**, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.'

**Comment:** An allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

Mark 6:34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a **shepherd**; and He began to teach them many things.

**Comment:** The picture of sheep without a shepherd is a recipe for disaster in the pasture. Notice what the Great Shepherd does for the sheep. Sheep need food and so He feeds them, teaching them "many things." Modern shepherds of the flock should do no less than follow in the Chief Shepherd's footsteps (1Pe 2:21). Dear pastor (shepherd), are you feeding your flock with pure food which will stabilize their walk and grow them into maturity? Nothing substitutes for the pure milk of the Word. In fact there will be no growth without intake of the pure Word of God. The result? The flock becomes like sheep without a shepherd and all manner of spiritual maladies will infect such a flock. Remember that you will have to give an account for failing to feed the flock (Heb 13:17, cp Lk 16:2, Ro 14:12, 2Cor 5:10, 11, 1Peter 5:4).

Mark 14:27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE **SHEPHERD**, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED.'

**A T Robertson:** A common figure in Palestine. The sheep are usually white and the goats black. There are kids (*eriphōn*, *eriphia*) which have grazed together. The goats devastate a field of all herbage. "Indeed they have extirpated many species of trees which once covered the hills" (Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, pp. 89f.). The shepherd stands at the gate and taps the sheep to go to the right and the goats to the left.

Luke 2:8 In the same region there were some **shepherds** staying out in the fields and keeping (**phulasso** = to guard or protect. **Present tense** = continual vigilance - a good word to pastors over "sheep with souls!") watch (Greek =**phulake** = act of guarding) over their flock by night. (Literally - "keeping the night-watches.")

**Comment:** Observe the role of literal shepherds regarding animals. How greater responsibility and accountability is there for a shepherd keeping watch over human souls in this present darkness!

**Henry Morris has an interesting note:** It is unlikely that shepherds would be abiding in their fields in late December. Furthermore, the 70-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem would probably have been too difficult for Mary in the winter. A more probable time would be late September, the time of the annual Feast of Tabernacles, when such travel was commonly accepted. Thus, it is rather commonly believed (though not certain) that Jesus' birth was around the last of September. The conception of Christ, however, may have taken place in late December of the previous year. Our Christmas celebration may well be recognized as an honored observation of the incarnation of "the Word made flesh" (John 1:14).

Luke 2:15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the **shepherds** began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

Luke 2:18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the **shepherds**.

Luke 2:20 The **shepherds** went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.



John 10:2 "But he who enters by the door is a **shepherd** of the sheep.

John 10:11 "I am the **good shepherd**; the **good shepherd** lays down His life for the sheep.

**Comment:** "Note repetition of the article, "the shepherd the good one."" (A T Robertson) Jesus' openly predicts His death **for the sheep**" or in their place, a clear allusion to His substitutionary atonement on the Cross. Two contrasts are apparent in this passage. Shepherding sheep in Palestine was dangerous and if the shepherd was killed the shepherd's sheep would most likely lose their lives. In contrast this Good Shepherd's death results in eternal life for His sheep! Another striking contrast is that the thief in John 10:10 takes the life of the sheep, while here the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:12 "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

John 10:14 "I am the **good shepherd**, and I know My own and My own know Me,

John 10:16 "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one **shepherd**.

Ephesians 4:11-note And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as **pastors** and teachers,

Hebrews 13:20 Now 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,

1 Peter 2:25-note For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the **Shepherd** and Guardian of your souls.

**Comment:** Jesus is the Shepherd watches over and provides for the welfare of His flock.

1 Peter 5:4-note And when the **Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

**Comment:** **Chief Shepherd** is the only Biblical use of the Greek noun **archipoimen** (arche = chief + poimen) clearly referring to Jesus Christ as the Head over His Flock, the Church.

**Poimen** - 65v in the **non-apocryphal Septuagint** - Gen 4:2; 13:7f; 26:20; 29:8; 38:12, 20; 46:32, 34; 47:3; Ex 2:17, 19; Nu 27:17; 1 Sam 25:7; 2 Sam 24:17; 1Kgs 22:17; 2Kgs 10:12; 2 Chr 18:16; Job 1:16; 24:2; Eccl 12:11; Song 1:8; Isa 13:20; 32:14; 40:11; 63:11; Jer 2:8; 3:1, 3, 15; 6:3; 10:21; 12:10; 22:22; 23:1, 4; 25:34ff; 33:12; 43:12; 49:19; 50:6, 44; 51:23; Ezek 34:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 23; 37:24; Amos 1:2; 3:12; Mic 5:5; Nah 3:18; Zech 10:3; 11:3, 5, 8, 15f; 13:7

Genesis 4:2 And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper (Lxx = **poimen**) of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

**Comment:** Abel was occupied as shepherd over the flocks (sheep).

Jeremiah 2:8ESV The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who handle the law did not know me; the **shepherds** (Lxx = **poimen**) transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.

**Comment:** The shepherds or rulers of Israel (for the most part) did not know Jehovah.

Ezekiel 34:23 "Then I will set over them one **shepherd**, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their **shepherd**. 24 "And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

**Comment:** **Poimen** in this passage is taken by many as a reference to the "greater David", the "Son of David", the Messiah, Who will reign over all the earth. While there is no question Messiah will reign as King of kings, even that phrase presupposes that there will be other "kings". In addition, let us compare Scripture with Scripture (always the best commentary!) Jeremiah 30:9 and Hosea 3:5.

Jeremiah 30:9 'But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

**Comment on Jeremiah 30:9:** First, who is "**they**"? In context, Jeremiah is describing the time of Jacob's distress (Jer 30:7 - synonymous with the 3.5 year Great Tribulation) out of which 1/3 of the nation of Israel will be saved (Jer 30:8 compared with Zech 13:9). Believing Israel will enter into the next age, the Millennium. Just as in Ezekiel 34:24, Jeremiah also describes two individuals "the LORD their (believing Israel's) God" and "David their king." Further, Jeremiah says that David will be raised up

for them (cp Da 12:13 - a promise to Daniel of resurrection at end of this present age, prior to the Messianic Age). What would be the role of a literally resurrected David? It is not unreasonable to assume that a literal resurrected David will shepherd Israel as their king. Ezekiel 34:24 specifically says he will be a prince or ruler over them (believing Israel). David as Israel's greatest king will rule over Israel as their king will be subject to the King of kings, the Messiah.

**Henry Morris commenting on Ezekiel 34:24:** In the millennial kingdom... it seems that David himself, resurrected from the dead with the other Old Testament saints... will sit upon the physical throne in Jerusalem (Jer 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24,25).

**Johann Bengel** quipped that "God brought the Shepherd; the Shepherd brings the flock. He brought Him from the depths, and set Him on high, where He may be seen by all. The apostle does not conclude, before he made mention of the resurrection of Christ. "The Great Shepherd of the sheep" (is) an appropriate appellation. You, says he, many ministers, He 13:17; but He is the Minister of all. I am absent from you, He 13:19; but God is not absent, nor will He be wanting to you. The allusion is to Isa 63:11, and by this allusion, the apostle at the very end of the epistle again and again prefers Christ to Moses, of whom Isaiah is speaking in the passage quoted above. ([Gnomon of the New Testament](#))

**Phil Newton** comments that "Two clear truths must stand out in our minds as we consider the power of God to raise the dead.**First**, the fact of the resurrection declares that God has accepted the death of Christ as sufficient for our eternal salvation. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. But how do we know that God accepted the blood of Christ as atonement for our sins? It is by the fact that He "brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep"! No other sacrificial victim was raised from the dead! All of the bulls and goats were temporary, but what Christ has done is final, complete, and eternal (He 10:10, 11, 12, 13, 14-note). **Second**, because the "great Shepherd of the sheep" has been brought up from the dead, the sheep will follow! That is why we can wait for "a kingdom which cannot be shaken" (He 12:28-note), and can seek "the city which is to come" (He 13:14-note). Christ's resurrection gives us hope, vision, and assurance of God's power to save us eternally, and to bring us finally into His presence forever. ([Hebrews 13:20-25 A Benediction for the New Year](#))

**THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE ETERNAL COVENANT EVEN JESUS OUR LORD:en haimati diathekes aioniou ton kurion hemon lesoun:**

- **The Blood:** He 9:20 He 10:22 Ex 24:8 Zec 9:11 Mt 26:28 Mk 14:24 Lk 22:20
- **Eternal:** 2Sa 23:5 1Ch 16:17 Isa 55:3 61:8 Jer 32:40 Eze 37:26
- **Covenant:** He 9:16, 17

## **THE BLOOD COVENANT ENDURES FOREVER!**

If you have entered into this binding eternal New Covenant by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9-note), you too are forever protected. Stated another way, your salvation is eternally assured in Christ Who eternally bears the marks (scars) which will forever testify to the everlasting nature of His covenant with those released from their sins by His blood (cp Rev 5:6-note, Rev 1:5-note)! You **ABSOLUTELY CANNOT LOSE YOUR SALVATION** (assuming you were genuinely saved)!

In Hebrews 8 the writer spoke extensively about the better covenant (He 8:6-note), the New Covenant (He 8:8-12-note)

**Spurgeon** - The work He has done has pleased the Father, and therefore He has brought Him back from among the dead. His acceptance is ours: we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6). We make with God, after conversion, a covenant of gratitude; we come to Him sensible of what He has done for us, and we devote ourselves to Him. We set our seal to that covenant when in baptism we are united with His church. Day by day, as often as we come around the table of the breaking of bread, we renew the vow of our covenant, and thus we have personal intimacy with God. I cannot pray to Him except through the covenant of grace, and I know that I am not His child unless I am His: first through the covenant whereby Christ purchased me, and secondly through the covenant by which I have given up myself and dedicated all that I am and all that I have to Him.

