

119

MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Nasso – The Blessing of Hope

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Nasso, which is Hebrew for “Take up,” and it goes from Numbers 4:21 to Numbers 7:89.

This Torah portion addresses the duties of the priests, purification of the camp, laws of restitution, laws concerning the wife who is accused of adultery, laws for Nazarites, and the priestly blessing.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about the blessing of hope.

Our parashah this week contains the famous “Aaronic Benediction,” or Priestly Blessing, or *Birkat Kohanim* in Hebrew. This is a powerful blessing in the Torah, dictated word-for-word by God Himself, by which the priests were to bless God’s people. Here is how it goes:

Numbers 6:24-26

[The Lord \[YHWH\] bless you and keep you; the Lord \[YHWH\] make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord \[YHWH\] lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.](#)

This blessing gives us a glimpse of God’s heart toward His people. He smiles upon His people and desires to bless and protect them.

When the passage says, “[The Lord bless you and keep you](#),” this recalls the many promised blessings that come with obedience that are listed in the Torah, specifically in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. These blessings include God sending rain upon the land and Israel having wealth and food. It also recalls the covenant promise of security and freedom from war. In other words, may God protect you and keep you from harm.

“[The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you](#)” entails having an audience with God—that is, having His favor. In the Ancient Near East, a king would grant favor to his subjects by giving

them access to him. To “hide the face” was an idiom for denying access. So, in other words, may God grant you favor to come into His presence.

“**The Lord lift up his countenance upon you**” is to say, literally, may the Lord smile upon you. We know this because to have one’s countenance “fall” or “drop” literally means to frown or express sorrow (Genesis 4:5-6).

“Peace,” *shalom* in Hebrew, entails wholeness and wellbeing. So to “**give you peace**” is to say may God restore wholeness and stability to your life.

Even though this is called the “Priestly Blessing,” it’s important to remember that this blessing didn’t come from the priests. They simply acted as the intermediaries through whom the blessing comes upon the people. This is clear by the verse directly after the blessing:

Numbers 6:27

So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.

Again, this blessing reveals the heart of God toward His people, and His desire to bless us, to give us security, to provide for us, and to bring wholeness and stability to our lives. But if this blessing is a revelation of God’s heart toward us, why don’t we, as God’s children, consistently experience these blessings? Many times in life we are simply not in a state of blessing, security, and wholeness, but the exact opposite!

This is the nature of our fallen world. As Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, “Time and chance happen to all” (Ecclesiastes 9:11). No matter how many commandments we keep and how great our theology is, we are not guaranteed consistent blessing and happiness in this life. That’s the message of Ecclesiastes, which is why Solomon’s conclusion is to focus not on what we can strive to gain in this world but what we gain in the world to come if we remain faithful to God.

So, more than anything else, this priestly blessing is pointing us to the world to come in which we will have true and lasting peace and prosperity for all eternity. Therefore, this blessing expresses a hope for that promise, which is not yet fully realized in this life but will come to fruition when Messiah returns to establish His Kingdom.

Ultimately, this blessing is a reminder of the hope we have in God. This blessing reassures us that this present life is not all there is, but there is something much more beautiful and wonderful that awaits the children of God.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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