

Numbers 6:23-27

SEEING THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

Joseph Tkach

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BLESSING

Israel;

- ✘ Why was Israel “created” and “chosen” by God?
 - + Witness to all the nations
- ✘ What were they to be a witness of?
 - + Relationship with God
 - + To display the blessings of life with God

BLESSING

Numbers tells a story

- ✘ 2 main characters

1. God

2. and Israel

- ✘ Wilderness wanderings

 - + Israel going about life in her own strength, rather than trusting in the Lord.

BLESSING

✘ Priesthood

+ Why did God give Israel a priesthood?

- ✘ To serve God on the people's behalf

 - ✘ Give offerings

- ✘ To serve the people on God's behalf

 - ✘ Teach and lead the people to God so they could be blessed



NUMBERS 6:23-26 (NIV)

23 Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

24 The Lord bless you and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

NUMBERS 6:27 (NIV)

²⁷ “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

- *my name*
 - bring my nature and character to bear on them
- Emphasizes relationship with God
 - It is God’s blessing
 - They are his people
 - He is with them
 - He will always care for them

NUMBERS 6:27 (NIV)

- ✘ Hebrew for the book of Numbers
 - + ‘B’Midbar’ *“In the wilderness.”*
- ✘ God has called his people to walk with him through the wilderness
 - + To bless them by re-orienting their lives
 - + To be truly his people
 - + To be blessed rather than dying in the wilderness

PRIESTLY BLESSING

- ✘ This special “blessing” was to be repeated as they wandered and set up the tabernacle to worship
- ✘ Then later when the Temple was built in Jerusalem

PRIESTLY BLESSING

- ✘ Christian *Blessing* or *Benediction*
 - + prayer at the close of Christian church service
 - + to pronounce a blessing upon the congregation

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

²⁴ **The LORD bless you** and keep you;
²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you and
give you peace.

- ✘ Hands held above head
 - + Blessing from God
 - + Priests mediators
 - ✘ Not initiators



NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

- ✘ What did it mean to say, “The Lord bless you”?
- ✘ Hebrew *ble*ss “chanan” = “on bended knee”.
 - + to bend or stoop in kindness
 - + describes a servant kneeling out of respect for master
 - + or a lover kneeling to ask his beloved for her hand in marriage.

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

- ✘ In this blessing, God is offering to come to His people “on bended knee”
 - + to come to serve them
 - + to love them
 - + to bless them with the gift of Himself

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

²⁴ The LORD bless you **and keep you;**

²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

✘ *keep* = “to build a hedge around”

+keep out enemies that would snatch
away blessings God has given

+keep you from wandering off.

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

²⁴ The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵ **the LORD make his face shine on you**
and be gracious to you;

✘ God turns his face to bless us

+ “Face” is his very nature and
presence

+ Opposite of turning away and leaving

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

"May the LORD lift up His face toward you OR turn His face toward you.

✘ God holds you up in His arms, as a delighted father might hold up his young child in joy....



NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

- ✘ *Blessing* is to have God's face shine upon you.
- ✘ *His face*; the very nature of His personality & His presence
 - + Throughout scripture when God hides His face /turns away; destruction & death follows.
 - + When He shines His face on them there is blessing & favour

PSALMS 27:8-9 NLT

⁷ Hear me as I pray, O LORD.

Be merciful and answer me!

⁸ My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.”

And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.”

⁹ Do not turn your back on me.

Do not reject your servant in anger.

You have always been my helper.

Don't leave me now; don't abandon me,

O God of my salvation!

¹⁰ Even if my father and mother abandon me,
the LORD will hold me close.

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

24 The LORD bless you and keep you;
25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

+asks that God look on us with
kindness.

- × When a child falls and skins his knees, he cries out in pain.
- × His father hears him and turns his face toward him.
- × He stoops down in kindness, wraps his arms around him and comforts him.

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace. (NIV)

²⁶ The LORD lift up his countenance
upon thee, and give thee peace. (KJV)

- ✘ Repeated emphasis on God's face
 - + God turning his being towards us in blessing

NUMBERS 6:24-26 PRIESTLY BLESSING

²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace. (NIV)

✘ *peace* "Shalom"


+ gift of wholeness, health and well-being that only God can give

BLESSING

- ✘ Traditionally, the priests blessed the people every morning after the sacrifice and later at the Temple.



The letter Shin for Shaddai

- ✘ 4 fingers on each hand split to forming the letter Shin ש
- ✘ First letter of Shaddai (a name for God)
- ✘ fingers positioned  form "windows" through which God's blessings flow to the congregation.



BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- ✘ Original purpose of the blessing was to put God's identity and name upon them...
- ✘ How does he do that for Christians?

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- + We are baptized into that name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - × Numbers 6 is a 3 fold blessing,
 - × The Lord... The Lord... The Lord...

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

+ Jesus' baptism

- × “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased”
- × Holy Spirit descended

+ Holy Spirit is God's presence with us

- × His gift and blessing
- × He puts God's name, his nature, his love and grace in us

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Num 6: 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you.

²⁵ May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

²⁶ May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

✘ In some senses

+ the Father blesses and protects

+ The Son is God's smile, his face turned towards us, and his graciousness through the cross

+ The Spirit reveals his favour and brings us his peace

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

✘ N.T. Letters

✘ Opening blessing; “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

✘ 15 times in NT in letters by Paul, Peter and John.

+ To wish someone “grace” and “peace” is to desire for them something wonderful

✘ – that they will be as close as possible to the heart of God.

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- ✘ The reality of this blessing is fulfilled in the person of Jesus

John 1: ¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. (*grace and truth*)
And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

- ✘ In Jesus God turns his face to us
- ✘ He smiles upon us and is gracious to us
- ✘ He shows his favour and gives us peace

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

John 1^{v16} From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. □
(*grace upon grace*) □

¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who himself God, **is** near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- ✘ When we face someone we are giving him or her our full attention.
- ✘ God chose to turn His face towards Israel because He willingly upheld His side of the covenant made with Abraham.
- ✘ He did not give up on Israel and sought to bring them to life in all its fullness.

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- ✘ This would involve seeing God as a Father and living according to the blueprint of the One who is totally opposed to sin, yet loves the sinner.
- ✘ God wants His nature and character to shine forth on the believer as He heals wounds and corrects wrong thinking

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- ✘ When a person turns and faces us, it speaks to us of their life and love, their focus and affection.
 - + What we turn and face also speaks of what we focus on most in our lives.

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- + I Corinthians 12:12-13 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. *NIV*
- + We look to him sporadically and see him incompletely today
- + But we look forward to the time when we will see and know him fully, and receive his blessings of grace and peace fully

BLESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- + God has made permanent eye contact with us for eternity through Jesus in the Spirit
- + Let us respond in turn by;
 - × By not turning ourselves away like Israel did so often
 - × But welcoming his face, his nature and peace into every areas of our life r thinking

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