

Numbers 6:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. The benediction's climax combines God's favorable regard with the comprehensive blessing of shalom. "Lift up his countenance" intensifies the previous line's imagery—when someone lifts their face toward you, it indicates attention, approval, and welcoming relationship. God lifting His countenance means He looks favorably upon His people, attending to them with loving care.

"Peace" (shalom, שָׁלוֹם) encompasses far more than absence of conflict. It includes wholeness, completeness, welfare, health, prosperity, harmony, and right relationships—comprehensive well-being in every dimension of life. Shalom represents the full flourishing God intends for His people, the restoration of Eden's harmony and anticipation of the new creation's perfection.

This triple blessing crescendos from provision and protection (v. 24) to favorable presence and grace (v. 25) to ultimate comprehensive well-being (v. 26). The threefold invocation of God's name (YHWH appears three times) was understood as "putting God's name" upon Israel (v. 27), marking them as God's possession and under His blessing. This priestly blessing continued in synagogue worship and anticipates the eternal blessing believers will enjoy in God's presence forever (Revelation 22:3-5).

Historical Context

This passage from **Nazirite Vow and Priestly Blessing** must be understood within its ancient Near Eastern context. The wilderness period (approximately 1446-1406 BCE using early Exodus chronology, or 1290-1250 BCE using late chronology) represents a formative period in Israel's national and spiritual development. Archaeological discoveries from Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia provide important background for understanding Israel's experiences.

The organizational structures described here reflect common ancient Near Eastern administrative practices while being uniquely adapted to Israel's theocratic covenant. Egyptian, Hittite, and Mesopotamian texts reveal similar census procedures, military organization, and priestly systems. However, Israel's tabernacle-centered arrangement with YHWH dwelling among His people was unprecedented—most ancient peoples built temples as homes for gods, not portable sanctuaries for a God who journeyed with His people.

The Sinai wilderness, a harsh environment of rocky mountains and desert valleys, could not naturally sustain a population of 2-3 million people. Israel's survival required continuous miraculous provision—manna, water, and preserved clothing (Deuteronomy 29:5). This setting deliberately forced dependence on God, preventing self-sufficiency and requiring daily trust in divine provision.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage's emphasis on consecration deepen your understanding of God's character and His work in His people's lives?
2. In what specific ways can you apply the principles of Nazirite vow to your current life circumstances and spiritual journey?

3. How does this passage anticipate Christ's person and work, and how does seeing Christ in this text transform your understanding and application?

Interlinear Text

lift up H5375	The LORD H3068	his countenance H6440	אֶל יְהֹוָה H413	וְיִשְׁאַל H7760	לְךָ H0
שָׁלוֹם:					
thee peace H7965					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 4:6 (References Lord): There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

Psalms 29:11 (Peace): The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (Peace): Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

Romans 15:13 (Peace): Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

John 16:33 (Peace): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Acts 2:28 (Parallel theme): Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

Isaiah 26:3 (Peace): Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Romans 15:33 (Peace): Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Psalms 42:5 (Parallel theme): Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

John 20:21 (Peace): Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

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