**Through the blood** - this recalls all the writer has said in Hebrews 8-10 in which he explains how a new and living way has been opened into the presence of the living God.

**Henry Morris** says "that **"the blood of the covenant"** is counted **"an unholy thing"** by apostates (He 10:29), but it sealed the new covenant as **"everlasting."** ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Wuest** - The words **"through the blood of the everlasting covenant"** are in a construction called in the Greek, the locative of sphere. The New Testament is called the **eternal** one, in contrast to the First Testament which was of a transitory nature. It was

within the sphere of the **eternal covenant** that Messiah, having died for sinful man, was raised up from among those who are dead. He could not be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec if He were not raised from the dead. Sinful man needs a living Priest to give life to the believing sinner, not a dead priest merely to pay for his sins. Thus, it was provided within the New Testament that the priest who offered Himself for sacrifice, would be raised from the dead. We have a prophetic type of this in Aaron's rod that budded. ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

#### Related Resource:

- See study on meaning and significance of locative of sphere

**Blood** ([129](#)) (**haima**) refers to blood as the basis of life or what constitutes the life of an individual. Jehovah explained that "the life of the flesh is in the **blood**, and I have given **it** to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the **blood** by reason of the life that makes atonement." (Lev 17:11-note)

**Blood** is the basic component of a living organism. The shedding of Christ's blood (death) was the penalty price for sin. What was foreshadowed (**shadow**) in the Levitical system was realized (**substance**) at the Cross when the Son of God laid down His life in death and ransomed men from sin. His precious blood paid the ransom price for our **redemption** once and for all (Cf "Paid in full" = John 19:30-note 1Pe 1:18-notes; Rev 5:9-note, Ro 3:24-note; Ro 3:25-note) **Blood** was also used in the cleansing rites on the annual day of atonement (Lev 16:1-5, 6-34-note). (Related Resource: **See discussion of Kinsman Redeemer**)

Compare the **eternal covenant** to that prophesied in Jer 32:40 - And I will make an **everlasting covenant** with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me." The **everlasting covenant** ("An august epithet" - Bengel) in Jeremiah 32:40 is the **New Covenant** (New Testament) sealed by the blood of the Lamb.

**Eternal** ([166](#)) (**aionios** from **aion**) means perpetual eternal, everlasting, without beginning or end (as of God), that which is always.

**Eternal** is a key word (see description) used 6x in 6v in the book of Hebrews:

- Blood of **eternal** covenant (He 13:20-note).
- He offered Himself through His **eternal** spirit (He 9:14-note)
- He has become the Author/Source of **eternal** salvation (He 5:9-note).
- Eternal judgment (He 6:2-note)
- He has obtained **eternal** redemption (He 9:12-note)
- He enables men to receive of the **eternal** inheritance (He 9:15-note).

**Covenant** ([1242](#)) (**diatheke** [word study] from **dia** = two + **tithemi** = to place pictures that which is placed between two Thus, a covenant is something placed between two, an arrangement between two parties.) was a commonly used in the Greco-Roman world to define a legal transaction in settling an inheritance. **Diatheke** denotes an irrevocable decision, which cannot be cancelled by anyone. A prerequisite of its effectiveness before the law is the death of the disposer and thus **diatheke** was like a "final will and testament". In reference to the divine covenants, such as the Abrahamic covenant, diatheke is not a covenant in the sense that God came to agreement or compromise with fallen man as if signing a contract. Rather, it involves declaration of God's unconditional promise to make Abraham and his seed the recipients of certain blessings.

#### Related Resources:

- Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic
- Covenant: New Covenant in the Old Testament
- Covenant: Why the New is Better
- Covenant: Abrahamic vs Old vs New

**Marvin Vincent** has a lengthy note on **everlasting covenant** - The phrase **eternal covenant** is Common in the **Septuagint (LXX)**; see Ge. 9:16; 17:19; Lev 24:8; 2Sa 23:5; Jer. 39:40; Ezek 16:60. Const. with the great shepherd of the sheep. It may be granted that the raising of Christ from the dead, viewed as the consummation of the plan of salvation, was in the sphere of the blood of the covenant; nevertheless, the covenant is nowhere in the NT associated with the resurrection, but frequently with death, especially in this epistle. See Mt 26:28; Lk 22:20; Heb. 9:15, 16, 17-note, He 9:20-note. The connection of the blood of the covenant with Christ's pastoral office gives a thoroughly scriptural sense, and one which exactly fits into the context. Christ becomes the great shepherd solely through the **blood of the covenant**. Compare Acts 20:28. Through this is brought about the new relation of the church with God described in He 8:10ff. This tallies perfectly with the conception of "**the God of peace**"; and the great Shepherd will assert the

power of the eternal covenant of reconciliation and peace by perfecting His flock in every good work to do his will, working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight. With this agree Jer 50:5, 19; Ezek 34:25, and the entire chapter, see especially Ezek 34:12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 31. In these verses the Shepherd of the Covenant appears as guiding, tending his flock, and leading them into fair and safe pastures. Comp. Isa. 63:11, 12, 13, 14, and Rev 7:17-[note](#)

## SALVATION IS BASED ON COVENANT

**Charles Simeon** encourages us to notice how the writer of Hebrews...

brings together, for the purpose of more deeply impressing our minds, and more largely unfolding to us the great mysteries of **redemption**. Here he traces up every thing to a **covenant**; a covenant made from all eternity between the Father and the Son, and in due season ratified and confirmed with the Redeemer's blood. In that covenant, the Son of God engaged to assume our nature; and in that nature, to expiate our guilt by His own obedience unto death (Php 2:8-note). The Father promised to accept His vicarious sacrifice, and to give Him a people who should be His joy and His glory through eternal ages.

In accordance with this covenant, Christ had laid down His life: and in agreement with it, the Father had now raised Him from the dead, and empowered Him to perfect the work He had undertaken. What a field of mysterious information is here opened to our view!

**Every thing connected with our salvation is traced up to an everlasting covenant.**

(Simon now asks a series of rhetorical questions) Is God reconciled to us, and become a "God of peace?" Has He, under this character, "**raised from the dead the Lord Jesus?**" Has He, for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes, invested His dear Son with "the pastoral office," and committed us to Him as "His sheep?" All has been effected in conformity with an **everlasting covenant**, and from respect to that blood by which the covenant was confirmed.

**And does not all this, at the same time that it opens to us the most mysterious truths, give us an assurance which nothing else could convey?**

Yes, verily: for if the Lord Jesus were to suffer one of His sheep to be plucked out of His hand, or the Father were to refuse to impart to us one atom of what the Saviour has purchased for us, the **covenant** itself would be broken. But that **covenant** cannot be broken: and therefore every one, who believes in Christ, may be assured, that God is to him a "**God of peace**;" and that the reconciliation which has been effected shall never finally be dissolved. ([Hebrews 13:20, 21 Christian Principles Improved in Prayer](#))

(Ed comment/question: **If it is true that everything connected with our salvation can be traced to God's eternal covenant, does it not behoove believers to set aside some time and seriously study the essence of what is involved in covenant?** I can vouch for the fact that the truths about covenant are not just informational but have the potential to be radically transformational in your life dear believer! See my brief testimony of the "miraculous" transformation that occurred in our marriage as the Spirit began to work on my wife and myself, specifically illumining our heart and mind regarding the liberating, reassuring truth of God's covenant - **Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage**)

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Walk - THE GREAT SHEPHERD** - IT IS most comforting that our Heavenly Father is "the God of Peace." He is the God of the gentle zephyr, of the evening glow, of the mother's brooding care; and may be trusted by His gentleness and patience to make us great. Bruised reeds are not trampled beneath His feet, and the smoking flax is fanned into a flame. Do not be afraid of God--He is the God of Peace!

He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep. As our Lord descended into the Valley of Death, He breathed His departing spirit into the Father's hands. He knew that the path of life would unfold before Him. He knew that the Father's welcome awaited Him. And God did not fail Him! However low He went, when He descended into Hades, the Everlasting Arms were always beneath Him; and Him did God raise up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.

And will God do less for the Flock! There are many of the sheep that have been scattered in the cloudy and dark days. Will every sheep and lamb be recovered, and led to the green pastures and beside the quiet waters of Paradise? Yes, every one! The great Shepherd would not be content if one were missing of those whom the Father has given Him (Jn 10:28, 29). Remember His own parable of the Shepherd who left the ninety and nine to recover the one. If you have come to Him by your will and choice, you are included in the Father's gift.

We are secure in the position which His grace has given us. It is secured not only by the promise of God, but sealed by the Blood of the Cross. That is the meaning of the words: "**The Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant**" Note that word eternal, which carries us back to the timeless past, when this compact was made. We may therefore humbly believe that our names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8-[note](#); Rev 21:27-[note](#)). But we are saved to save others! It is thus that we make our calling and election sure (2Pe 1:10-[note](#)).

**PRAYER** - We thank Thee, O blessed Master, not only that Thou hast cleansed us from our sins, but that Thou hast entered into, and ratified by Thy precious blood, the eternal covenant which has made us Thine for ever. AMEN.

