

The Blessing (HaBracha)

Dave Edwards

The Aaronic Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26



**The Lord bless you, and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.**

This blessing was given around 6,000 BC.

It came directly from the heart of God and is given by God to Aaron, the high priest, to pronounce upon the people of Israel.

As Christians, we are grafted into the benefits of this blessing through Christ's sacrifice.

In ancient Israel, blessings held immense importance. It extended beyond mere words; it was an expression of hope, prosperity, and divine favor.

The patriarchal blessing, was a sacred tradition, symbolizing the transmission of spiritual authority and familial blessings. This was a patriarchal blessing from Father God to His children.

The Priestly Blessing wasn't a mere verbal expression; it was a ritualistic act performed by the designated priest, invoking divine favor upon the people.

Jesus steps in as our High Priest, blessing all of humanity with the gift of salvation, made possible through his perfect sacrifice on the cross.

He forms a new covenant with humanity and fulfills the role of the High Priest by interceding on our behalf before the Father.

This blessing followed the national census and instructions for the layout of the tabernacle.

Most of Numbers 6 deals with the Nazirite vow, with all its rules and conditions (Numbers 6:1-20). This involved consecration to the Lord or separation in service to the Lord (Numbers 6:2,21). Unlike the Nazirite vow, the blessing is a declaration, not conditioned on following a set of rules.

Shortly after this blessing, the Israelites sinned against God, with their transgressions costing them forty years of wandering (Numbers 13:34). But they had the assurance, their sin would not cost them God's love and care. God was faithful to His blessing even when His people were unfaithful.

"If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself." 2 Timothy 2:13

It does not start with the words, "if you obey me". Even in their disobedience and unfaithfulness, God still wanted to bless His people. He may need to discipline His children, but He doesn't stop loving them and wanting the best for them.

God's blessings are filled with His favor, His promises, His power, and His presence.

It invokes the imagery of shepherds guarding their flocks, the radiance of God's face, and the profound concept of shalom that would resonate deeply with a pastoral society, evoking feelings of security, divine presence, and holistic well-being.

Because they were blessed by God, the children of Israel were called to be a blessing to all the nations (Genesis 22:18)

Because we, as Christ's followers, are blessed by God, we too are called to bless all nations.

In the original Hebrew, this blessing is written in clear poetic form. The first verse has three words, the second five, and the third seven.

In Judaism it is recited at Shabbat, the weekly Sabbath, and other holidays and milestones.

It's also widely used in Christianity and is found in liturgies, worship songs, devotionals, and as a benediction used at the end of a service or ceremony.

It's a declaration of God's intent to bestow His blessings upon the people.

Phrase by Phrase Commentary

May the Lord bless you

God gives unique gifts to each of us because we are unique individuals.

Often times, God's best gifts are wrapped in ugly giftwrap.

Some of His best gifts can come through trials or pain.

His gifts can be physical, financial, relational, emotional, spiritual.

Some of His blessings include:

Salvation is the ultimate blessing through faith in Jesus Christ.

Peace that surpasses understanding will guard my heart and mind.

Joy: The joy of the Lord will strengthen and uplift my soul.

Wisdom helps me navigate life's challenges and make godly decisions.

Strength that empowers me to face trials and overcome obstacles.

Provision of material and financial blessings to meet my needs.

Health: Physical well-being and healing.

Guidance and direction in all areas of life.

Favor in relationships, opportunities, and endeavors.

Restoration of what was lost or broken.

Courage and boldness to face challenges and fulfill God's purposes.

Comfort of His presence in times of grief and hardship.

Friendships that are healthy and supportive friendships that enrich our lives.

Contentment regardless of circumstances.

Love that fills and transforms our hearts.

Mercy: God's compassionate and forgiving mercy.

Eternal Life with Him forevermore

Open Doors in career, relationships, and ministry.

Protection. His guarding hand over my life.

Creativity: God's inspiration and creativity in my endeavors.

Sometimes God's best gifts are wrapped in ugly giftwrap. He gives me pain, hardship, disappointment, trials and struggles. However, I know that all things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

"Barak" means kneeling before someone, such as God bending down toward man in a relationship.

And keep you

Father God guards and protects me.

He hides me under His wings: "He that dwelleth in the secret place (cover, protection) of the most High shall abide (to stay permanently) under the shadow of the Almighty.... He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

Ps. 91:1,4

"Shamar" suggests more than mere protection; it implies a vigilant guarding akin to a shepherd guarding and protecting a flock, ensuring their safety and well-being.

The Lord make His face shine on you

He focuses His attention on me and gives me divine favor.

I am the "apple of His eye." "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings."

Psalm 17:8. I have captured His attention and interest, much like the focal point of the eye.

I am cherished and favored of God as His beloved.

He looks at me with delight as a father would his child.

"Ya'er" indicates a radiant light with His presence bringing warmth and joy, dispelling darkness.

It's reminiscent of the sun's warmth and light, essential for agricultural prosperity.

It's a life-giving force that illuminated the fields, ensuring a bountiful harvest.

