

NUMBERS SIX, TWENTY-FOUR THROUGH TWENTY-SIX

Intro: Many of the Lord's people have made the discovery that the best way to learn to pray is by using the Word of God as a guide.

One reason for praying is to seek the blessing of God. Perhaps one thing which has made these verses "great" to the people of God is that they constitute a prayer which was ordained of God Himself. It indicates how the priests were to pray for the people (of special interest to pastors, parents, etc.), BUT IT ALSO INDICATES WHAT GOD WANTS TO DO FOR HIS PEOPLE.

There are three parts to it--all beginning with, "The Lord," i.e., Jehovah. Most of the early Church fathers and Theologians took this as evidence of the Trinity, and that all of the Trinity have right to the name, Jehovah. Some went even further and taught that v. 24 spoke of The Father, v. 25, of the Son, and v. 26, of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to think about, but probably we cannot be too dogmatic about this.

The benediction would also indicate that it is from the Lord that these blessings are to be sought because He is the only One who can bestow them upon our lives. With these we have all that we need from day to day.

Let us note, first of all,

I. THE BEGINNING OF EACH VERSE.

The thought at the beginning of each verse is very similar. They speak of the importance of being in fellowship with the Lord--and we know that fellowship can only be maintained through obedience to the Word of God. God's blessings are experienced in their greatest measure when His people are walking in fellowship with Him because they are walking in obedience to His Word.

This causes Him to make his face to shine and to lift up His countenance upon us. (Both of these latter two verses are the same in their beginning except for the verbs which seem to be two ways for expressing the same thing.)

THE IMPORTANT POINT IN ALL OF THIS IS THAT THE LORD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO REALIZE THAT HE IS THE ONE WHO BLESSES HIS PEOPLE SO THAT FELLOWSHIP IS MAINTAINED. WE CANNOT PLEASE HIM, WE CANNOT OBEY HIM, WITHOUT THE DIVINE ENABLEMENT WHICH HE ALONE GIVES TO US. MANY OF

THE ISRAELITES NEVER LEARNED THIS LESSON, AS MANY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD TODAY STILL DO NOT REALIZE THAT THIS THIS IS TRUE!

Somehow we keep trying to bring ourselves to the place of blessing. Cf. Phil. 2:13. THE OT AND THE NT BOTH TEACH US THAT EVEN FOR THE DESIRE AND THE STRENGTH TO PLEASE GOD WE ARE UTTERLY DEPENDENT UPON HIM!

II. THE DIFFERENCES AND THE PROGRESSION AS SEEN IN THE LAST OF THE THREE VERSES.

A. "And keep thee."

Here we see God's sovereign preservation of His people.

One of the best illustrations we have of this is taken from the life of Jacob as he left home to go to Padan-aram. It was at Bethel that he heard the most encouraging promise. Cf. Gen. 28:15.

Cf. Psa. 121. Then see Rom. 8:28. And finally, Jude 24, 25.

These promises do not mean that a child of God will be kept from trouble, or from suffering, or from harm, or even from death. BUT THEY DO MEAN THAT NOTHING WILL BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH GOD'S PURPOSE FOR US REGARDLESS OF WHAT IT MAY BE.

B. "And be gracious unto thee."

Here we see God's sovereign grace for His people.

What is grace? Grace is the undeserved blessing of God. It means that often the only way God can give us blessing is to give it in spite of what we have done. NOT ONLY DO WE FAIL TO DESERVE IT, BUT WE OFTEN STAND IN THE WAY AND OPPOSE IT--EVEN THOUGH WE MAY DO IT UNINTENTIONALLY!

The child of God is constantly in need of the grace of God. Cf. Psa. 103:10-14.

IN NUM 14:22  
10X  
REBELLED

In Num. 20 Moses himself was to see this when he smote the rock instead of speaking to it. It was grace for him, and grace for a rebellious people.

The very prayer itself indicates that, if God gave His people what they deserve, there would be very, very few blessings!!!!

C. "And give thee peace."

This was the greeting of the Hebrews. SHALOM! It was what every Jew wished for his friends, and the greeting with which he met every stranger.

What does peace mean--deliverance from trouble? No, it cannot mean that. The Word does not teach this, and neither does experience. BUT THIS IS WHAT WE WOULD LIKE FOR IT TO MEAN!

What does it mean?

The Hebrew verb from which this word comes contains two ideas:

- 1) That of being complete.
- 2) That of being safe.

THIS PRAYER INDICATES THAT THERE CAN BE NO REAL PEACE EXCEPT IT COME FROM THE LORD. It is only in Him that we are complete, in Him that we are safe.

Fear grips our hearts when we face a situation and we know that we cannot cope with it. Cf. 2 Chron. 20:1-3a,

"It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them some of the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some who told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee . . . And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord."

Cf. Isa. 26:3, 4; Phil. 4:6, 7; John 14:1, 27; 2 Th. 3:16,

"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all."

When we have the Lord we are complete and we are safe. THIS IS PEACE!

Concl: Note how the chapter ends. Here is Jehovah's guarantee that He will stand behind His Word.