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**PEACE OF PARDON—Not a Mere Forgetfulness** - I have spilled the ink over a bill and so have blotted it till it can hardly be read, but this is quite another thing from having the debt blotted out, for that cannot be till payment is made. So a man may blot his sins from his memory, and quiet his mind with false hopes, but the peace which this will bring him is widely different from that which arises from God's forgiveness of sin through the satisfaction which Jesus made in his atonement. Our blotting is one thing, God's blotting out is something far higher.— Spurgeon in Feathers for Arrows

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Augustine, after years of tossing to and fro, found **peace** with God by hearing a little child say, "Take up, and read." I suppose that the child was singing to itself, and hardly knew what it was saying as it repeated to itself the two words—"Tolle, lege; tolle, lege; tolle, lege." "Take up, and read." That voice struck the ear of the perplexed thinker as though it were the voice of God, and he took the Scripture, and read the Scripture, and no sooner had he read it than he found Christ. I would entreat each one of you to do this, in order that you may find rest for your soul. Believe what is revealed in Holy Scripture. — Barbed Arrows from the Quiver of C. H. Spurgeon

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**Peace—uplifting.** The compass on board an iron steam-vessel is placed aloft, so that it may not be so much influenced by the metal of the ship: though surrounded by that which would put it out of place, the needle faithfully adheres to the pole, because it is set above misleading influence. So with the child of God when the Lord has given him peace: he is lifted beyond the supremacy of his sorrowful surroundings, and his heart is delivered from its sad surroundings.— Barbed Arrows from the Quiver of C. H. Spurgeon

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**Hebrews 13:21** [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](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

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**Greek:** [katartisai](#) (3SAAO) [umas en panti agatho eis to poiesai](#) (AAN) [to thelema autou. poion](#) (PAPMSN) [en emin to euareston enopion autou dia Iesou Christou. o e doca eis tous aionas \[ton aionon\]; amen.](#)

**Amplified:** Strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you and accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (the Messiah); to Whom be the glory forever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen (so be it). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** equip you with every good thing that you may do his will and may he create in you through Jesus Christ that which is well-pleasing in his sight. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. ([Westminster John Knox Press](#))

**ESV:** equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. ([ESV](#))

**KJV:** Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**NET:** equip you with every good thing to do his will, working in us what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen. ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV:** equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NLT:** may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** equip you thoroughly for the doing of his will! May he effect in you everything that pleases him

through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** equip you in every good thing to do His will, doing that in you which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Eerdmans)

**YLT:** make you perfect in every good work to do His will, doing in you that which is well-pleasing before Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory -- to the ages of the ages! Amen.

**EQUIP YOU IN EVERY GOOD THING TO DO HIS WILL: katartisai (3SAAO) humas en panti agatho eis to poiesai (AAN) to thelema autou:**

- **KJV = "Make you perfect":** He 12:23 Dt 32:4 Ps 138:8 Jn 17:23 Eph 3:16, 17, 18, 19 Col 1:9, 10, 11, 12 4:12 1Th 3:13 5:23 2Th 2:17 1Pe 5:10)
- **every:** 2Co 9:8 Eph 2:10 Php 1:11 2Th 2:17 1Ti 5:10
- **to do:** He 10:36 Mt 7:21 12:50 21:31 Jn 7:17 Ro 12:2 1Th 4:3 1Pe 4:2 1Jn 2:17)

### THE WRITER'S PRAYER FOR THE READERS OF THIS LETTER

Note the juxtaposition of God's sovereignty (**equip**) and man's responsibility (**do His will**). God equips us but we must still do the work! The Bible never teaches the perverted doctrine of "Let go, let God." Yes, we are to "let God" (provide the power) but we are to "join God" in accomplishing His will! To emphasize "Let God" results in passivity. To emphasize our working out His will (without depending on His power and provision) is to accomplish nothing of eternal value. Jesus was very clear that apart from Him we can do NOTHING that will endure eternity!

**Spurgeon** - The expression should be rendered, "**Make you fully complete**," or "**fully fitted**" to do His will. We ought to request earnestly that we may be qualified, adapted, and suited to be used of God for the performance of His will. The original Greek word (though I have not noticed that expositors observe it, yet anyone turning to the lexicon will see it) properly means to reset a bone that is dislocated. The meaning of the text is this: by the fall, all our bones are out of joint for the doing of the Lord's will. The desire of the apostle is that the Lord will set the bones in their places, and thus make us able with every faculty and in every good work to do His will.

**Equip** ([2675](#)) (**katartizo** [word study] from **katá** = with + **artízō** = to adjust, fit, finish, in turn from **ártios** = fit, complete) means to fit or join together and so to mend or repair. **Katartizo** conveys the fundamental idea of putting something into its appropriate condition so it will function well. It conveys the idea of making whole by fitting together, to order and arrange properly. When applied to that which is weak and defective, it denotes setting right what has gone wrong, to restore to a former condition, whether mending broken nets or setting broken bones.

**Katartizo** - 13x in 13v in **NAS** = Mt 4:21; 21:16; Mk 1:19; Lk 6:40; Ro 9:22-note; 1Co 1:10; 2Co 13:11; Gal 6:1; 1Th 3:10-note; Heb 10:5-note, He 11:3-note; He 13:21; 1Pe 5:10-note. **NAS** = complete(1), equip(1), fully trained(1), made complete(2), **mending**(2), perfect(1), prepared(4), restore(1).

Considering that because of sin, we are all "spiritually broken" (even believers still possess the fallen, anti-God tendency, the NT calls the **flesh**), Matthew's use of **katartizo** is interesting

Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, **mending** their nets; and He called them. (Matthew 4:21)

**Comment:** In this passage James and John were preparing their equipment so that they might catch fish, which was their "good deed" as fishermen. If fishermen can't function well without proper equipment in the natural realm, how much greater is the believer's need for God's equipping in the supernatural realm! The Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24) has "**mended**" us and by His Spirit has made us whole **in Christ**, our Source of the strengthening grace (2Ti 2:1-note, 2Co 12:9-note, 1Co 15:10) we need His amazing, all sufficient grace continually in order that we might worship and work in a manner pleasing to Him in all respects. In 1Co 1:10 note the antithesis of "divisions" with "be made complete" (**katartizo**, KJV "may be perfected"). One (divisions caused by men) tears down, while the other (equipping caused by God) builds up. Will we ever learn?

To make fitted or equipped for a duty or function.



To make someone completely adequate or sufficient for something.

To thoroughly prepare something to meet demands.

To supply that which is missing.

**Wuest** adds that **katartizō** "has in it the idea of equipping something or preparing it for future use."

**Vincent** says that **katartizō** "signifies to readjust, restore, set to rights, whether in a physical or a moral sense."

**Westcott** writes that the word "includes the thoughts of the harmonious combination of different powers, the supply of that which is defective, and the amendment of that which is faulty."

**Hiebert** notes that **katartizō** can also mean "to bring to completion a process of making whole already begun" as in Jesus statement that "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been **fully trained** (katartizō), will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

**Katartizō** was sometimes used metaphorically of restoring harmony among quarreling factions in a dispute.

**Katartizō** was used in secular Greek to describe a trainer who adjusts parts of the body, as a surgical term of the setting of a broken bone or putting a dislocated limb back in place or of the repairing and refitting of a damaged vessel (ship). **Katartizō** is used in other contexts of the strengthening or sustaining of a worn down people, of the mixing of medicine or of politicians appeasing factions and restoring unity (used by Herodotus for composing civil disorder)

Like a doctor setting a broken bone, God will **mend** our broken lives and make us whole.

That God would equip believers so they might be made ready to fulfill their purpose! Joshua was to do his part by not letting the law depart from his mouth, but to meditate on it daily and God would then do His part in equipping Joshua in every good thing to do His will and to step out onto the territory that was already his by God's promise (Jos 1:3).

**Katartizō** is the same word the writer uses to describe God preparing the world (He 11:3-note). If God can **katartizo** world out of things not seen by His spoken WORD, He is certainly able to equip us whatever task He has for us to do (Ep 2:10-note). What God requires He inspires and empowers!

Paul uses a related verb **exartizo** describing the power of the Living Word to **equip** the saint for service writing that "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, **equipped** (**exartizo** = to completely outfit, furnish fully) for every good work." (2Ti 3:16, 17-note)

**Newton** writes that **katartizo** "is a common word in the New Testament, variously translated as "prepared" (He 10:5-note, He 11:3-note), "complete" (1Th 3:10-note), and "restore" (Gal 6:1). It implies that something is lacking, defective, or faulty and must be repaired or restored to usefulness. The word was used for setting a broken bone and repairing a torn fishing net. Equip" appeals to the God who has justified us through Christ to provide everything necessary, in every area of life, to follow faithfully in doing God's will. The "prayer-wish" (portative mood) supplicates God, based on new covenant promises, to work in such a way that the believer will be adequately prepared "in every good thing to do His will... Think of what this meant to these weak, struggling believers. While they felt themselves inadequate for what lay ahead, they were now assured that God through Christ has come to their aid. Like a broken fishing net that cannot hold its catch without someone outside of it mending it, we stand torn, broken, and demoralized by the world and our own weakness. But our God carefully takes the needle and netting, and weaves it wisely into the torn places of our lives, bringing us to wholeness and usefulness. Are you weakened by the wear and tear of the world? Do you feel yourself incapable of living unto the Lord and doing His will? Then see that He meets you in your weakness, and equips you through the Word of God, the sufficiency of the gospel, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, fellowship of the Church, and the blessings of the ordinances to do His will. " (Ed: Brethren, is this not an excellent prayer we might pray frequently for one another?) ([Hebrews 13:20-25 A Benediction for the New Year](#))

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Walk - DISLOCATED LIMBS** - THE GREEK word here rendered **perfect** (He 13:21KJV) really means "to put in joint, to complete." In his original creation man's will was intended to register the Will of God, to say Yes to it, and to pass the divine impulses and commandments to the rest of our being. Sometimes on board ship, before the phone made it possible for the captain to speak to every part of the ocean-liner, I have heard Him quietly utter his orders to a subordinate officer beside him, who in turn repeated them in a loud voice through a speaking-trumpet or tube. That intermediary may represent the will which was intended to receive its directions from the Will of God, and pass them throughout the economy of our being. Such was our Lord's attitude throughout His earthly life. He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me"; "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"; "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

But in the Fall, the dominance of God's will and the loyal response of man's will became disorganized; and the human will instead of functioning in harmony with the Will of God, began to obey the will of the flesh in its grosser or more refined forms. Not what God wills, but what 'T' Hill, has become the working principle of the great majority. Thus it has come about that the will, by constant misuse, has become dislocated, warped, "out of joint." Tennyson says: "Our wills are ours to make them Thine!" Just so, but they are too stubborn for some of us to manage. Hence the suggestion that we should pass the matter over to the "God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus."

