

תַּנְחִיחַ לִּי מֵחֶמֶד
The Book of

דֵּס תֵּל גִּנְזֵס פִּדְא רַחֲחֵס נִנְז

Hebrews

מֵאֲנִי מִנְּמ דֵּא מִנְּ ת אֶקְלֵא

צִמְאֵל לֵל נִתְאַתְצֵרְח דִּרְתִּסְנ סֶק

א ח פֶּקְלֵא ת סִנְ סֶרְבֵּאֵל

רֵר תֵּא סֶד תֶּאֶקְסִנְז דִּמְמִצ

תֵּאֲתִפְלֵשׁ נ תִּרְדֵּנָה רִפֵּר נ רֵלֵד

תֵּאֲנִשׁ רֵלֵד מִלְּלֵצ סֶס תֵּלֵשׁ



Outline of Hebrews

“Jesus is Better”

- I. Jesus Is Better Than the OT Prophets (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Is Better Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Is Better Than Moses (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus’ Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)
- V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)
- VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)**

Outline of Hebrews

VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)

- A. Practical Expressions of Love in the Church (13:1-6)
- B. Remember Your Leaders and Suffer with Jesus “Outside the Camp” (13:7-16)
- C. Final Words (13:17-25)
 - A. Obey Your Leaders (13:17)
 - B. Author’s Request for Prayer (13:18-19)
 - C. Author’s Prayer for His Readers (13:20-21)
 - D. Personal Notes (13:22-25)

Final Words (13:18-25)

¹⁸ Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹ I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. ²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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. ²² I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. ²³ You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. ²⁴ Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. ²⁵ Grace be with all of you.

¹⁸ *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.* ¹⁹ *I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

- Our author asks his readers to “*pray*” for him, as the Apostle Paul often does in *his* letters (Rom 15:30-32; Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3-4; 1 Thes 5:5; cf. Phil. 1:19). ¹
- The request for prayer by the author shows that he has *confidence* in his readers as genuine fellow believers and reassures them of the warmth and humility of his attitude towards them. ²
- After all, he would not be asking them to pray for him if he had decided that they are already in a state of apostasy! ²

¹ Dennis E. Johnson; *ESV Expository Commentary* (Volume 12) (pp. 354-355)

² Philip E. Hughes; *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (p. 587)

¹⁸ *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.* ¹⁹
I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

- It **is** true, that “*desiring to act honorably in all things*”, he has spoken very frankly to them about the concerns he has for their spiritual well-being, as a genuine Christian friend and mentor **should** do.
- And though that may have been **painful** for them to hear him express his concerns, he is “**sure**” that he has “*a clear conscience*” and that his conduct towards them can withstand the scrutiny of both man and God.
- The **motive behind** the stern admonitions given in this letter has **not** been **hostility**, but a desire to **speak the truth in love**.

¹⁸ *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.* ¹⁹
I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

- In a ***similar*** manner, the ***Apostle Paul*** sought the prayers of the ***Corinthian*** believers on his behalf (in a letter in which he had the painful experience of having to firmly reassert his apostolic authority):
 - *You also must help us by prayer... for our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you... We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.* (2 Cor 1:11-12; 4:2b)

¹⁸ *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.* ¹⁹ *I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

- The author mentions **one** specific request: that the Hebrew readers would ask God to hasten his return to them.
- This request should no doubt **increase** the reader's assurance of the genuineness of his love for them.
- Not **only** does he desire their **prayers**, but he longs to be united in person with them again, no longer separated by miles or suspicions.
- The **implications** of this brief request are:
 - The author has previously been associated with his readers, perhaps as one of their leaders.
 - He is now at a different location.
 - He is, for the time being, prevented from coming to them, though he hopes to be able to do so soon.

²⁰ *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, ²¹ *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.*

- Here we see that the author has requested prayers for ***himself***, so in return he pronounces God's ***blessing*** on his readers.
- This rich benediction and the briefer one in verse 25 are not ***merely*** the record of the author's prayer to God for his readers.
- Benedictions have ***more weight*** than just a prayer offered for others.

²⁰ *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, ²¹ *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.*

- Benedictions confer benefit through a minister authorized to speak from and for God.
- Benedictions in NT letters extend the OT tradition of priestly blessing on Israel with the pronouncement of the Lord's name in order to convey a blessing on the people: "*So shall [the priests] put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them*" (Num 6:22-27).

²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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.

