

What does “the Lord make His face shine on you” mean?

Many churches will conclude their worship service with the minister saying, “The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26). This was the priests’ blessing in the Old Testament for God’s people passed down for centuries.

In 1979, archaeologists excavating a tomb near Jerusalem discovered two small silver scrolls that recorded this priestly blessing from Numbers 6. The scrolls were dated to the 7th century B.C., making them oldest written Scriptures we have found. So what does “the Lord make His face shine on you” mean?

The fact that God would have Aaron and the priests to repeat this blessing for centuries must mean it is very important. It’s not just meant to be a ritualistic chant to let the congregation know the worship service is over. This blessing is an appeal to God to look favorably upon His people and to grant His presence, blessing, guidance, and grace.

“The Lord keep you” is a blessing of God’s protection. Jesus said, “See that you do not despise one of these little ones for I say to you that **their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father** in heaven” (Matt. 18:10). Jesus revealed this interesting fact—as the angels watch over the children on earth, they are at the same time looking at God’s shining face in heaven. Sometimes we forget heaven is that close.

“The Lord **CAUSE** His face to shine on you” implies that God does **not** shine on everyone. He causes His face to shine on those who seek His face and want to be a blessing to Him. A number of verses asks that God **not hide His face** from them (Job 13:24, Psalm 27:9, 44:24, 69:17, 88:14, 102:2, 143:7).

The Scriptural blessing goes on to say, “the **Lord lift His countenance on you**” which is a picture of a father smiling and taking pleasure in his child. If Israel were to ever turn away in rebellion, God says, “But **I will surely hide My face** in that day because of all the evil they will do” (Deut. 31:18).

When the Lord lifts His countenance upon us, it shows that He is looking on us for our good. God wants to bless us. He wants to protect us. He wants to make His face to shine upon us and be gracious to us, and give us peace. Is the Lord’s face shining on you?

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