Sometimes at football (British soccer), or on the ice, a player may lose his balance, or be tripped up, and in the fall his shoulder may become dislocated. His arm is still in the body, but out of joint, so that it hangs useless by his side, until the surgeon by one strong wrench forces the bone back into its proper place. Is not that true of us? We are in the Body of Christ by redeeming grace, but we need to be set, i.e., to be brought into articulated union with the Will of God in Christ Jesus.

**THOUGHT** - Let us humbly ask the great Surgeon of souls, by the pressure of His strong and gentle hands, here and now, to joint our wayward wills with the Will of God, and then to work in us and through us that which is well-pleasing in His sight!

**PRAYER** - Gracious Father! I yield to Thee my will and desires, my members and faculties, the life of my body, the thoughts of my heart, and the aspirations of my spirit--perfect, I pray Thee, that which concerneth me. AMEN.

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**Good** (18) (**agathos**) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). **Agathos** is that which is good in its character, beneficial in its effects and/or useful in its action.

**Spurgeon** - God in Christ Jesus, by His almighty grace, must raise us up together with Christ. He who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ must stoop down to lift us up from the grave of sin, and quicken us into life eternal, or we shall never think His thoughts or follow His ways (Isa 55:8). Into the light where He dwells we can never come except by the operations of His divine Spirit. Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6) and "No one is able to come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44). The Holy Ghost must make us alive out of our trespasses and sins, deliver us from the ways in which we walk according to the course of this world, and redeem us from the dominion of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. By sanctification He must deliver us from our indwelling corruption, and continue the process till He conforms us perfectly to the image of the peerless Son of God. He will work likeness to Jesus in all believers, and it shall be said of us, "They are blameless" (Rev 14:5). Christ Himself shall say, "They will walk with me in white, because they are worthy" (Rev 3:4).

**To do** (4160) (**poieo**) means to accomplish. The same verb is used below to describe God's **"working"** (**poieo**) in us so that we can **"do"** what pleases Him. Clearly He equips us and then He works in us, enabling us to do His will. Mystery of mysteries which should evoke a loud "Hallelujah! Amen!"

**Vine** adds that "this desire, which gathers up the preceding exhortations throughout the chapter, could be fulfilled only by the power of God in Christ. The wish stands in contrast to the unfulfilled pledges of Israel who had said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient." Under the new covenant the power is bestowed with the will. Sinless perfection is not intended; *katartizō* means to fit, to prepare. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**His will** (2307) (**thelema** from **thelo** = to will with the **"-ma"** suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name **"Thelma."** In its most basic form, **thelema** refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. (**Note:** See also the discussion of the word **bole** for comments relating to thelema).

**Zodhiates** says that **thelema** is the "Will, not to be conceived as a demand, but as an expression or inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. ([Zodhiates, S. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. AMG](#))

**Thelema** has both an objective meaning ("what one wishes to happen" or what is willed) and a subjective connotation ("the act of willing or desiring"). The word conveys the idea of desire, even a heart's desire, for the word primarily expresses emotion instead of volition. Thus God's will is not so much God's intention, as it is His heart's desire.

Most of the NT uses of **thelema** (over 3/4's) refer to God's will and signify His gracious disposition toward something. God's will usually refers to what He has decreed, but occasionally God's will refers to what He desires but has not decreed (Mt 18:14). Of the remainder of the uses of **thelema** twice refers to the will of the exalted Christ (Acts 21:14, Ep 5:17-note), once to the will of the devil (2Ti 2:26-note) and 12 times to human will most often in contrast to God's will (eg Lk 23:25, Jn 1:13, Ep 2:3-note). Paul was an

**apostle** only because it was the **will (thelema)** of God - 1Cor 1:1, 2Cor 1:1, Ep 1:1-note, Col 1:1-note, 2Ti 1:1-note.

**Vine** - Man is able to resist the will, the thelema, of God, but whatever takes place God's determinate counsel, boulema, is never prevented from fulfillment. **Thelema**, when used of God, signifies a gracious design (cp. Ro 2:18; 12:2; 15:32); the similar word boulema denotes a determined resolve (see Ro 9:19). To do the will of God, then, is to yield ourselves to the accomplishment of His designs for us by obeying Him in all that He has revealed to faith, cp. Ro 1:17; He 11:3. But since neither the desire, nor the power, to do the will of God, dwells naturally in the believer, God works in Him "both to will and to work of His good pleasure," Php 2:13, cp. He 13:21 and 1Co 12:6. This, however, does not relieve the believer of his responsibility, for he is to "understand what the will of the Lord is," Ep 5:17, and understanding it, he is to do it from the heart, Ep 6:6. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**WORKING IN US THAT WHICH IS PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER AMEN: poion (PAPMSN) en hemin to euaireston enopion autou dia Iesou Christou o e doxa eis tous aionas (ton aionon), amen:**

- **working:** Php 2:13
- **pleasing :** He 13:16 Ro 12:1 14:17,18 Php 4:18 Col 3:20 1Jn 3:22
- **Through Jesus Christ:** Jn 16:23,24 Eph 2:18 Php 1:11 4:13 Col 3:17 1Pe 2:5
- **To whom:** Ps 72:18,19 Ro 16:27 Ga 1:5 Php 2:11 1Ti 1:17 6:16 2Ti 4:18 1Pe 5:11 2Pe 3:18 Jude 1:25 Rev 4:6 Re 5:9, Re 5:13
- **Amen:** Mt 6:13 Mt 28:20

## **GOD WORKS IN SO WE CAN WORK OUT**

**Working** (4160) (**poieo**) means doing or in this context accomplishing. The **present tense** indicates the God of peace is continually working in the believer's life. **Bengel** phrases it this way "God doing, we will do. God fits us for doing... 2Pe 1:3-note."

**Working in us** means the Christian life is not us living "like Jesus" trying to do our best for Him but that it is the Spirit of Christ living in and through us. This simple truth is the key to understanding and appropriating the Christ Life. The idea is that we can't live this Christian life but He did and He will live it through us. That's supernatural life and is what the world needs to see, for when they see us living that way, they will see Him, Christ in us the hope of glory.

The Spirit of Christ now living in me enables me to do what He has commanded me to do. We must come to the end of ourselves and realize that we cannot live the life Christ lived unless He lives it through us, in His power, and for His Father's glory.

The trap we often fall into is trying to "clean ourselves up" so that we appear more holy. We stop going to R-Rated movies, stop cursing, etc and think that because we have abandoned a few behaviors we are "better". This behavior borders on legalism, living by keeping rules or a set of do's and don'ts. The Christian life is no longer a matter of stopping some things and starting some others. Our ability to sin or not is the result of the Holy Spirit in us creating in us the desire and empowering us to be like Christ.

The "separation" from the world and who we present our members to (Ro 6:13-note, Ro 6:19-note, Ro 12:1-note; Ro 12:2-note) is a daily (Mk 8:34,35) even moment by moment choice which is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. With the discernment of the mind of Christ (Php 1:9, 10-note) we "cooperate" with the Spirit (filled with the Spirit like a "drunk" man is controlled by what fills him). We have to continually, daily die to the flesh (death to self), saying "yes" to Jesus (Note the order in Jn 3:30-note He must increase and we must decrease) and "no" to what the flesh strongly desires or lusts for and then we begin to experience living His life through us.

**Spurgeon** on working in us - The promise is a double promise when it is confirmed in Jesus. Though we are poor and worthless creatures, yet we can say with David, "Yet not so is my house with God, for he made an everlasting covenant, arranging everything" (2Sa 23:5).

**Pleasing** (2101) (**euairestos** [**word study**] from **eu** = good, well + **arestos** = pleasing, desirable, proper, fit, agreeable from **arésko** = to please or be pleasing/acceptable to) means that which causes someone, in this case God the Father, to be pleased. It is something which God well approves, which He finds eminently satisfactory or extra-ordinarily pleasing (because it is done **in Christ** , Jn 15:5 and for His glory Mt 5:16-note).

**Euairestos** - 9x in 9v in **NAS** - Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:2-note; Ro 14:18-note; 2Co 5:9-note; Ep 5:10-note; Php 4:18-note; Col 3:20-note; Titus 2:9-note; He 13:21. **NAS** = acceptable(3), pleasing(3), well-pleasing(3).

