

BENEDICTIONS

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The benediction slot appears at the end of the service. In popular usage “benediction” has become a label for the closing prayer, but a benediction is really a pronouncement of blessing on those assembled for worship or on God as a final statement of praise. The biblical texts given below can serve as a word of praise to God or a word of blessing on the worshipers as they are about to leave.

Genesis 31:49b: “The Lord watch between me and you when we are absent one from another.”

***Numbers 6:24-26:** “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance on you and give you peace.”

Joshua 24:15 (altered): “Choose this day whom you will serve As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

1 Kings 8:57-58: “The Lord our God be with us as he was with our father. Let him not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances, which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words, with which I have made supplication before the Lord be near to the Lord our God day and night that he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people . . . as every day will require, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God to walk in his statutes and to keep his commandments as at this day.”

Psalms 19:14: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in you sight, o Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

20:1-3, 5): “May Yahweh answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob set you up on high, send you help from the sanctuary and strengthen you out of Zion, remember all you offerings . . . , grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all you counsel . . . ; may Yahweh fulfill all you petitions.”

29:11: “The Lord will give strength to his people. The Lord will bless his people with peace.”

33:22: “Let your lovingkindness, O Lord, be on us according as we have hoped in you.”

67:1-2(-7): “God be merciful to us and bless us and cause his face to shine on us, that your way may be known on earth, thy salvation among all nations.”

90:16-17: “Let your work appear to your servants and your glory on their children, and let the favor of the Lord our God be on us and establish the work of our hand on us, yea, the work of our hands—establish it.”

115:14-15: “Blessed are you by the Lord, who made heaven and earth. The heavens are the heaven of the Lord, but the earth he has given to the children of men.”

121:8: “The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”

Isaiah 26:3: “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you.”

30:15: “Thus [says] the Lord Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, ‘In returning and rest you will be saved. In quietness and in confidence will be your strength . . .’”

Jeremiah 31:33-34: “This is the covenant that I . . . make with the house of Israel . . . : I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart I will write it. And I will be their God and they will be my people. And they will no more teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord; because I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.”

Luke (1:68-79): “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he has visited and worked redemption for his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.”

2:14 (Christmas): “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.”

29(-30): “Now let thy servant depart, Lord, according to your word in peace; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples—a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.”

John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Acts 20:32: “Now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.”

Romans 15:5-6: “Now the God patience and comfort grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

15:13: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

15:33: “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

16:25-27: “Now to him that is able to establish you according to [the] gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that has been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God is made known to all the nations to the obedience of faith. To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

1 Corinthians 1:3: “Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ now and forever.”

2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

Galatians 1:3-4: “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us out of this present evil world according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

1:7: “In [Christ] we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.”

3:20-21: “Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Philippians 4:7: “The peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

4:20: “Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

4:23: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13: “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men even as we also do toward you, to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”

5:23: “The God peace himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without out blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.”

3:16: “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.”

1 Timothy 1:2 (= 2 Timothy 1:2b): “Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord be and abide with you forever.”

1:17: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

6:11-17: “ . . . O man of God . . . follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the eternal life to which you were called; and you confessed the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things and (in the sight) of Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without spot, without reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in its own times he will show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only has immortality dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man has seen nor can see—to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen.”

2 Timothy 4:22: “The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”

Philemon 25: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:20-21: “Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in [you] what is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Peter 5:10-11: “The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you suffered a little while, will himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

2 Peter 3:18: “Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”

2 John 3: “Grace, mercy, peace will be with [you] from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”

Jude 21: “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

24-25: “Now to him that is able to guard you from stumbling and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and power before all time and now and forevermore. Amen.”

Revelation

1:4b-6: “Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him that loves us and loosed us from our sins by his blood and made us to be a kingdom—priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

22:21: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.”

Obviously, a worship assembly does not have to close in any particular way. It may end with a benediction, a prayer, a unison reading, or a closing song. The service leader could end the gathering by a statement of encouragement to the congregation and an admonition to greet one another.

A benediction may be a reading from scripture or a spontaneous statement of blessing by the presider on those assembled. It may be a statement of praise to God as a final note to summarize the effect of the worship gathering. If the benediction is a reading from scripture or elsewhere, it is probably more effective if memorized and stated while using eye contact with the assembly.

A closing prayer could connect a central point in the sermon with a request that God help us live up to the ideals of that message in the coming days as a testimony to other people; it can be a statement of commitment to do so.

“Day by day and with each passing moment” can be used effectively as a closing song. The congregation might sing the first two verses and then read in unison the last verse as a prayer because it is addressed to God in the second person.