

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NUMBERS
"What is the Aaronic Blessing"
Numbers 6:22-27

BACKGROUND

1. The camp is in order and every warrior is in his proper place (chap. 1, 2). Every workman is set in his proper work (chap. 3, 4).
2. The congregation has been instructed concerning purity and defilement (chap. 5). Provision is made for those who really desire the character of separation to God (chap. 6).
3. At this stage, it is well to be reminded of 1 Chronicles 29:5. What a magnificent call to the Lord. Let us respond as did they (1 Chron. 29:6-9).
4. As then, so here in Numbers, a blessing is forthcoming. There--to God (1 Chron. 29:10). Here--to men (v. 23).
5. Consider these facts about the text. They affirm God's constant concern for Israel

1. The Context

a. Its contents

It is easily noticed that the Nazarite vow (6:1-21) and the ensuing offerings (chap. 7) form a strange context for the text. Yet, it is an integral part of all the regulations given here (cf. 5:1, 5, 11; 6:1). God was preparing the nation for worship and the wilderness march. This blessing was a necessary part.

b. Its concerns

The Nazarites took their vows for a limited period of time. This blessing related to all Israelites (not only Nazarites) and was to be pronounced whenever it was desired by the priests. In fact, it was used at the close of the daily morning worship in the temple and later in the synagogues.

2. The Words

a. Their number

The poetic form of this blessing makes it one of the oldest poems in the O.T. The first line consists of three words in Hebrew. The second of five words and the third of seven words.

b. Their structure

The number of syllables in the words increases accordingly: #1 has 12; #2 has 14; #3 has 16. The consonants are similar (early Hebrew did not indicate vowels) having 15, 20, and 25 respectively.

*from me all
on how I love you*

c. Their inclusion

Three times the name of God (tetragrammaton) is included. This may be a reference to the Trinity. Note Jesus and Holy Spirit are deity (Rom. 10:9; 2 Cor. 3:17). Deducting the thrice repeated name of God, 12 words are left. This may symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel.

3. The Message

a. About God's Power

This concerns the initial statement of God's blessing followed by His keeping. The first verb is expanded in the second one. Moreover, the first one invokes God's movement toward His people and the second indicates His activity on their behalf. These features are true of each line of the prayer. God's blessing is explicated in His keeping power. What a mighty God! What a prayer to be kept by the Almighty (Psa. 121; 1 Pet. 1:5).

b. About God's Grace

The lifting up of God's face upon one is a characteristic of God (Psa. 31:16; 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19). Here is God's smile extended over His people. This brings God's gracious disposition upon His own (cf. Psa. 4:1; 6:2; 41:4; 51:1). Thus light from God makes the recipient to enjoy God's grace.

c. About God's Peace

The previous petition relates to God's benevolent look. The verb here, also linked with God's face, concerns God giving attention to His people (cf. Gen. 43:29; Psa. 4:6; 34:15). Out of this attention comes peace. Now the Hebrew word shalom means more than absence of war. It means well being, health, prosperity, salvation--a total holistic enjoyment.

SUMMARY

The final verse (v. 27) notes the priests would put God's Name (His very Being) upon the sons of Israel. Moreover, with the emphatic personal pronoun "I" there is the very assurance of God "I will bless them." The investment with His Name is for a witness. He guarantees blessing for such persons. Amen.

Psa 119, 30, 135
Psalms 121