**Vine - Amen** is a Hebrew word. When said by God it means "it is and shall be so": when said by men it means "so let it be." The Lord Jesus often used it (translated "verily") to introduce new revelations of the mind of God. In John's Gospel it is always repeated, but not elsewhere. Once in the New Testament it is a title of Christ, Revelation 3:14-[note](#), because through Him the purposes of God are established. (Ibid)

## CORAM DEO

**In His sight** ([1799](#)) (**enopion** from **en** = in + **ops** = face, eye, countenance) literally means in the face of, in front of, before, in the sight of, in context in front of God. This calls to mind the Latin phrase Coram Deo meaning "Before the face of God".

This adverb is also used in Heb 4:13-note ("no creature hidden from His **sight**")

**Phil Newton** elaborates on the significance of "**in His sight**"...

Here is the implication. God is so working in our lives through his providential dealings in the details of life that we might do the things that He finds well-pleasing before His face. It is as though you were staring in the face of God, and He finds great pleasure in what you are doing because He has worked it in you.

Now the key to this is found in the covenant keeping God **"working in us."** I never cease to be amazed at the wonder that the transcendent God saves us and continues working in us! In that same vein, Paul exhorted the Philippians to work out their salvation, to give zealous attention to it, but to remember, "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note,). Both the desire-to will- and the ability-to work-is found in what God is doing in the believer. So every detail of your life has some bearing on the way God is working in you as a Christian so that you might do the things that are pleasing before His face. He works providentially in ways we see and cannot see, to enable us, strengthen us, refine us, teach us, shape us, reform us, renew us, and refresh us all for the purpose of doing "that which is pleasing in His sight." How does the Lord do this? The **Westminster Shorter Catechism** answers the question, "What are God's works of providence?"

"God's works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions" [Q. 11].

Because He has worked redemptively in your life, He continues to work (cp Php 1:6-note) to sanctify (**Ed**: He sets apart from the profane things of earth and the pure things of Heaven) your desires, ambitions, motives, delights, actions, and conversations so that all might be to His pleasure and glory. ([Hebrews 13:20-25 A Benediction for the New Year](#))

There is no time of day or night,  
No place on land or sea  
That God, whose eye is never dim,  
Does not see you and me.  
--DJD

**To know that God sees us brings  
both conviction and comfort**  
(cp Pr 5:21-note, Pr 15:3, 2Chr 16:9)

We see a similar "juxtaposition" of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in the following passages...

For this purpose (context = Col 1:28-note = to present every man complete [~spiritual maturity] in Christ ) also (First Paul describes his responsibility, his effort) **I labor** (**kopiao** [**word study**] = to the point of weariness), **striving** (**agonizomai** [**word study**]) (Now Paul explains how he is able to accomplish the work of God for His glory) according to **His power** (**energeia** [**word study**] ~ "**divine energy**"), which mightily **works** (**energeo** [**word study**] and **present tense** = God is continually energizing His bondservant to accomplish that which pleases Him in His sight) within me. (Col 1:29-note)

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but **I labored** (**kopiao**) even more than all of them, **yet not I, but the grace of God with me.** (1 Co 15:10) (**Comment**: Again we see this mysterious but very real juxtaposition of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty and sufficiency. There is no other way to live the "victorious Christian life"!)

**Ray Stedman** sums up this section writing that "With such marvelous resources as these, who can excuse any failure to become

the man or woman God intends you to be? We may well adopt for our own the words of J. I. Packer: "My task is not to dizzy myself by introspecting or speculating to find (if I can) what lies at the outer reaches of consciousness, nor to pursue endless, exquisite stimulation in the hope of new exotic ecstasies. It is, rather, to know and keep my place in God's cosmic hierarchy, and in that place to spend my strength in serving God and men" (Your Father Loves You. Ed. and compiled by Jean Watson. Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw. 1986). ([Hebrews 13:20-21 A Gathered-Together Prayer](#))

**Though Jesus Christ** (See a simple study of **through Christ**) - **Dods** notes that it is "through Jesus, now reigning as Christ, that all grace is bestowed on His people."

**Charles Simeon** discusses the blessing upon his readers which the writer "solicits" from God (He 13:21) noting first that

Here also is a singular accumulation of words to convey what might have been stated in a much shorter space. But the (writer's) mind was so full, that he could not but dilate upon the subject which so strongly engaged his thoughts. His general request was, that God would make them holy, and enable them to please Him who had so mercifully accepted them to his favour. But,

**1. He first expresses the extent of his desire for them—"This,"** says he in another place, **"is my wish, even your perfection."** (2Co 13:9) He would have us **"perfect in every good work."**

The whole soul has been so disorganized, in relation to all spiritual things, that it is incapable of rendering to God the obedience due to Him. Hence he prays, that we may be **"fitted,"** by a renovation and concentration of all our powers, for the execution of God's holy will.

**He would not have us to render any partial services, but an obedience perfect and entire.**

He would have us engage **"in every good work,"** of whatever kind it be; without regarding either the difficulty of performing it, or the danger to which the performance of it may expose us. We should know no authority but God's; no standard but God's:

**His will should be both the rule and the reason of every thing that we do.**

And who that views God as reconciled towards him in the Son of His love would wish to curtail any one duty, or to reduce the standard which is here proposed? I am sure, that a knowledge of God, as a **"God of peace,"** cannot fail to engender in us the desires here expressed by the (writer), or of stimulating us to the attainment of a perfect conformity to the Divine will.

**2. He next suggests the only means by which that desire can be accomplished—**It is **"God Who must work in us both to will and to do."** (Php 2:13-note)

**Without the operation of His Holy Spirit in us, we cannot even think a good thought.**(Ed: Do you believe that! There can be no doubt when one compares Jn 15:5!)

Hence the Apostle prays, that God will **"work in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight"**

**In addition to holy principles instilled into our minds, there must be powerful energies imparted to our souls:**

for, as soon might a body, every joint of which was dislocated, perform the common offices of life, as we with our fallen powers effect the will of God in all holy obedience.

**We must not hope "to please God"  
by any thing undertaken in our own strength.**

Nor indeed, however it be wrought in us, can anything come up with acceptance before God, except **"through Jesus Christ."** His blood must cleanse our very best actions from the defilement that attends them; and His intercession must obtain for them the favour of our God. Except as coming before Him in this way, God could not look upon the very best action of the best of men: "He is of purer eyes than to behold" with complacency any service that we can render, till it has been purified and presented by Christ Himself. And I wish you to notice how carefully the (writer) strives to impress this upon our minds, where a common writer would never have thought of suggesting any such idea.

You will notice, also, how full of gratitude the (writer) is to that Saviour Who has thus reconciled us unto God, and procured for us the acceptance of our unworthy services. In truth, the (writer) can scarcely ever mention Christ without expatiating upon His excellencies, and offering to Him some ascription of praise. Here, apparently without necessity, the (writer) adds, **"To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever: Amen."**

And who amongst us has not his soul attuned to this divine and heavenly strain? Who, in the view of Him as reconciling us to God, and as executing towards us the office of a Shepherd, and as procuring for us God's favourable acceptance both of our persons and our services; who, I say, does not add his "**Amen**" to this; and desire, from his inmost soul, that all "**glory and dominion**" may be given to Him by all His creatures, both in heaven and earth?

## REAL HOLINESS

From the whole of this subject we may learn,

**1. What we should aspire after**—We can scarcely conceive any thing more comprehensive of real holiness, of holiness in its utmost possible extent, than the words before us. This is what the (writer) desired in behalf of all the Christian Church: and this is what every Christian should aspire after for himself.

Beloved brethren, indeed Christianity does not consist in notions of any kind. Doubtless its foundation is laid on truths revealed by Almighty God: but it must have a superstructure, a superstructure high as heaven itself; for "**our conversation must be in heaven**," (Php 3:20KJV, Php 3:20NASB-note) whither our Saviour Christ is gone before. I pray you, do not attempt to lower the standard of God's requirements.

**Let your labour be for "every good work;"**  
**Your rule, "his revealed will;"**  
**Your delight, "whatsoever is pleasing in his sight:"**

Desire nothing less than this; and aim at nothing less: but seek to be "**holy as God himself is holy**," (1Pe 1:15, 16-note, Lv 11:44, 45) and "**perfect as God himself is perfect**." (Mt 5:48-note)

**2. How it is to be attained**—It is not by any worldly principles that such holiness can be acquired:

**it is by a discovery and reception of evangelical truth,**  
**even by the Gospel only:**

And the more fully that **Gospel** is understood, the more influential shall we find it on our hearts and lives.

It (an understanding of the Gospel) banishes servile fear:

it establishes the dominion of gratitude and love:

it stimulates to high and noble exertions:

it renders suffering itself a ground of joy, when sustained in the cause of our adorable Lord and Master.

It even assimilates us to Christ himself.

What was there which He did not do to effect a reconciliation between God and us? And what will not His followers do to express their love to Him? Behold St. Paul.

**"For the knowledge of Christ, he accounted all things but dung and dross"**

He was ready to die at any time, and in any manner, for the sake of Christ. In like manner will the saving knowledge of Christ operate on us also. Let this, then, be remembered by us, that

**Christian principle alone**  
**will lead to Christian practice.**

And in order to our advancement in the divine life, let us seek to know Christ (cp Php 3:10-note, Col 1:28-note): for then only shall we be conformed to His image (Ro 8:29-note), when we behold His glory (cp He 12:2-note), and the glory of God the Father shining forth in Him. [Hebrews 13:20, 21 Christian Principles Improved in Prayer](#)

## THE CLOSING PRAYER



"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Hebrews 13:20-21.

