

Hebrews 13:20

Authorized King James Version (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,

Analysis

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, This benediction opens with 'the God of peace' (ho theos tēs eirēnēs, ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης), emphasizing reconciliation achieved through Christ. God establishes peace between Himself and sinners, among believers, and within individual souls. This peace rests on Christ's work, described next: God 'brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus' (anagagōn ek nekrōn ton kyrion hēmōn Iēsoun)—resurrection validates Christ's sacrifice and secures our salvation.

'That great shepherd of the sheep' (ton poimena tōn probatōn ton megan) identifies Jesus as ultimate fulfillment of Ezekiel 34's promised shepherd. He's not merely a shepherd but 'the great shepherd,' superior to all under-shepherds (pastors). 'Through the blood of the everlasting covenant' (en haimati diathēkēs aiōniou) specifies the means: Christ's shed blood ratified the eternal, unbreakable New Covenant, securing all its promises permanently.

This rich theological summary encapsulates the gospel: peace with God through Christ's resurrection, accomplished by His shepherding leadership and covenant blood. The 'everlasting covenant' contrasts with Old Covenant's temporary nature—this covenant endures eternally, never to be superseded. Reformed theology sees here God's eternal decree, Christ's substitutionary atonement, and resurrection power, all working together to secure believers' salvation permanently.

Historical Context

The shepherd metaphor permeates Scripture. God is Israel's shepherd (Psalm 23; 80:1); David, a shepherd king, foreshadowed Christ; Ezekiel 34 condemned false shepherds and promised God would raise up faithful shepherd. Jesus identified Himself as good shepherd who lays down His life for sheep (John 10:11-18). The 'everlasting covenant' references Jeremiah 31:31-34's New Covenant prophecy, fulfilled in Christ. First-century readers, familiar with shepherding culture and Old Testament shepherd imagery, would recognize Christ as promised Davidic shepherd-king. The emphasis on 'everlasting' covenant assured them that unlike Old Covenant which proved breakable, this covenant endures permanently through Christ's unchanging priesthood and completed sacrifice.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing Jesus as 'that great shepherd' affect your trust and submission to His leadership?
2. What does the 'everlasting covenant' guarantee about your salvation's security and God's faithfulness?
3. In what ways does God's resurrection of Jesus provide you with peace in current circumstances?

Interlinear Text

Ὁ	δὲ	θεὸς	τῆς	εἰρήνης	ὁ	ἀναγαγὼν	ἐκ	νεκρῶν
G3588	Now	the God	G3588	of peace	G3588	that brought again	from	the dead
	G1161	G2316		G1515		G321	G1537	G3498
τὸν	ποιμένα	τῶν	προβάτων	τὸν	μέγαν	ἐν	αἵματι	
G3588	shepherd	G3588	of the sheep	G3588	that great	through	the blood	
	G4166		G4263		G3173	G1722	G129	
διαθήκης	αἰωνίου	τὸν	κύριον	ἡμῶν	Ἰησοῦν			
covenant	of the everlasting	G3588	Lord	our	Jesus			
G1242	G166		G2962	G2257	G2424			

Additional Cross-References

John 10:11 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Hebrews 10:22 (Parallel theme): Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Psalms 23:1 (References Lord): The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Romans 15:33 (Peace): Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Ezekiel 37:26 (Covenant): Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (Peace): Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

John 10:14 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Zechariah 9:11 (Covenant): As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

Acts 2:24 (References God): Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Exodus 24:8 (Covenant): And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

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