

“May the Lord Bless Thee”

Numbers 6:22-27

Graduate Night

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: Christina, I would like to share this Old Testament blessing with you, as you embark on a new stage in your life. This was to be God's blessing upon Israel as pronounced by Aaron & his sons (the priests of Israel). That which was an O. T. pronouncement of benediction upon Israel I would like to share as my prayer of blessing upon you. The benediction here in Numbers 6 is made up of three coup-lets, with the name of the LORD repeated three times. Some suggest that this refers to the Trinity (cf. II Cor. 13:14, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, & the love of God, & the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”*). All agree that it was God's desire for Israel to have His blessing. Matthew Henry said, "Our blessing God is only our speaking well of Him; His blessing us is doing well for us; those whom He blesses are blessed indeed." I see three requests in this prayer, asking for the Lord's **protection**, the Lord's **presence**, & the Lord's **peace**.

I. My request for you is for the **Father's protection**(:24).

A. The bestowing of prosperity > *"bless thee"*

1. "A blessing was one way of asking for God's divine favor to rest upon others" (Life Application Bible). "They must each of them prepare themselves to receive the blessing, & then they should find enough in it to make them every man (& woman) happy" (Henry).

2. "The blessing of God is the goodness of God in action, by which a supply of all good pours down to us from His good favor as from their only fountain..." (Keil).

Conditional?? Consider Deut. 28:1-2, *“...And all these blessings shall come on thee, & overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.”*

B. The withholding of adversity > *"keep thee"*

1. An O.T. promise > Psalm 121:4-5, *“Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.”* The Lord promises to ward off every curse, all adversity.

2. A N.T. promise > I Peter 1:5, *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* The Lord promises to preserve with His guardian care.

Summary: Psalm 4:7-8 > “If God gives us the assurance of His special favor & His acceptance of us, this will put gladness into the heart” (Henry).

II. My request for you is for the **Son's presence** (:25).

A. His face to shine upon you - God's goodness > *“The LORD make His face shine upon thee”*

1. "The face of God is the personality of God as turned towards man" (Keil). "This alludes to the shining of the sun upon the earth, to enlighten, & comfort it, & to renew the face of it" (Henry). "A shining face is a smiling face, a pledge of God's good favor" (ESV note).

2. From God's face goes "...also a sunlight shining with love & full of life & good" (Keil). See Psalm 31:16, 67:1, 80:3, 7, & 19

B. His favor to shower upon you - God's graciousness > *“...and be gracious unto thee.”*

1. This is the experience of His redemption that blots out one's guilt & bestows God's grace.

2. "This light sends rays of mercy into a heart in need of salvation, & makes it the recipient of grace" (Keil).

Summary: *“...for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”* (Hebrews 13:5b).

III. My request for you is for the **Spirit's peace** (:26).

A. The blessing of His pleasure

1. "*The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee...*" The "*countenance*" is the face or the expression of one's face. This speaks of God taking notice of & treating His people with favor; His recognition & approval; see Ps. 37:23, "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: & He delighteth in his way.*"
2. "The Lord love thee & cause thee to know that He loves thee" (Henry).
How will this be possible? See John 8:29, & follow after Christ (I John 2:6).

B. The bestowal of His peace [cf. "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1) – "peace of God" (Phil. 4:4-7) – "peace with others" (Pro. 16:6-7)]

1. "*And give thee peace*" - "The sum of all the good which God sets, prepares, or establishes for His people" (Keil). "It means more than the absence of storm & trouble around us. It involves quietness of heart within us, spiritual health & spiritual prosperity, adequacy for the demands of life, & the kind of spiritual well-being that rises above circumstances" (Wiersbe).
2. "'*Shalom*' is a comprehensive word, including the concepts of completeness, security, health, tranquility, contentment, friendship, & peace with God & man" (Wycliffe).

Summary: This peace is total well-being, "the possession of adequate resources" (Morrison).

Illustrate: Song: "Wonderful Peace."

Conclusion: God closes this benediction with, "*And they (the priests) shall put My name upon the children of Israel; & I will bless them.*" Matthew Henry remarks, "God gives them (priests) leave to make use of His name in blessing the people, & to bless them as His people, called by His name. This included all the blessings they could pronounce upon them, to mark them for God's peculiar, the people of His choice & love. God's name upon them was their honor, their comfort, their safety, their plea." Young lady, this is my prayer for you. I ask for the Lord's protection **for** you, the Lord's presence **with** you, & the Lord's peace **in** you. May you experience the Lord's protection in all that you do. Might you also enjoy the Lord's presence as you sense His goodness & graciousness. And I pray you will evidence the Lord's peace in your life, by walking so as to receive the blessing of His pleasure (walk as to please Him) & as to rejoice in the bestowal of His peace. "*The Lord bless thee, & keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, & be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, & give thee peace*" Amen.