

# The Power of the Blessing

13 - Metamorphosis: The Way of Transformation  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 21 NOV 2021 | Glen Gerhauser

**Texts:** “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: 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.’” So they shall invoke [put, set or fix] My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them” (Num. 6:22–27, NASB).

“And He [Jesus] led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.” (Lk 24:50–53, NASB).

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Co 10:4, NIV).

**Theme:** Proclaiming the Blessing is one of the forgotten spiritual weapons in our arsenal.

**Intro:** Over the last few weeks, we’ve been learning about the power of praise. Praise has the power to transform our environment, turning the enemy’s attack into a bountiful blessing. After Jehoshaphat ordered the singers to spearhead the army, God fought the battle for them. In the end, they took abundant spoils from their enemies. They even called the valley where the multitude of opposition stood ‘The Valley of Blessing’ (2 Chron. 20:24-30). Their praise transformed their valley of destruction into a valley of blessing.

Today, we will see the power of proclamation. Specifically, we will focus on proclaiming the Blessing given to Aaron and his sons. This priestly blessing is another weapon in our spiritual arsenal. It has the power to turn the darkness around us into light. Its strength lies in speaking it with your mouth, not just knowing it in your head. When you vocalise it, you speak God’s Word over your life, family, friends, church, work environment, neighbourhood, city and nation. Every believer, father, mother, brother, sister and worker should be proclaiming the blessing over their homes and places. And I made a fresh infographic and translation of the Blessing to help you. You can find it at [www.brisbanefire.com/infographics](http://www.brisbanefire.com/infographics).

## 1) Know the Blessing (Numbers 6:24-26).

- What does the Lord’s blessing mean?
  - The Lord’s blessing empowers you to fulfill his will, enabling you to bear fruit and reflect his image and likeness (Gen. 1:20-28).
  - When the priests would proclaim the blessing, it would fix God’s name on his people. In other words, it would empower God’s people to reflect God’s nature, represent his Kingdom and reproduce his likeness over the earth.

- As we study the word blessing (*barak* and *eulogeo*), we see that God's blessing can rest on people, animals, the land and food. In other words, God's blessing can be on people, animals and things.
- In Greek, the word 'bless' is εὐλογέω *eulogeo*.
  - It has two parts: 1) *eu*, meaning good, and 2) *logeo*, meaning word (*logos*).
  - Simply put, a blessing is a good word.
- In Luke's Gospel, the last thing Jesus does is bless his disciples (Luke 24:50-53).
  - This reminds us of God's first words to man: a blessing to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28).
  - Blessings give us purpose, identity and power to carry out God's will.
  - The blessing of Jesus at the end of Luke filled the disciples with joy and praise (Luke 24:52-53).
- In Hebrew, the word for bless is *barak* בָּרַךְ.
  - It comes from the word *berek*, meaning kneel.
    - It shows us God's humility to kneel down to bless us and bestow on us his grace.
    - We bless the Lord when we kneel down and humbly praise and thank him.
    - The attributes of God's kindness, humility, love and grace are seen in the Hebrew word for bless.
    - Bless is *barak* and blessing is *barakah*.
  - The word bless in Hebrew also sounds like *baraq*, which means lightning or to light up.
    - And we see one of the main features of The Blessing is Yahweh shining his face upon us.
- When the priests spoke the Blessing over Israel, they were paving the way for their Messiah Jesus.
  - As we study the New Testament, we see that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Blessing.
    - The Lord himself has revealed his light and face to us, and that is the greatest blessing: JESUS.
    - Ephesians 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (NASB).

## 2) Know the power of the Blessing (Num. 6:24-26).

- Here's my translation:

Yahweh  
Bless you  
and  
Guard you.

Yahweh  
Shine  
His Face  
Upon you  
and  
Grace you.

Yahweh  
Raise  
His Face  
Upon you  
and  
Establish  
you  
with  
Shalom –  
Peace,  
Wholeness  
and  
Security.

