What kind of God frees slaves and then allows them to wander in the wilderness to die without food or water? The people of Israel had such thoughts. After a miraculous Moses-led rescue from the labor camps of Egypt, the Israelites wondered if God had brought them that far just to kill them in the wilderness of Sinai.

Yet out of the doubts and fears of those days comes one of the most loved gifts of Jewish faith and culture. From one of the most unlikely places, a prayer known as the Aaronic Blessing found in the book of Numbers offers a vision of the unchanging desire and heart of God for people like us—with the mere mention of His name.

**THIS WEEK’S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- When reading Numbers 6, the Aaronic Blessing seems to show up almost out of nowhere. What makes this blessing a surprise?

- How would you characterize the Aaronic Blessing? Is it a promise of what God will do for His people if they keep His laws? What is the only condition mentioned? Does this surprise you? Can you think of any way in which Israel would have been blessed by hearing these words?

- If Numbers 6:22–27 was the only reference to this blessing, we might assume that it is limited to only the people of Israel. Read Psalm 67. How does this passage of Scripture show a surprisingly global significance?

- The blessing we are considering together is entrusted to the sons of Aaron. How does the story of Aaron’s incident with the golden calf (Exodus 32) contribute to the unfolding surprises of this text? How does the thought of one family mediating the blessing of God on all move forward into the New Testament?

- The name of the LORD is repeated or referred to five times in the blessing. For Israel, the sacred name of Yahweh was the name above all names. Can you see why, as the story and surprises of this text continue to multiply and unfold, there is a blessing to those who hear the name of Jesus (Philippians 2:8–11)?
Let’s ask God to help us see ourselves in the fears and mistakes of an ancient wilderness—and then to surprise and renew us with the blessing that brings us to the heart and name of Jesus.

“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24–26).

Father, thank You for giving us reason to believe it is the desire of Your heart to bless us and to show yourself to Israel, and ultimately, through Jesus, that You are more merciful, patient, and loving than we ever thought possible. In Your name we pray, Amen.