

Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

A Threefold Blessing

Key Verse: *"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.

This blessing is found amongst the prescription of priests' duties toward God's people, Israel. It is not intended for people who are not His. We may claim this blessing by our association with God through Christ Jesus. We do so on two grounds. First because it is the nature of God to bless all those who turn to Him in faith (see for example Isaiah 56.3-8), and second because the New Testament tells us in Ephesians 2.11-22 tells us that God has brought into one all who are in Christ Jesus, both Jew and Gentile. Also see Romans 15.4, 1 Corinthians 10.11 and 2 Corinthians 1.20.

This blessing consists of three double statements in which the name Jehovah is included. This name, printed in most Bibles, such as the KJV, NIV and NASB as LORD, as Dr WG Scroggie points out, means literally "to be or become". . . the LORD is the God who revealed Himself to Israel in covenant grace, and this explains the frequency of its occurrence . . . 6345 times in all." This name corresponds in the New Testament to the names for Jesus as 'the Word' in John 1.1-18 and the 'I AM' used specifically and repeatedly in that Gospel, for example John 8.58. The name is found in the context of redemption in Exodus 3.14. The link of the I AM of the Old Testament and the I AM of the new Testament was quite deliberate by John. It is He, Jesus, who in this benediction brings the blessing into the lives of His people.

First, the LORD bless thee and keep thee.

The word 'bless' here comes from an Hebrew word meaning a greeting or a salute, and the word 'keep' means to preserve. It is the Lord who is protecting us. What encouragement to the pilgrim facing ever present danger on his journey. How we share the confidence of king David in the shepherd psalm, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."* Well may we sing, *"Guide me O Thou*

great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land."

Listen to the promise of God through Isaiah, *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."* 41:10. Take courage, the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. 'I am' is with you if you are His. Look up also His promise in Hebrews 13.6

Second, the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

'Make His face' is from a word meaning a presence or to be before, and 'shine' means to enlighten. It could be translated, 'before His sight, enlighten' as like the breaking of day before the sun. 'Be gracious' could be rendered as show favour, mercy. The thought of enlightenment is contained in the earliest chapters of the Bible where we read that darkness was upon the face of the deep, and God said 'Let there be light,' and there was light. Paul picks up the theme in 2 Corinthians 4:6 *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

This light is glowing when our knowledge of Him is growing. It was the burden of Paul's prayer for early Christians and it should be ours. See Ephesians 1.17&18. Look it up in your own Bible.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. Is this your experience? Are you knowing,

glowing, growing more and more like Jesus every day. Remember Stephen. Jesus just shone from his face even as he was being tried for his faith. Acts 6.15. Just like His Lord. See Matthew 17.2

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

The word 'lift' comes from a word meaning to lift up, bare and carry. 'Countenance' is from a word meaning the face, the presence of. 'Give' is from a word meaning to put, make or set. 'Peace' is 'shalom' which may be translated as safety, tranquillity, contentment, health, completeness and the like. It looks to the welfare of the recipient, and is a far cry from what the world calls peace today.

Look up and compare Isaiah 26.3&4 with Philippians 4.6&7. These two words for peace are complimentary. These two verses teach the same thing. As God's children we may fly to him in a time of trouble, and find our refuge in His presence. In the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament the word 'Shalom' or peace is often translated as 'salvation'.

The priest was to confer this blessing upon his people. It is the benediction of God that flows through the hands of the priest. We also have a high priest Hebrews 4.14-16. Notice Exodus 6.27 *"And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."*

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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