- The author **begins** the benediction by designating God as the “**God of peace**”.
- This phrase is commonly used by the Apostle Paul as well (e.g., Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thes 5:23; 2 Thes 3:16) and should be understood to mean “**the God [who gives] peace**”.
- The readers, since they were outside of the social mainstream, were experiencing significant stress.
- Furthermore, several exhortations in the letter have emphasized the importance of “**peace**” **within** the church (e.g. Heb 12:14; 13:1) and so the author reminds them that **true** “**peace**” comes from God.

²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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.

- Here the author gives the **only explicit** reference to the **resurrection** of Jesus in the entire letter.
- Nevertheless, while not **explicitly** mentioned elsewhere, the resurrection plays a **major role** in the book of Hebrews.
- Jesus cried out to God and was saved from death **by being raised from the dead** (Heb 5:7)
- Jesus enters the heavenly sanctuary as the **resurrected** and exalted Lord (Heb 6:20).

²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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.

- He is the Melchizedekian priest who abides as a priest forever **by virtue of the resurrection** (Ps 110:4; Heb 7:3)
- What sets Jesus apart as a priest is that “*he lives*” (Heb 7:8), for he has an “*indestructible life*” (Heb 7:16).
- He isn’t like the levitical priests, who were hindered by death, but he “*continues forever*” and “*always lives*” (Heb 7:23-25).
- Jesus is the **resurrected** Lord, sitting at God’s right hand (Heb 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2)

²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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.

- “**Brought again**” is an unusual verb for resurrection, reflecting the influence of Isaiah 63:11, speaking of Moses and the exodus reads (in the Septuagint), “**who brought up from the sea the shepherd of the sheep.**”
- In the exodus, the **shepherd** was **Moses** (cf. Ps 77:20) and the rescue was from the “**sea**”; but now the “**great shepherd**”, **Jesus**, has been “**brought up**” from the **realm of the dead**.

²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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.

- Jesus' role as "*shepherd*" also fulfills Ezek 34:23, showing that he is the new and true David, and that as "*shepherd*" he will take care of the flock:
 - *And I will set up over them **one shepherd**, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.* (Ezek 34:23)
- Indeed, as "*the good shepherd*" Jesus gave his **life** for the sheep (John 10:11) and this idea is not far from the author's mind, since in the **very next phrase** he alludes to the shedding of Jesus' "*blood*".

²⁰ 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**, ²¹ 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.

- In the original Greek, the phrase “*by the blood of the eternal covenant*” is connected to the phrase “*who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus*”.
- The word “*by*” shows in this context the **reason** Jesus was raised from the dead: his resurrection **vindicated** his sacrifice (wherein he shed his “*blood*”), showing God **approved** of him yielding of his life for others.
- The “*blood*” of Jesus (i.e. the death of Jesus), **inaugurates** the new covenant, or what is called here “*the eternal covenant*”.

²⁰ 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**, ²¹ 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.

- The contrast between the new and old covenant **permeates** Hebrews.
- Jesus inaugurated a “**new**” and “**better**” covenant (Heb 7:22; 8:13; 12:24).
- Furthermore, believers enjoy “**eternal salvation**” (Heb 5:9), “**eternal redemption**” (Heb 9:12), and an “**eternal inheritance**” (Heb 9:15) because Jesus has instituted through his “**blood**” an “**eternal covenant**”

²⁰ 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**, ²¹ 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.

- The author's choice of the adjective "*eternal*" is **deliberate**. For if the old covenant gave way to a new covenant, assurance is needed that the new covenant is here to stay.
- Furthermore, he is using OT language here. For our author, the new covenant established by Christ is none other than that "*everlasting covenant*" spoken of in Isaiah 55:3, Jeremiah 32:40, and Ezekiel 37:26.

²⁰ *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, ²¹ *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.*

- The author is praying here that “*the God of peace*” will “*equip*” his readers with every “*good*” thing that they need in order to do “*his will*”.
- Furthermore, he prays that “*the God of peace*” would work “*in us*” to do that which is pleasing to him “*through*” the power of “*Jesus Christ*”.
- Given the rest of the letter, the author is probably thinking *particularly* of their *perseverance*, though it would not be limited to that.

