**"THE PRIESTLY BLESSING"**

[**Numbers 6:22-27**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Numbers%206.22-27)

**INTRODUCTION**

1. In a book filled with "numbers", we find a beautiful gem of

 scripture, which has been called "the Lord's Prayer of the Old

 Testament":

 **"The LORD bless you and keep you;**

 **The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;**

 **The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."**

2. As noted in [**Num 6:22-27**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Num%206.22-27), it is the blessing of the Lord with which

 Aaron and his sons were to bless the children of Israel...

 a. Aaron and his sons made up the priesthood for Israel

 b. Therefore this passage as often been called **"The Priestly**

 **Blessing"** (also the Aaronic Benediction)

3. In this passage, I believe we learn things about the Lord which are

 just as true today...

 a. Even though we do not live under the Old Covenant, with its

 Aaronic priesthood

 b. We do have a "High Priest", who desires to bless us just as

 richly (if not more so)!

[To understand what I mean, let's first look more closely at...]

**I. THE PRIESTLY BLESSING DEFINED**

 **A. "THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU"**

 1. The word **"bless"** means to confer well-being or prosperity

 a. The promise of such blessings was conditional - [**Deut 28:1-6**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Deut%2028.1-6)

 b. Failure to meet God's conditions brought curses, not

 blessings - [**Deut 28:15-19**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Deut%2028.15-19)

 2. The word **"keep"** means to provide and care, to guard and

 protect

 a. A beautiful psalm which speaks of God's care is [**Ps 121:1-8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20121.1-8)

 b. Like a shepherd guarding and providing his sheep, the

 benediction calls upon God to keep watch over Israel

 **B. "THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU, AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU"**

 1. To **"make His face shine"** may be an idiom...

 a. Indicating God's smile of favor on His people, evidenced by

 His being "gracious" (Wenham)

 b. Note how it is used elsewhere - [**Ps 31:16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%2031.16)**;** [**80:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%2080.3)**;** [**Dan 9:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Dan%209.17)

 2. To **"be gracious"** means to bestow favor, especially that which

 is unmerited

 a. The parallelism of this benediction suggests this favor

 refers to the blessing and keeping by the Lord mentioned

 previously

 b. Perhaps emphasizing that such blessings are unmerited, even

 though conditional

 **C. "THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON YOU, AND GIVE YOU PEACE"**

 1. To **"lift up His countenance"** may be similar to smile

 (Believers' Study Bible)

 a. As such it suggests pleasure and affection (Allen)

 b. Also approval and recognition (Ryrie)

 2. The word **"peace"** is not just the absence of war, but a

 positive state of rightness and fullness of well-being (Allen)

 a. For the nation of Israel, God had promised peace if they

 were faithful - [**Lev 26:6**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lev%2026.6)

 b. There was also peace for the individual who trusted in God

 - [**Isa 26:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Isa%2026.3)

[That God would have Aaron and his sons bless the children of Israel

with this benediction indicates that God really wanted to bless and

provide for them.

How about today? Does God desire to bless us, and if so, how?]

**II. THE PRIESTLY BLESSING TODAY**

 **A. "THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU"**

 1. Indeed the Lord does desire to bless us!

 a. Today, those blessings come through Jesus Christ - [**Ep 1:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%201.3)

 b. They come especially to those described in [**Mt 5:3-12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%205.3-12)

 2. And the Lord desires to provide and care for us!

 a. As described by Jesus in [**Mt 6:25-32**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%206.25-32)

 b. But this care is conditional, the condition described in

 [**Mt 6:33**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%206.33)

 -- Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the

 priestly blessing will be upon you too!

 **B. "THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU, AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU"**

 1. Just as all spiritual blessings come through Jesus, so God's

 grace is now manifested through His Son - cf. [**Jn 1:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%201.17)

 2. Yes, God desires to show His smile of favor upon us, but it is

 imperative that we not receive it in vain! - cf. [**2Co 6:1-3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Co%206.1-3)

 -- How sad that God's grace is so freely extended, yet so few

 accept His grace!

 **C. "THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON YOU, AND GIVE YOU PEACE"**

 1. Through Christ, peace with God is now possible - [**Ro 5:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%205.1)

 2. And as we continue to pray, God bestows peace through His Son

 - [**Php 4:6-7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Php%204.6-7)

 -- The Father is willing to give us peace, but do we accept it?

**CONCLUSION**

1. We have been talking about **"The Priestly Blessing"**...

 a. How God wanted to bless Israel under the Old Covenant

 b. Through His priests in the Aaronic priesthood

2. We have noted that the same sort of blessings are available today...

 a. But the blessings of God are bestowed through His Son, Jesus

 Christ

 b. Who today is **our "High Priest"** - cf. [**He 4:14-16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%204.14-16)

The point of this lesson is simple, yet profound:

 If you desire **"The Priestly Blessing"** today, you must be in

 Christ and He must be your High Priest; for that is how God

 is blessing His people today! (cf. [**Ep 1:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%201.3))

Are you in Jesus Christ? How does one get "into" Christ, where they

can receive the blessings He offers as our High Priest? Consider what

is said in [**Ga 3:26-27**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ga%203.26-27)...