THROUGHOUT this Epistle, the inspired writer has been appealing to man. Through successive paragraphs he has poured forth a burning stream of argument, remonstrance, or appeal; now opening the full peal of Sinai's thunders, and now the wail of Calvary's broken heart, and finally summoning the most honored names in Hebrew story to enforce his words. All this is over now. He can say no more. The plowing and sowing and harrowing are alike complete. He must turn from earth to heaven, from man to God; and leave his converts and his work with that glorious Being whose cause he had striven so faithfully to plead, and who alone could crown his labors with success. There are many splendid outbursts of prayer beginning these Epistles; but amongst them all, it is impossible to find one more striking or beautiful than this.

## **I. THE BURDEN OF THE PRAYER**

Is that these Hebrew Christians may be made perfect to do God's will. The word "perfect" means to set in joint, or articulate. Naturally, we are out of joint, or, at the best, work stiffly; but the ideal of Christian living is to be so perfectly "set" that God's purposes may be easily and completely realized in us. There is no higher aim in life than to do the will of God. It was the supreme object for which our Saviour lived. This brought him from heaven. This determined his every action. This fed his inner life with hidden meat. This cleared and lit up his judgment. This led him with unfaltering decision into the valley of death. This was the stay and solace of his spirit as he drank the bitter cup of agony. Throughout his mortal life his one glad shout of assurance and victory was, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." And human lives climb up from the lowlands to the upland heights just in proportion as they do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. If every reader of these lines would resolve from this moment to do the will of God in the very smallest things-with scrupulous care, counting nothing insignificant, shrinking from no sacrifice, evading no command-life would assume entirely a new aspect. There might be a momentary experience of suffering and pain; but it would be succeeded by the light of resurrection, and the new song of heaven, stealing like morning through the chambers of the soul.

God is love; to do his will is to scatter love in handfuls of blessing on a weary world. God is light; to do his will is to tread a path that shines more and more unto the perfect day. God is life; to do his will is to eat of the Tree of Life, and live forever, and to drink deep draughts of the more abundant life which Jesus gives. God is the God of hope; to do his will is to be full of all joy and peace, and to abound in hope. God is the God of all comfort; to do his will is to be comforted in all our tribulation by the tender love of a mother. God is the God of peace; to do his will is to learn the secret inner calm, which no storm can reach, no tempest ruffle. God is the God of truth; to do his will is to be on the winning side, and to be assured of the time when he will bring out our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday. Why will you not, my readers, who have followed these chapters thus far to the last, resolve from this moment that your will shall henceforth say "Yes" to God's will, and that you will live out what be wills and works within? Probably, at the very outset, you will be tested by your attitude to some one thing. Do not try to answer all the suggestions or inquiries that may be raised tumultuously within, but deal immediately and decisively with that single item. Dare to say, with respect to it, "I will thy will, O my God." And immediately the gate will open into the rapture of a new life. But remember that his will must be done in every work to which you put your hands; and then every work will be good. We cannot tell how the mysterious promptings of our will are able to express themselves in our limbs and members. We only know that what we will in ourselves is instantly wrought out through the wonderful machinery of nerve and muscle. And we are quick to perceive when, through some injury or dislocation, the mandate of the will fails to be instantly and completely fulfilled. Nor do we rest content until the complete communication is restored. But in all this there is a deep spiritual analogy. We are members, through grace, of the body of Christ. The will lies with him; and if we were living as we ought, we should be incessantly conscious of its holy impulses, withdrawing us from this, or prompting us to that. Our will would not be obliterated, but would elect to work in perpetual obedience and subordination to the will of its King. Alas! this is not our case. We are too little sensible of those holy impulses. On rare occasions we realize and yield to them. But how many of them fail to reach or move us, because we are out of joint! What prayer could better befit our lips than that the God of peace, the true surgeon of souls, would put us in joint, to do his will, with unerring accuracy, promptitude, and completeness!

## **II. MARK THE GUARANTEES THAT THIS PRAYER SHALL BE REALIZED**

The appeal is made to the God of peace. He whose nature is never swept by the storms of desire or unrest; whose one aim is to introduce peace into the heart and life; whose love to us will not brook disappointment in achieving our highest blessedness, he must undertake this office; he will do it most tenderly and delicately; nor will he rest until the obstruction to the inflow of his nature is removed, and there is perfect harmony between the promptings of his will and our immediate and joyous response.

He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep. To have given us a Shepherd was much; but to have given us so great a Shepherd is marvelous. He is the great Shepherd who died, just as he is the good Shepherd who knows

his flock, and the chief Shepherd who is coming again. He is great, because of the intrinsic dignity of his nature; because of his personal qualifications to save and bless us; because of the greatness of his unknown sufferings; and because of the height of glory to which the Father hath exalted him. The words "brought again" are very expressive. They contain the idea of "brought up." More is meant than the reanimation of the dead body of Christ. There is included, also, his exaltation by the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour. And, surely, if our God has given us such a Shepherd, and raised him to such a glory, that he may help us the more efficiently, there is every reason why we should confidently count on his doing all that may be needed in us, as he has done all that was needed for us.

He will certainly respect the everlasting covenant, which has been sealed with blood. God has entered into an eternal covenant with us to be our God and Friend. That covenant, which does not depend on anything in us, but rests on his own unchanging nature, has been ratified by the precious blood of his Son. As the first covenant was sealed by the sprinkled blood of slain beasts, so the second was sealed by the precious blood of Christ. "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Thus spoke our Saviour on the eve of his death, with a weight of meaning which this Epistle was needed to explain. And is it likely that he who has entered into such a covenant with our souls—a covenant so everlasting, so divine, so solemn—will ever go back from it, or allow anything to remain undone which may be needed to secure its perfect and efficient operation? It cannot be! We may count, without the slightest hesitation, on the God of peace doing all that is required to perfect us in every good work to do his will.

### III. THE DIVINE METHOD

**Will be to work in us.** It is necessary first that we should be adjusted so that there may be no waste or diversion of the divine energy. When that is done, then it will begin to pass into and through us in mighty tides of power. "God working in you." It is a marvelous expression! We know how steam works mightily within the cylinder, forcing up and down the ponderous piston. We know how sap works mightily within the branches, forcing itself out in bud and leaf and blossom. We read of a time when men and women were so possessed of devils that they spoke and acted as the inward promptings led them. These are approximations to the conception of the text, which towers infinitely beyond. Have we not all been conscious of some of these workings? They do not work in us mightily as they did in the Apostle Paul, because we have not yielded to them as he did. Still, we have known them when the breath of holy resolution has swept through our natures; or we have conceived some noble purpose; or have been impelled to some deed of self-sacrifice for others. These are the workings of God within the heart, not in the tornado only, but in the zephyr; not in the thunder alone, but in the still small voice. Every sigh for the better life, every strong and earnest resolution, every determination to leave the nets and fishing-boats to follow Jesus, every appetite for fellowship, every aspiration heavenward—all these are the result of God's in-working. How careful we should be to gather up every divine impulse, and translate it into action! We must work out what he works in. We must labor according to his working, which works in us mightily. We must be swift to seize the fugitive and transient expression, embodying it in the permanent act. It does not seem so difficult to live and work for God when it is realized that the eternal God is energizing within. You cannot be sufficiently patient to that querulous invalid, your patience is exhausted; but God is working his patience within you: let it come out through you. You cannot muster strength for that obvious Christian duty; but God is working that fruit in your innermost nature; be content to let it manifest itself by you. You are incompetent to sustain that Christian work, with its manifold demands; but stand aside, and let the eternal God work in and through you, to do by his strength what you in your weakness cannot do. The Christian is the workshop of God. In that mortal but renewed nature the divine Artisan is at work, elaborating products of exquisite beauty and marvelous skill. Would that we might be less eager to give the world ourselves, and more determined that there should be a manifestation through all the gateways of our being of the wondrous in-working of the God of peace! Then we might say, with some approach to the words of our Lord, to such as demand evidences of his resurrection and life, "How sayest thou, Prove to me the resurrection of Jesus? the words which I speak, I speak not of myself; but my Saviour, who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

### III. THE RESULT

**Will be that we shall be well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.** Our good works can never be the ground of our acceptance or justification. The very best of them can only please God through Jesus Christ. Our purest tears need washing again in his blood. Our holiest actions need to be cleansed ere they can be viewed by a holy God. Our best prayers and gifts need to be laid on the altar which sanctifies all it touches. We could not stand before God for a moment, save by that one sufficient substitutionary sacrifice, once offered by Jesus on the cross, and now pleaded by him before the throne. At the same time, our Father is pleased with our obedient loyalty to his will. He gives us this testimony, that we please him; as Enoch did, who walked with him before the flood. And it should be the constant ambition of our lives so to walk as to please him, and to obtain from him a faint echo of those memorable words which greeted our Saviour as he stepped upon the waters of Baptism: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

**To Him be glory forever and ever!**

Directly the soul is right with God, it becomes a vehicle for God; and thus a revenue of glory begins to accrue to God, which ceases not, but augments as the years roll by. And the time will never come when the spirit shall not still pour forth its glad rejoicings to the glory of him to whom is due the praise of all. If your life is not bringing glory to God, see to it that at once you set to work to ascertain the cause. Learning it, let it be dealt with forthwith. Hand yourself over to God to make you and keep you right. And thus begin a song of love and praise, which shall rise through all coming ages, to the Father who chose you in Christ, to the Saviour who bought you with his blood, and to the Spirit who sanctifies the heart; one adorable Trinity, to whom be the glory forever and ever, Amen. ([Hebrews 13:20-21: The Closing Prayer from The Way into the Holiest](#))

Steven Cole's sermon on Hebrews 13:20-21...