And be gracious to you

He gives me His unique personal attention and unmerited favor.

He gives me kindness and benevolence beyond what is deserved.

In ancient Israelite culture, hospitality, showing favor and kindness were esteemed virtues.

The Lord lift up His countenance on you

This represents His favor, acceptance and approval.

It's like a parent's approving gaze bringing assurance and joy.

And give you peace

He gives me rest and the promise of tranquility and well-being.

"Shalom" encompasses completeness, well-being, harmony, flourishing and prosperity. It was far more than the absence of conflict but the holistic well-being, prosperity, and harmony.

"Shalom Shalom" means perfect peace. The Hebrew word for perfect in Isaiah 26:3 is Shalom and the Hebrew word for peace is also Shalom. This verse literally reads, "You keep him in "PEACE, PEACE" whose mind is stayed on you."

Hebrew

Y'va-reh-ch'cha Adonai v'yeesh-m'reh-cha.

Ya-air Adonai pa-nahv ay-leh-cha vee-chu-neh-ka.

Yee-sa Adonai pa-nahv ay-leh-cha v'ya-same l'cha Shalom.

Songs

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzqrWae5IK4
www.youtube.com/watch?v=xW4YB6fVvJo
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp6aygmvzM4
www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtI3mNj5U
www.youtube.com/watch?v=d48-qbcovVY
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TascswZPj8U

Other Blessings

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Cor. 13:14

Now may 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. 2 Thess. 2:16-17

In times of trouble, may the Lord answer your cry. May the name of the God of Jacob keep you safe from all harm. May he send you help from his sanctuary and strengthen you from Jerusalem. May he remember all your gifts and look favorably on your burnt offerings. May he grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed. May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory and raise a victory banner in the name of our God. May the Lord answer all your prayers. Ps.20:1-5 adapted for liturgy

May the strength of God sustain us;
may the power of God preserve us;
may the hands of God protect us;
may the way of God direct us;
may the love of God go with us this day (night) and forever.

May His favor be upon you and a thousand generations, and your family and your children, their children and their children. May His presence go before you and beside you and behind you, all around you and within you, He is with you in the morning and the evening, in your coming and your going, in your weeping and rejoicing. He is with you, He is for you. Joshua Aaron

May the love of the Father,
the tenderness of the Son,
and the presence of the Spirit,
gladden your heart
and bring peace to your soul,
this day and all days, Amen.

May God the Father prepare your journey,
Jesus the Son guide your footsteps,
The Spirit of Life strengthen your body,
The Three in One watch over you, on every road that you may follow.

May the peace of God enfold us,
The love of God uphold us,
The wisdom of God control us.

Let the majesty of the Father be the light by which you walk,
the compassion of the Son be the love by which you walk,
the presence of the Spirit be the power by which you walk.

May the peace of God reign in this place
and the love of God forever hold you tight,
May the Spirit of God flow through your life
and the joy of God uphold you day and night.

The love of God be the passion in your heart.
The joy of God your strength when times are hard.
The presence of God a peace that overflows.
The Word of God the seed that you might sow.

The embrace of the Father be the comfort you desire.
The name of the Son be the one on whom you rely.
The presence of the Spirit be with you every hour.
The Three in One be the focus of all you are.

May the beauty of God be reflected in your eyes,
the love of God be reflected in your hands,
the wisdom of God be reflected in your words,
and the knowledge of God flow from your heart,
that all might see, and seeing, believe

The peace of God be in your heart
The grace of God be in your words
The love of God be in your hands
The joy of God be in your soul
and in the song that your life sings.

God's love surround you,
God's Spirit guide you,
God's whisper cheer you,
God's peace calm you,
God's shield protect you,
God's wisdom arm you,
wherever God may lead you.

May God's Spirit surround you and those whom you love.
Rest now, in that calm embrace,
let your hearts be warmed and all storms be stilled by the whisper of his voice.

May your day be blessed
by moments of quietness,
light in your darkness,
strength in your weakness,
grace in your meekness,
joy in your gladness,
peace in your stillness.
May your day be blessed

In anxiety may you find peace
In sadness may you find comfort
In sickness may you find healing
In loneliness may you find company
In busyness may you find space
In listening may you find wisdom
In following may you find hope
In the One who meets our needs
Who says, 'Ask and you will receive.'

May the love of Christ
be active in your heart,
be heard in your words,
be seen in your actions
and inform your choices
today and all days. Amen.

May the knowledge of God's presence be your strength throughout this day, a source of wisdom, love, light, and grace. And as darkness falls may you find peace in that presence, and the gift of sleep.

May our hearts sing of love pouring out upon a tree.
May our hearts sing of peace that can calm an angry sea.
May our hearts sing of joy in forgiveness, grace, mercy.
May our hearts sing of faith in a God who sets us free.
May our hearts sing of life lived well and abundantly.
May our hearts sing, always.

May you find peace
in your busyness,
in your journeying,
in your happiness,
in your suffering,
in your fearfulness,
in your questioning,
in your faithfulness,
in your worshipping.
May you find peace.

