

A. In the Authorized (“King James”) version, this reads:

22 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 23 “Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 24 The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”

- 1. there are many kinds of blessing
 - a. one of my late relatives, Garnet Kirk, who grew up in the Mennonite community around Markham, used to pray a blessing at meal time that began with a summary of the whole Bible and ended with “... and at last feed us with the bread and water of life.” — well, we were lucky if by the time he was finished there was any bread and water left!
 - b. one Irish blessing is "may you be in heaven 30 minutes before the devil knows you're dead."
 - c. and another Irish blessing goes

May the road rise up to meet you,
 May the wind be always at your back,
 May the sun shine warm upon your face,
 And rains fall soft upon your fields,
 And until we meet again
 May God hold you in the hollow of His hand. (Anon)

- d. but the blessing that we read today was not invented by men, nor the ideas of men, nor the beauty of a human poet

2. but rather, this blessing was formulated by Yahweh Himself

- a. so it reveals ever so fully God's loving attitude
- b. and God's benevolent intentions
- c. to those who are His own special people

(A) the children Israel were first named as this people by God Himself in Exodus 19:4–6a (NAS): 4 "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

(B) and with almost the same words are Christians called in 1 Peter 2:9–10 (NAS): 9 "but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; 10 for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

3. so, likewise, this Aaronic blessing has been applied to saints of all ages, both the old and the new; let's consider it a brief while this morning before we join together in our communion service. And, by the way, for you who are parents of young children, it is our intention next month to have this service prior to the dismissal of the younger children. Our purpose in this will be to briefly introduce them to the meaning of the Lord's supper.

B. The Three-Fold Blessing

1. one of the distinctive of the Holy Scriptures is their association of the number three with the person of God

- a. for example

(A) their is the three-fold worship of the angels as related in Isaiah 6:3 (NAS): *And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."*

(B) and in this blessing, the thrice repeated, *"The Lord, ... the Lord, ... the Lord"*

- b. nor do I believe this to be at all accidental, but rather a confirmation of the Triune nature of God

(A) that there is but one God: one in essence and being, one in the consistency of His character, and one in opposition to any that would seek to share His glory

(B) but that also, this one God is revealed and manifest in three distinct persons: Father, Son and

Holy Spirit

- c. these Three, then, are involved in providing this blessing to God's people ... but I won't even begin to attempt to say which is the work of each Person, for in this blessing They bear a unity of purpose in benefiting His people
2. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee"
 - a. in the Hebrew, this is but three words
 - (A) with the personal, covenant name of God, "Yahweh" (or "Jehovah") being central
 - (B) and the key, climactic word in the last: Keep
 - b. this blessing was first enunciated when the children of Israel had been redeemed by the mighty hand of God from out of their bondage in Egypt
 - (A) now they were in the midst of enemies round about
 - (B) and as it was God who had delivered and saved them
 - (C) so it was God who was going to guard them now on
 - (D) these theme repeats itself throughout God's Word
 - (1) the Lord is a Rock, a High Tower, a Refuge, a Help
 - (2) He is Jehovah-Nissi — the Lord, our Banner
 - (3) He is El-Gibbor — God the Mighty One
 - (4) He is Jehovah-Sabaoth — the Lord of Hosts
 - c. and for the Christian
 - (A) on becoming a child of God, enters a spiritual battle, surrounded by the enemy, needing protection
 - (B) Jesus engages to protect us: for in echo to God's Old Testament promise "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5 from Deuteronomy 31:6, 8, Joshua 1:5) Jesus tells us "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)
 3. "The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:"
 - a. making His face shine on us — or, as some put it, smiling on us — is another way of describing blessing from God
 - (A) blessing from God is the eternal Creator stooping down to interpose His activity in the creature's humble life

- (B) Jesus said He did it for the sparrow, and the lily — then why not for you, too!
- (C) God wants us to know in this blessing about his kindly, benevolent look upon us, on our needs, on our cares
- b. and that His gracious, merciful designs for us
 - (A) do not stop with the grace that brought us salvation
 - (B) but remain with us as day by day through the work of the Holy Spirit, he moulds us to become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29)

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

- a. another way again of describing blessing from God
 - (A) that God is keeping His face turned toward us, keeping His eye upon us, watching over us
 - (B) that He may work all things together for good to those that love Him, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28)
- b. His deliverance, His protective care, His work of Grace
 - (A) is not merely a minimum to make us fit for heaven
 - (B) but everything that is necessary for our peace — our Shalom — which we cannot even begin to describe this morning: let it suffice us to say it means our wholeness and health in every aspect of our being

C. Bring us to the Greatest Blessing of All — His Name:

1. "They shall put my Name upon ... them"

- a. this is God's purpose
 - (A) that we might be a people called by His name
 - (B) "...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26)

2. we bear the name of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

- a. so we are His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- b. so we are His property
- c. so we are His people
- d. so we can rejoice with the writer, George Robinson ^{-{2}}.

Loved with everlasting love, Led by grace that love to know:
Spirit, breathing from above, Thou hast taught me it is so!
Oh this full and perfect peace, Oh this transport all divine –
In a love which cannot cease, I am His and He is mine;

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by "Kerux" followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. "I Am His and He Is Mine," George Wade Robinson (1838-1877)