## God Our Provider

One of the strange ironies of human existence is that all of us are weak and needy, but we try to project the impression that we're strong and self-sufficient. I'm sure that pride is at the root of this, but it's still strange to observe. We're like the emperor in the familiar story, proudly strutting down the street to show off our new clothes, when in fact we're stark naked.

For example, every one of us is physically frail, but we act as if we're going to live forever. Even if you're young and in good health, there are many ways that you could die before this day is over. When we visit Marla's mother, who lives in a community of mostly retired people, I'm always amazed at the way that all of the old geezers are desperately trying to keep it all together. I'm quickly becoming an old geezer myself, and I'm all for trying to stay in shape as long as I'm able. But watching these people gives me the distinct impression that they're closing their eyes to the fact that they're going to die in just a few years.

Every one of us is financially frail and needy. Again, someone may protest, "I've got adequate investments and properties that I own that will more than meet my future needs. I've got a great job with seniority." I'm sure that Saddam Hussein had similar thoughts about a year before we invaded Iraq! But his investments and job security didn't do him much good then. Jesus warned about the man who thought that he had achieved financial security, but God demanded his soul of him that very night (Luke 12:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

Our bodies and our finances are only two areas, but pick any area of life that you wish, and the conclusions are the same: you are weak, vulnerable, and needy. Emotionally, maybe you're doing great today, but tomorrow a series of tragedies could hit you as they hit Job, and you would be shattered. Nothing in this life is a sure basis for security-except for God! He designed it that way so that we would be driven to trust in Him for every need. But in spite of the obvious truth of this, we madly scramble to find our security in other things.

The church of Laodicea thought that they had it together. They said, "I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing." God had a slightly different opinion: "you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Rev 3:17-[note](#)). There could hardly be a greater contrast! How could a church think that they were rich, wealthy, and in need of nothing, and yet God sees them as wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked?

The irony is, when we see ourselves as God sees us, recognizing our desperate need for Him, and cry out to Him, He is ready to flood us with His abundant blessings. As Mary acknowledged, "He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed" (Luke 1:53). When we come hungry to God, He fills us. When we think we're rich and don't need God, He sends us away empty-handed. This is great news-that the only requirement for receiving God's abundant blessings is to come to Him as a desperate, needy sinner and ask for mercy. He delights to provide for those who rely on Him.

The author of Hebrews has just acknowledged his need by asking his readers for prayer (He 13:18, 19). Now, he returns the favor by praying for his readers in this wonderful benediction. We can sum it up by saying,

God, who has provided everything for our salvation through Jesus Christ (2Pe 1:3-note), through Him will also provide all that we need to live for His glory.

God has promised to do everything that is in these two verses, and yet the author prays that it would be so. God has ordained that prayer is the way for us to lay hold of His promises. Prayer acknowledges that we're needy and that God is mighty to provide. When He does provide, He gets the glory because we know that He did it.

## **1. God has provided everything for our salvation through Jesus Christ (He 13:20).**

The author succinctly gives five aspects of our salvation:

### **A. God has provided peace between Himself and fallen sinners.**

The author refers to God as “the God of peace.” People desperately seek peace for their souls in many ways, but true peace can only come through being reconciled to God. The Bible teaches that we are born in rebellion against God. Our sins make us enemies of God, who is absolutely holy. Paul writes of those who are outside of Christ, “the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro 8:7, 8-note). James (Jas 4:4-note) writes that “friendship with the world is hostility toward God.”

People who are God’s enemies often do not recognize their true spiritual condition, because Satan has blinded their minds (2Co 4:4). One of the first signs that God is at work in your heart is that you begin to see your sin and guilt before God (2Co 4:6). You recognize that there is no way that you can atone for your own sin. You wonder if there is any way that you can have true peace with God. The great news of the Bible is, Yes! That’s why Jesus Christ came. Paul wrote (2Co 5:19) “that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them....” Before we explore how He did that, note...

### **B. God has provided the great Shepherd of the sheep that we needed.**

This is the only time in Hebrews that the author refers to Jesus as our **Shepherd**, but that metaphor is used often of Him. Jesus referred to Himself as “**the good shepherd**,” who “lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Here, the author has just referred to the leaders of the congregation as those who “**keep watch over your souls**” (Heb. 13:17). But even the best of leaders are imperfect shepherds at best. Jesus is **the great Shepherd**,” who does not lose any of the sheep that the Father has given to Him. He said (John 10:28, 29, 30),

“I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

**Phillip Keller**, in his excellent [A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 \[Zondervan\]](#), shows that domestic sheep are some of the most helpless animals in the world. They literally cannot survive without a shepherd. They need him to guard them from predators, to lead them to pasture, to provide quiet sources of pure water, and many other necessities. In fact, they can even get stuck on their backs, with their legs flailing the air, and die in that position, if the shepherd does not come along and set them upright! Someone has humorously pointed out that domestic sheep disprove the evolutionary dogma of the survival of the fittest! The Bible calls us “sheep” to point out what should be obvious, but what we often deny, that we cannot survive without the good Shepherd. God graciously sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our good Shepherd.

### **C. God has provided by putting that Shepherd to death for our sins.**

Our verse mentions “**death**” and “**blood**.” As the author has shown, in His death Jesus fulfilled all that the Old Testament sacrifices pointed toward. God instituted those sacrifices to provide a temporary solution for the sins of the Jewish people. The wages of sin is death, and because He is just, God cannot simply forgive sins without the penalty being paid. “Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:22-note). The blood of animals could never totally atone for sins (He 10:1, 2, 3, 4-note). What those sacrifices could not do, Jesus did. As the eternal Son of God, He took on human flesh, perfectly obeyed God’s law, and then offered Himself as the just payment for the sins of His people. Isaiah 53:4, 5, 6 prophesied of Jesus’ death on our behalf:

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

Thus the God of peace has provided the way for us to have peace with Him by sending the great Shepherd and putting Him to death for our sins. But He did not remain in the grave:

### **D. God has provided by raising that Shepherd from the dead, thus confirming His covenant.**

There is a sense in which Jesus laid down His life and took it up again by His own authority (John 10:18). But

in another sense, the Father raised Jesus from the dead by His mighty power (Acts 2:24; 3:15, 4:10, 26; 5:30; Ep 1:20-note). The phrase, “through [or, by] the blood of the eternal covenant” is connected with God’s bringing Jesus up from the dead. The resurrection confirmed God’s acceptance of Jesus’ death as ratification of the new covenant, in which He said, “I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will re-member their sins no more” (Heb. 8:12-note). The covenant is eternal in the sense that it never will be invalidated or superseded. Jesus’ shed blood is the final, complete sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 10:14, 15, 16, 17, 18-note).

The bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the solid foundation of the Christian faith. If you can disprove it, there is no basis for Christianity, and you should live for all the pleasure you can get in this life (1Co 15:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 32). But the uniform witness of the apostles, who were transformed from dejected and disillusioned men after the crucifixion into bold witnesses, was that Jesus is risen bodily. They saw Him, they touched Him, they ate with Him, and He taught them for 40 days before He ascended into heaven. He promised to return bodily. If these things are just the wish fulfillments of a bunch of deluded men, then Christianity is false. If these witnesses spoke the truth, then Jesus is the risen Lord.

#### **E. God has provided Jesus, who is our Lord.**

The last phrase of He 13:20 identifies the great Shepherd of the sheep as “Jesus our Lord.” This shows both the humanity and deity of the Savior. Jesus is His human name, born of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a man, He could die on the cross as the substitute for human sinners. “Lord” is a title for the sovereign God. As God in human flesh, Jesus’ death could do what the death of animals never could do: permanently take away our sins (He 10:10-note, He 10:14-note, He 10:18-note).

The author uses the first person plural pronoun, “our Lord.” The Bible is clear that while Jesus is Lord of all, He is not the Lord of all in the same way. He is the Lord of some in the sense that He is their Judge, who will condemn them. He is Lord of others in the sense of being their Savior. Those are the only two options. If Jesus is not your Lord personally, because you have trusted in Him as your Savior from sin, and submitted to Him as the rightful Sovereign of your life, then you will face Him someday as the Judge who will impose the just penalty of eternal separation from Him because of your sins.

Now is the day of salvation (2Co 6:2), when every sinner may find mercy at the cross. At death or when Jesus returns will be the day of judgment, when those who have not submitted to Jesus as Lord will cry out to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16-note).

So the first part of the author’s benediction shows that God has provided everything for our salvation through Jesus our Lord. But, He does not just save us from His judgment and then leave us to fend for ourselves.

#### **2. God will also provide all that we need to live for His glory (He 13:21).**

The verb, equip, is in the Greek optative mood, which expresses a desire or wish. The sense is, “May the God of peace equip you....” There are four facets to this:

##### **A. God will equip us in every good thing to do His will.**

Imagine the parents of a newborn bringing their little bundle home from the hospital. They carry him from room to room, explaining, “There’s the refrigerator. Help yourself when you’re hungry. There’s the bathroom. It’s all there for you: toilet, shower, sink. Your bedroom is in here. Just make sure that you change the sheets each week and make your bed. If you ever need anything, let us know. We’ll see what we can do.”

Thankfully, no earthly parents would ever think of doing that, and God does not do that, either. As Paul explains in Ro 8:32-note,

“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

There is one sense in which evil men killed Jesus. But in another sense, God put His own Son to death for us (Ps 22:15; Is 53:4, 10; Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28). If God made that greatest provision for us while we were yet sinners, won’t He now provide all that we need to live for Him and serve Him for His glory?

“To do God’s will” is to be like Jesus, because He came to do God’s will (Heb. 10:7). This is a lifelong process that is never complete in this life. But the point here is that the same mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead equips us to do God’s will and to live for His glory.

