Numbers 6:23-27

### SEEING THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

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# 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

## 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.

- × Priesthood
  - + Why did God give Israel a priesthood?
    - x 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)

- <sup>27</sup> "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

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 heal
  - +Blessing from God
  - +Priests mediators
    - × Not initiators

- \* What did it mean to say, "The Lord bless you"?
- \* Hebrew bless "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.

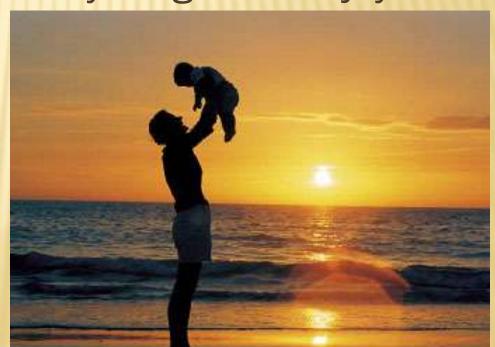
- In this blessing, God is offering to come to His people "on bended knee"
  - + to come to serve them
  - + to love them
  - + to bless them with the gift of Himself

- <sup>24</sup> The Lord bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> 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.

- <sup>24</sup> The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> 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

"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....



- 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**

<sup>7</sup> Hear me as I pray, O LORD.

Be merciful and answer me!

My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me."

And my heart responds, "LORD, I am coming."

<sup>9</sup> 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!

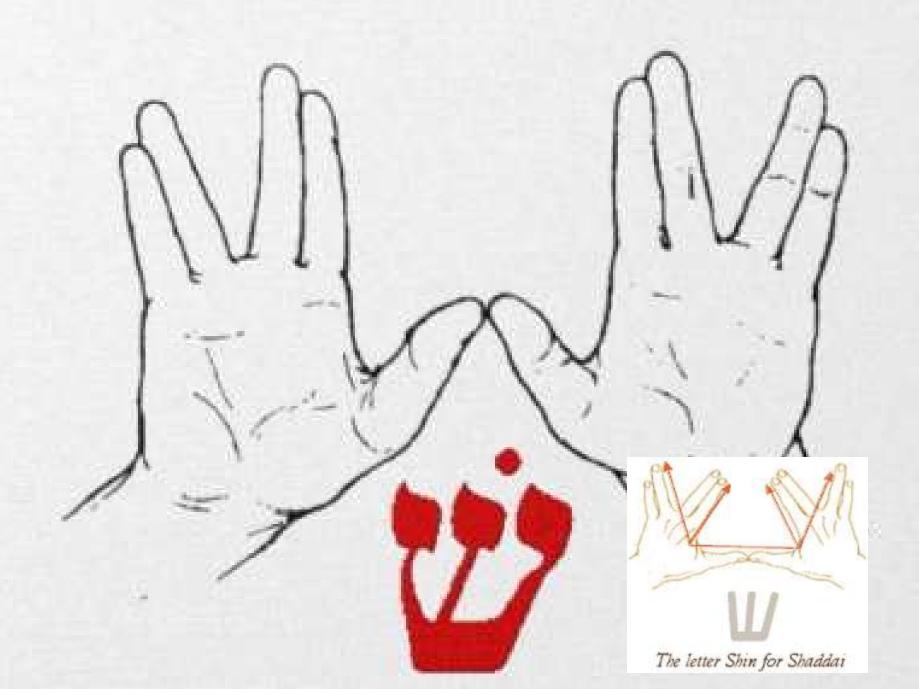
Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.

- <sup>24</sup> The Lord bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> 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.

- <sup>26</sup> the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (NIV)
- <sup>26</sup> 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

- <sup>26</sup>the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (NIV)
- \*peace "Shalom"
  - +gift of wholeness, health and wellbeing that only God can give

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



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





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

- + 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...

- + 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

- Num 6: 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you.
- <sup>25</sup> May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.
- <sup>26</sup> 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

- × 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
    - x that they will be as close as possible to the heart of God.

- The reality of this blessing is fulfilled in the person of Jesus
- John 1: <sup>14</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.

- 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.

- \* 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

- 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.

- + I Corinthians 12: 12 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

- + 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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