

The Blessing of Jehovah God

Rev. George Lubbers

“. . . and I will bless them.” Numbers 6:27b

Did you ever stop to ponder, young people, that the Name of Jehovah God has been put upon your forehead because you belonged to the Israel of God? Have you pondered the magnitude of the great words which are spoken before each service in your midst on Sunday morning and on Sunday evening by the minister of the Word, “Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord, by the operation of the Holy Spirit”? Or is this simply some rite which we take for granted as we do with so many of the good things of God’s Covenant with us, His people.

In this little phrase taken from Numbers 6:27, we have the LORD God speaking to Moses giving him instructions as to what mandate he must give to Aaron’s priesthood in regard to laying the Name of Jehovah upon the Israel of God. God spoke these words to Moses when they were at Mount Sinai, after the tabernacle had been completed and the official services at the altar were to begin as a perpetual service until Christ should come to fulfil them all in His own precious blood.

Now the priest had to “bless the children of Israel” in the Name of the Lord. This blessing was not a mere “priestly wish”, but it was what the LORD Himself will surely, efficaciously work in the heart of His people Israel. You pronounce this blessing upon Israel, says the Lord to Aaron’s priesthood, and I will bless them! The work of bestowing the blessings of the covenant is not man’s work, but is exclusively the wonder of Jehovah’s salvation. This work of grace is fulfilled in Jesus Christ’s Cross and resurrection, and in the outpouring of the Spirit in Pentecost. However, in the Old Testament Dispensation the priesthood of Aaron, both high priests and regular priests were to stand at the altar of the sacrifices and at the altar of incense and bless the people of Israel, who came to worship in the temple and thus to appear before the Lord!

Yes, the LORD says: and I will bless them!

Aaron speaks the words of God, and the LORD works His blessing by this Word and by His Spirit. Now surely the important thing is not whether Aaron and his sons spoke these words with their eyes closed or opened, but the important thing is that the proper words, the proper “blessing” was pronounced upon the congregation. When the LORD tells Moses to say that the blessing must be “on this wise” (Numbers 6:23) he means not the posture either of prayer or of a direct speech (it is in an hour of prayer!) but this refers to the **content** of the covenant blessing.

Let this be understood, young people!

We had better keep this straight in our mind lest we be caught up in the trivial.

We do not often hear this so-called “Aaronic blessing” pronounced from our pulpits do we? And we probably have never heard a sermon preached on this very remarkable “wording” of this blessing which Aaron is enjoined to lay upon Israel; in this blessing the Name of Jehovah is placed upon Israel as a crown and diadem.

Let us briefly attend to this threefold repetition here in this blessing. It reads as follows:

“The LORD bless thee and keep thee”

“The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.”

“The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Numbers 6:24-26

It ought to be clear that the “LORD” here is the translation, in the KJV, for the Hebrew

name "JEHOVAH". So three times the priest must take this name of JEHOVAH and place it upon the children of Israel, as the priest stands at the altar of God in the tabernacle and/or temple. Some have seen here the revelation of the triune God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It must be said that, although this is not clearly revealed here in New Testament clarity, nevertheless we do have here no mere repetition of the name Jehovah, but the threefold blessing of the LORD as this is ascribed in the Twelve Articles of Faith to the three Persons in the economy of salvation: God the Father in our creation, God the Son in our redemption, and God the Holy Spirit in our sanctification. What we see clearly in the New Testament, after Christ has come to suffer and die, and the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, that we see here in this threefold repetition of the blessing of Jehovah in the Old Testament dimly and in shadowy form! The so-called Aaronic blessing and the blessing of Paul's epistles are the same blessings; the former is connected with the sacrifice upon the altar and the latter connected with the Cross and the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

We notice that in this "blessing" there is only once mentioned: the "LORD bless thee". That is the central thought in this text. It must not be repeated. It is the main subject. All the rest is the particularization of this blessing of God's covenant in Israel.

The most general is: "and **keep** thee". This refers to the Fatherly and loving care of Jehovah over His people. Thus Jehovah says to Jacob at Bethel. "Behold, I am with thee and will **keep thee** in all places whither thou goest...for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". (Genesis 28:15) Here in this keeping we see the faithfulness of our heavenly Father over Jacob and all his seed forever. He is the God of Bethel, where angels ascend and descend upon Israel; where the Angel of the Lord surrounds His people. He will finish the work. We are "kept" in the power of Almighty God; yea, kept unto the salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last day. (I Peter 1:4,5) Not a hair can fall from our head without the will of our heavenly Father, and not a sparrow can fall from the house-top except by His bidding. We are kept safe and secure by His grace under the blood of the Lamb, in which blood we overcome! That was pronounced from the Old Testament altar in the tabernacle to the people, from the LORD who dwells upon the mercy-seat.

The second is: "The LORD make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee". Here we have an intensification of this blessing of revelation of His Fatherly attitude of love and grace. Really this is God revealing Himself in the face of Jesus Christ. In all of Christ's work, His words, His miracles, His suffering and death, and His resurrection, we see the Father's fact. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. It was in Jesus that the LORD "made" (caused) His face to shine upon Israel. His name is "Jesus" for He it is that shall save His people from their sins. And thus in this Jesus, we see that the Lord is full of pity, mercy and grace to us from the mercy-seat of God's heavenly temple, as this was typified in the earthly Ark of the Covenant. Yes, then we see here in this "cause the FACE to shine" the work of Jesus Christ, the Son. Dimly, yes, but nonetheless very really we see in this Aaronic blessing, the very Christ of God. He was here portrayed in the shadows!

The third time we read: "The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee and **give thee peace**". Here we see the fruit of the blessing in the hearts of Israel. It is the great blessing. Jesus spoke of this when He was about to die: He spoke of this at the table of the Passover Lamb of the broken bread and the poured out wine. Said He, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". (John 14:27) Here we see the face of the LORD "lifted up upon Israel" here in the words and work of Christ. Of this, the priests spoke standing at the altar in the tabernacle. And when

Christ stands in the midst of His apostles on resurrection day evening He says: "Peace be unto you". Yes, that was the same blessing which had been pronounced upon Israel for centuries in the temple of the Old Testament dispensation. Here we see the work of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace**. (Galatians 5:22) And so, dimly through the shadows in hope the Old Testament saints looked for the hope of righteousness as they heard the Aaronic blessing pronounced from the altar.

It was a historic moment when Moses and Aaron brought the first sacrifice in the new tabernacle at Sinai's heights! What a moment! All Israel stands before the LORD. The Lord will appear in His Old Testament "glory". Israel must know that the LORD stands back of Aaron and his sons in the priesthood. Thus we read. "And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and **blessed them**, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering and peace offerings". (Leviticus 9:22) And then we read. "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation and came out, and **blessed** the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people". (Leviticus 9:23) What a moment this was! And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces!

Yes, thou shall put my Name upon the children of Israel, and **I will bless them!**

Thy blessing is upon thy people. O LORD!

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