The King James Version translated equip as make you perfect, but that conveys a wrong sense. The Greek

verb is used of mending torn nets (Mt. 4:21). It was used outside of the Bible to describe putting a bone back into place. It means to restore something so that it can realize its intended purpose. As sinners, we're wounded and broken. By our own efforts, we could never put our lives back together so that they would be useful to the holy God. But what we cannot do, God does! He mends the torn places in our lives. He sets the broken bones, so that they will heal. He does not do this so that we can live for ourselves, but rather so that we can "in every good thing ... do His will." His Word shows us the things that "are pleasing in His sight," so that we can walk in them.

#### **B. God will work in us that which is pleasing in His sight.**

God equips or restores us, and then He works in us. But this does not mean that we are completely passive in the process. Our text conveys what Paul wrote (Phil 2:12b-note, Php 2:13-note), "work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." God saves us by His sovereign grace, not by anything we do. Both saving faith and repentance are His gift, not something that comes from within us (Php 1:29-note; Acts 11:18; 2Ti 2:25-note). Having saved us, He blesses us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3-note). He works in us, motivating and empowering us to do His will. And yet at the same time, we must work in cooperation with Him. Ephesians 2:8, 9-note Ep 2:10-note puts it all together,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before-hand so that we would walk in them.

God saved us by His grace, and He prepared the very works that we should do for Him beforehand. But, we have to walk in them. Our aim every day, beginning on the thought level, should be, "God, I want to please You because of Your abundant grace that You have shown me. Empower me today to do that which is pleasing in Your sight."

Thus God will equip us in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

#### **C. God works these things through Jesus Christ.**

The author adds (He 13:21), "**through Jesus Christ.**" As we saw in our study of 13:15, everything in the Christian life is "**through Him.**" (See discussion of **through Him = through Christ**) We are saved because "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4-note). He "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3-note). Someone has added up the phrase "in Christ" (See discussion of **in Christ**) or "in Christ Jesus" in Paul's writings and found that it occurs 169 times (cited by [R. Kent Hughes Hebrews- An Anchor for the Soul, Volume 2](#)). What a glorious truth, that if you have trusted Christ, everything that is true of Him is true of you! All of His riches are yours to enjoy!

Imagine that you were a poor orphan in Africa and the billionaire, Bill Gates, adopted you and included you in his will as the only heir. Suddenly, all of the riches of the richest man in the world are yours because you are in his family. Far better than the riches of Bill Gates, which will perish, are God's riches in Jesus Christ, which endure throughout eternity! And they are yours in Him!

#### **D. God and the Lord Jesus Christ get all of the glory.**

Grammatically, "to whom" may refer either to God or to Jesus Christ, and scholars are divided over which is preferable. But since the Father and the Son are one, they both get the glory in our salvation. As Revelation 5:13-note puts it,

To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and do-minion forever and ever.

Salvation is not about us. The Christian life is not about us. It's all about God's glory and the glory of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who gave Himself for our sins. If you are not living daily to glorify God for His great salvation in Jesus Christ, you are living for an insignificant purpose. God created you so that you would live to glorify Him by enjoying Him forever. "Amen" means, "So be it!"

**Conclusion** - Someone has written (source unknown), Empty hands I lifted to Him and He filled them with a store Of His own transcendent riches till my hands could hold no more. And at last I comprehended, with my mind so slow and dull That God could not pour His riches into hands already full.

Has God opened your eyes to your need for Christ? If so, let go of everything else and lay hold of Jesus Christ. He is that "treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes



and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matt. 13:44). He is that pearl of great value for which a merchant "sold all that he had and bought it" (Matt. 13:45, 46). In Him, God has provided all that you need for salvation from His judgment. In Him, God has provided all that you need to live in a manner that is pleasing unto Him, for His glory. Make sure that your faith rests in the risen great Shepherd, even Jesus our Lord!

### Discussion Questions

1. Why are people who are headed for judgment blind to their desperate need for Christ (2Co 4:4)? Other than prayer, how can we help them to see the truth?
2. "Good" people are often the most difficult to reach with the gospel. Agree/disagree? Why? (See Luke 18:18-27.)
3. How can we know the balance between God's power and our own efforts in serving Him (Phil 2:12b-note, Php 2:13-note)?
4. Why must pleasing God begin on the thought level? See Heb 4:13-note; 1Th 2:4-note. ([Hebrews 13:20-21 God Our Provider](#))

## THE GOD OF PEACE- WHAT HE WILL DO IN US

**Andrew Murray** - The God of Peace - And What He Will Do In Us - Hebrews 13:20-21 from "[Holiest of All](#)"

THE Epistle began by telling us that in 'all that Christ is and does it is God speaking in us. The great work of Christ is to bring us to God; His death and His blood, His ascension and sitting on the throne, all mean one thing--our being brought nigh to dwell in God's presence. And with what object? That God may have us, to perfect us, and work in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. Let no one think that the entrance into the Holiest is the end, it is only the beginning of the true Christian life. It brings us into the right place and the right position, in which God now, in His divine power, can work out His own power in us, can make us in full truth one with Christ, can work the likeness of Christ into us.

We have reached the close of the Epistle. The writer gathers up all his teaching in the two verses of this beautiful closing prayer. As in it he commits his readers to God, the mention of God's name calls up all that he has said of God's work, and the first of the two verses is a summing up of all that God has done for us to bring us to Himself. Then follows, in the second the prayer, with its promise of all that we can count upon this God to do in us, that we may live worthy of Him. He points to the work God has done for us, as the ground and pledge of what He will do in us. The Epistle has revealed to us God in Christ; it seeks to send us out into life with the assurance that as wonderful and mighty and perfect as was the work of God in Christ for us, will be His work through Christ, by the Spirit, in us. Let each one who has listened to the call Let us draw nigh, remember that he has been brought to God, that God may now reveal Christ in Him, and, as completely as He perfected Christ, perfect each one of us to do His will. The more we look to what God has done in Christ, as the pledge of what He will do in us, with the more confidence will our faith accept and expect it. And the more our desire is set upon the wonderful work God is yet to do in us, the more will our heart be fixed in adoration on God Himself as our hope and our joy.

**The God of peace.** This is the name by which we are invited to call upon and trust our God. Peace is the opposite of enmity, of war, of care, of unrest. Where everything is finished and perfect, there is peace and rest. God hath set the Holiest open for us, in token that we may enter into His rest, and trust Him to perfect His work in us. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, can now keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. Peace, an end of all care and fear and separation, has been proclaimed; the God of peace is now waiting to do His work in us.

**Who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the everlasting covenant.** The Epistle has nowhere directly made mention of the resurrection of Christ. But this was not needful: all its teaching was based upon the fact that He who died and shed His blood is now living in heaven. We have studied the Epistle in vain, and we shall in vain attempt to live the true Christian life, if we have not learnt that our salvation is not in the death of Jesus but in His life--in His death only as the gate to the risen life. And so the God of peace, whom we are now invited to trust in, is spoken of as He who raised Jesus, the Shepherd of the sheep, who gave His life for them, from the dead. Scripture ever points to the resurrection as the mightiest part of God's mighty power; the God of the resurrection is to be the God in whom we trust for the work to be done in us. He has raised Christ, as the Shepherd, who watches and tends His sheep, through whom He will do His work.

**In the blood of the everlasting covenant.** We know how the blood has been coupled in the Epistle with the **redemption** of

transgressions, the opening of the entrance into heaven, and the cleansing of the heart from all conscience of sin. Were it not for that blood-shedding Christ had never risen from the dead. In that blood, even the blood of the everlasting covenant, which could only be made after there had been a redemption for transgressions, God raised Jesus from the dead. It was the blood that sealed the covenant, by which the covenant blessings of perfect pardon, of the law written in the heart, and direct fellowship with God were secured to us. It was the blood that had conquered sin and death and hell, that could give the entrance into heaven, and cleanse the sinner's heart for the reception and experience of the heavenly life. And as those who are sprinkled with this blood, the secret of resurrection power; we are invited to trust the God of the resurrection to work in us.

The God of peace, who hath raised Jesus from the dead in the blood of the covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will. The God who perfected His Son through suffering to do His will, until He raised Him in triumph over death to His own right hand--O soul! this same God is waiting to do this same work in thee in the same power. What He did in Christ for thee is all for thee sake of what He is now day by day to do in thee. All that thou hast learnt Of the wonders of His redeeming work, and His receiving thee into the Holiest, is that thou mightest now confidently trust and expect Him to take possession of thee and perfect His work within thee Oh, let us draw nigh and enter in, in the restful, adoring assurance that God will perfect us in every good thing.

1. Peace is rest. To know the God of peace is to enter the rest of God. And until the soul rests in Him in Sabbath peace, God cannot do His higher, His perfect work.
2. The work of the Father and the Son for us find their completion in the work of the Holy Spirit within us. All the objective revelation is for the sake of the subjective experience, the mighty power of God working in the heart of His child what He longs to see. It is in what God makes us, that the power of the redemption in Christ is proved.
3. By faith. Here more than ever this must be our watchword. Faith that sees and accepts and dwells in all God has done for us in Christ, and then counts upon His faithfulness and power to make it all real within us in Christ through the Spirit.
4. As it was through the Spirit that God wrought that perfect work in Christ by which fallen human nature, as He had taken it upon Himself, was redeemed and raised up and glorified, so nothing can make us partakers of that redeeming and quickening power but that same Spirit, truly living and working in our soul and body, in the same manner as it did in the humanity of Christ. ([Andrew Murray's - "Holiest of All"](#))