

## Hebrews

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Hebrews 13:20-25



- Now the sermon becomes a letter. Here the preacher writes the classic ending to an epistle, leaving the reader with a perfect picture of the Father and the Son.
- God is the God of Peace. Not A God, but THE God. There is no One other than God who can bring Peace to a person's soul or to any given situation or to the world. In virtually any conflict, people have forgotten God and replaced Him with pride or greed or lust. Only God can restore the broken peace. Only by giving God control of one's life can peace be found. God and God alone can empower us to have peace within ourselves, peace with others, and peace with Him.
- God is the God of resurrection and life. It is God who brought Jesus up from the dead. God's love and power can not only bring peace to a person's life, but bring life where life was broken and lost. And to be clear, the Father raised the Son to life because the Son had been obedient even to death. If we are likewise obedient to the Father we will never be in a place where we are without Hope. Even death cannot defeat us!
- The preacher uses the present tense to refer to Jesus as the Great Shepherd. He IS still our Shepherd! And we who are His sheep hear His voice and follow Him who leads us to green pastures and has us rest by still waters.
- Through His obedience even to death, Jesus establishes the New Covenant, an eternal covenant. It is Christ alone who makes possible a new relationship between ourselves and God. It is Jesus who showed us who God is really like, a loving Father who invites us to join His Son and be with Him forever and ever. He took away the mental image of God as angry and ready to strike us, with the true picture of God as love. To accomplish this Jesus had to fulfill John 3:16. As God gave, so too does the Son give Himself, His Body and Blood. He gave His life so that He could make a way for us to know life with the Father.
- In this closing, the preacher speaks of the Father and the Son, but also the church. "May the God of peace...equip you in every good thing to do His will...". In John 5:19, Jesus Himself says that "...the Son can do nothing of Himself" and in 5:30 goes on to say, "I can do nothing on my own initiative...". Thus we too, the church and its respective members, can do nothing on our own. But with God all things are possible and whatever He calls to according to His will, He will equip us so that we have the power and all we need to work to accomplish all He desires. It is in the working, not in the results, that God is pleased. It is our obedience to His will that pleases Him. The results belong to Him.

#### Vs. 22

- Now, perhaps because he has a little space remaining on the paper, the preacher adds a postscript. He pleads with them to bear, to really listen to, this short “word of exhortation”, this short sermon. Trouble and pain will come soon and He has given them all they need to know to endure it and survive and emerge stronger.

#### Vs. 23

- It seems that Timothy has been imprisoned and has been released. Nero’s persecution of the church began in 64 AD and did not end until his death in 68 AD. During this time both Peter and Paul were put to death. There had been a time of peace afterward, but persecution began again under Domitian around 85 AD (the same persecution that saw John exiled to Patmos). It is likely then that in the early days of the persecution, which lasted nearly 10 years, that Timothy was not held long and then released.
- Also, in the ongoing question of who wrote the book of Hebrews, further evidence that it was most likely NOT Paul, is that here Timothy is referred to as “our brother”, while Paul referred to Timothy as “my son”. Also, back in vs. 20, Jesus is referred to as “the great Shepherd”, a term Paul never used, but a term John uses extensively. So whoever the author may have been, he clearly was influenced by both Paul and John and was a peer of Timothy’s.
- The preacher desired to bring Timothy with him to visit the congregation, hopefully ahead of their troubles. It would be an enormous gift to have had Timothy with them.

#### Vss. 24-25

- The preacher’s final word is a word of greeting and grace. If we do not know exactly who wrote Hebrews or exactly when, here we at least know where it was written: “Those from Italy greet you!”. Perhaps the preacher had left the congregation to go to Rome to secure Timothy’s release and to encourage the church there as the persecution began, for the Roman church would bear the brunt of it.
- God’s grace is a powerful thing. His grace can give us what we need to endure persecution, pain, suffering, and sorrow. But grace can also make the good times even sweeter, our relationships stronger, and our love for one another deeper. Grace be with you all.