²⁰ 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, ²¹ **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.**

- The readers do not have the internal capacity to fulfill what is written here, therefore the author prays for **God's** power to be unleashed in them and at the same time asks that his petition will be fulfilled "*through Jesus Christ*".
- The idea expressed here is similar to that expressed by the Apostle Paul in Phil 2:12b-13:
 - *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is **God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.***

²⁰ 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, ²¹ 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.**

- The God who has done this great work for believers, who has sent the “*great shepherd*” to atone for their sins and has instituted a new “*eternal covenant*”, deserves all the “*glory*” and praise for all time.
- His magnificent love exhibited to the readers and the wonder of his plan of salvation elevate our hearts so we are drawn to give great praise and glory to God, both now and forevermore.

²² *I appeal to you, brothers, bear with **my word of exhortation**, for I have **written to you briefly**.*

- “*My word of exhortation*” refers to the whole of the preceding letter.
- In Acts 13:15, where the rulers of the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch send a message to Paul and Barnabas inviting them to pass on any “*word of exhortation*” which they may have for the assembled congregation, the phrase clearly denotes a **sermon**.
- It is also a very suitable description for **this letter**, which is a **sermon in written form**, with some personal remarks added at the end.
- But how could a document of **this length** be appropriately spoken of as written “*briefly*”?

²² *I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.*

- Well, it might be a **long letter**, but it's **not** a **long sermon**; it can be read out loud in about an hour.
- You'll remember that at **one** point the writer said "*there is much that we have to say*" (Heb 5:11); but at **another** point he indicates that he could have said **much more** (Heb 9:5b).
- The added remark about having "*written to you briefly*" makes it clear that it is the **length** of the exhortation, not its **content**, that our author thinks the readers might begin to find wearisome.

²³ *You should know that **our brother Timothy has been released**, with whom I shall see you **if he comes soon**.*

- The author elaborates on his intention to return to his readers (which we just saw in verse 19) by mentioning that Timothy “*has been released*” from imprisonment and will accompany him “*if he comes soon*.”
- The “*Timothy*” mentioned here is probably the Timothy who served as Paul’s associate (Acts 16:1-4; 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 1:1; 1 and 2 Timothy).
- Timothy is apparently known to the readers, so he needs no further identification by the author to them.

²³ *You should know that **our brother Timothy has been released**, with whom I shall see you **if he comes soon**.*

- In the early church, this mention of Timothy caused some early church fathers to believe that the **Apostle Paul** wrote the book of Hebrews
- But the arguments **against** Pauline authorship would seem to preclude that possibility:
 - The Apostle Paul stressed that his call to apostleship came from the risen Christ **himself**, unmediated by other men or even apostles (Gal 1:1,11-17).
 - It seems **unlikely**, then, that Paul would say, as the author of Hebrews does, that he received the message of salvation through **other apostles** (Heb 2:3).

²⁴ *Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.* ²⁵ *Grace be with all of you.*

- The exchange of greetings between a letter's author and those with him, on the one hand, and its recipients, on the other, is customary in NT letters.
- "*Those who come from Italy,*" probably refers to believers who are now traveling with the author who once lived in Italy and wish to send greetings to the Hebrew readers back home.
- Perhaps these believers were exiled when Emperor Claudius banned Jews from Rome (in AD 49), as Aquila and his wife Priscilla had been (Acts 18:2).

²⁴ *Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.* ²⁵ ***Grace be with all of you.***

- The NT letters often end with a prayer that grace be given to the recipients.
- “*Grace*” is a fitting note on which to end a letter like this one, so full of what God has done for the people of Christ.
- So, the author closes by praying for God’s unmerited favor for “*all*” his readers.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- It would seem, in his closing remarks, that the author counterbalances the strong admonitions and warnings given to his readers earlier in the letter by:
 - Asking them to pray for him
 - Assuring them that he had a clear conscience and had acted “*honorably in all things*”
 - Letting them know that he wanted to return so as to be physically present with them
 - Pronouncing God’s blessing on them through a rich benediction
- Do you think that there is wisdom in the author’s approach that we could learn from when we find ***ourselves*** in a situation where we have to give a strong warning or admonition to someone we care about?
- If so, what are some of the wisdom principles that you see illustrated here?

*Class Discussion Time

- I pointed out that when the author prayed concerning his readers that God would “*equip [them] with everything good that [they] may do his will, working in [them] that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ*” it is was reminiscent of Phil 2:12b-13 where it says to “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is **God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.***”
- Does it seem like a mixed message to say we should “do God’s will” or “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling”, and then turn around and say that when we do these things, it’s actually God who is working in us to do these things?
- If **God** is the one who **does the work**, does that mean that **we don’t have to work** at doing these things?
- How do these two ideas fit together?