God's arms enfold and protect you.
God's word inform and inspire you.
God's love infuse and transform you.
God's Spirit flow and empower you
now and always.

God of rising sun, embrace us
God of mist and rain, refresh us
God of flowing stream, revive us
God of gentle breeze, speak to us
God of day and night-time, hear us
God of tears and laughter, bless us
God of love and power, uphold us
Your children and our family, we pray

God's wisdom be the store from where our daily thoughts are gathered.
God's love be a flowing river bringing peace to heart and soul.
God's whisper be a word in time breaking through this world's clamor.
God's faithfulness be our strength and hope within the storms we face.

God's peace be known deep within your soul when anxiety and fear assail you, when daily life becomes a burden that is difficult to carry. God's peace be known and felt, as those arms reach out to hold you.
God's peace be known and heard, in words of comfort and release. God's peace be known.

May the God of love surround you; those loving arms embrace you,
bring you comfort, hope and light. and as the day draws to a close
God's peace permeate your heart, and bring healing through the night.

In the busyness of life may you find space.
In the worries of life may you find peace.
In the beauty of life may you find joy.
In the sorrows of life may you find comfort,
faith be strengthened and your day be blessed.

In every moment of this day,
May you know the embrace of God's love
May you hear the whisper of God's voice
May you feel the presence of God's Spirit
May you share the knowledge of God's grace
in every moment of this day

God bless your journey,
the people and places,
talking and listening,
giving and receiving,
fellowship, loneliness,
sorrow and thankfulness.

May all you embrace
build and strengthen you
on your daily walk with God.

God of rising sun, embrace us
God of mist and rain, refresh us
God of flowing stream, revive us
God of gentle breeze, speak to us
God of day and night-time, hear us
God of tears and laughter, bless us
God of love and power, uphold us
Your children and our family, we pray

May you know the warmth of God's loving embrace
May you know the joy of God's ever-presence
May you know the peace of God's gentle whisper
May you know the strength of God's Spirit within you
this day and always in your life.

God's peace be known deep within your soul when anxiety and fear assail you,
when daily life becomes a burden that is difficult to carry.
God's peace be known and felt, as those arms reach out to hold you.
God's peace be known and heard, in words of comfort and release.
God's peace be known.

Follow the Spirit. Walk in the rhythm of the Spirit. Sing in the Spirit. Pray with the Spirit. Be filled with
the Spirit. Sow to the Spirit. Reap from the Spirit. Preserve the unity of the Spirit. Be borne by the Spirit.
Cling to the Spirit. Breathe in the Spirit and breathe...out (the Spirit). Drench yourself in the Spirit. Drink
the Spirit and be drunk by him. Peter Leithart

May the Hero of all history talk personally to you. May you find in Jesus the answer to the deepest needs
of your life. May you remember your highest privilege: you are known by God and cherished by heaven.
Max Lucado

I bless you with the knowledge and assurance that you cannot earn God's love.
No matter how far you run from Him in your search for freedom and pleasure.
No matter how hard you try to earn his blessings by being good and moral.
Live your lives this week as God's redeemed people, live in joy and freedom.

I bless you with the sure knowledge that you belong to the Alpha and the Omega
You are children of the one who is, and who was, and who is to come.
He has called you to be his nation, and his royal priesthood.
Go out into the world as servants of the King, The Almighty. Bud Thoreen

Sisters and brothers, our plans are always limited. But God's plans never are. So go out into the world
with the assurance of Jesus' presence, the vision of God's eternity, and the compassion of the Holy
Spirit.

May you have the courage to confront the dark places.
May you trust in God's goodness to lead you to the living water.
May you act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

As you go forth from here, may you go forth with the heart of the Psalmist, in humility, seeking the will of the Lord in all you do, and in confidence, knowing that the Lord is our rock and redeemer. And may the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and forevermore. Amen.

Austin D. Hill

Go in the love and peace of Christ, claiming your freedom to live victoriously in Christ's love, and in harmony with our brothers and sisters who have been reconciled by Christ's grace. Amen.

Hassell Bullock

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ give you the one great thing that you seek: that you may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of your lives, and that you may gaze upon His beauty, and that you may continually lift up your requests to God as you go from this place, and may you bless others with the hope of the Gospel!

Irish Blessings

May the road rise to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

St. Patrick

May the strength of God pilot us;
May the wisdom of God instruct us,
May the hand of God protect us,
May the word of God direct us.
Be always ours this day and for evermore.

St. Patrick

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
Salvation is of the Lord.
Salvation is of the Christ.
May your salvation, Lord, be ever with us.



may you always be blessed
with walls for the wind
a roof for the rain
a warm cup of tea by the fire
laughter to cheer you
those you love near you
and all that your
heart might desire

an irish blessing





Assisted by ChatGPT, Joel Ryan--Crosswalk.com, Annette Griffin—iBelieve, Sophia Bricker—Christianity.com, Pamela Palmer—Bible Study Tools