- In Leviticus 9:23, we see the power of blessing visibly manifested:
  - “Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out **and blessed the people**, the **glory** of the LORD appeared to all the people.”
- There are three parts of the Blessing, and they remind us of the ministry of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  - The last portion reveals to us that the Holy Spirit gives us true peace.
    - Just before leaving his disciples, Jesus taught us that he would give us his own peace, the Holy Spirit.
      - “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (Jn 14:26–27, NASB).
  - The first part of the Blessing reflects the Father from whom all blessings flow.
  - The second part of the Blessing reflects Jesus, who is the face of God that gives us true light and grace (John 1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 4:6).
  - And the third part (as we’ve seen) is the Holy Spirit, who is our seal, fixed on our soul, giving us peace (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph 4:30).
- Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21).
  - So when you proclaim the blessing, you are proclaiming the Father’s heart, will and word over those in your care and your environment.
  - The Blessing coming out of your mouth is one of the ways God’s Kingdom is manifested on earth. It’s a fulfillment of the Lord’s prayer: “Your Kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:9-13).
- The power is in speaking it out, not just praying it in the mind.
  - You need to speak it over your environment, family and church.

- When you continue to speak blessing (and you can also put it into your own words), it brings light to those around you.
  - Proclaiming blessing causes God to move and people to come to know him.
  - Proclaiming blessing strengthens God's people.
  - Proclaiming blessing empowers the church to be fruitful and multiply.
  - Speaking blessing chases the darkness away and replaces our environments with God's light.
  - It's a weapon that fights against the enemy's plans to steal, kill and destroy.
    - The Blessing does the opposite to the enemy's work. It imparts abundant life, the life of Jesus.
  - Declaring blessing brings transformation.
  - Summing it up, the Blessing causes God's Kingdom to advance and grow.

### **3) Know your authority to speak the Blessing (Numbers 6:27).**

- You have been blessed to be a conduit of the Father's blessing (Gen. 12:1-3).
- So in the past, God entrusted the Blessing to Aaron and his sons, the priests.
- But now, in Jesus, we are all priests.
  - We are a royal priesthood (1 Peter. 2:9-10).
  - This is a great privilege but also a weighty responsibility.
- Jesus has given you authority to speak life (Luke 10:19).
  - When you speak the Blessing speak it with authority.
- Know your authority and use it.
  - If you're facing a difficult situation and you see the enemy getting in—it's time to speak the Blessing and keep speaking blessing.
  - It will cause the plants and vines in your life (the people in your life) to grow healthy and vibrant. It will lead people to Jesus and cause them to grow like Jesus.
- We are even called to bless those who curse us (Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12, 1 Pet. 3:9).
- And most importantly, be the blessing you speak of.
  - WARNING: Don't taint the blessing by also speaking curses out of your mouth (James 3:10)

**Conclusion:** We covered three main points: 1) Know the Blessings, 2) Know the power of the Blessing, and 3) Know your authority to speak the Blessing. Now, let's put it into practice.

יְבָרַךְ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ: O  
 יָאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנְּךָ: O  
 יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם: O

[The Lexham Hebrew Bible](#). (2012). (Nu 6:24–26). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

εὐλογέω eulogéō; contracted eulogō, imperf. ēulógoun, fut. eulogésō, aor. ēulógēs, from eú (2095), good, well, and lógos (3056), word. To bless, speak well of. This word should be distinguished from makarizō (3106), to acknowledge or pronounce as blessed.

(I) Of men toward God, to bless, i.e., to praise, speak well of with ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving (Luke 1:64; 2:28; 24:53; 1 Cor. 14:16; James 3:9; Sept.: 1 Chr. 29:10, 20).

(II) Of men toward men and things, to bless, speak well of with praise and thanksgiving, to invoke God's blessing upon, which is God's action in their lives or God's intervention to accomplish His will.

(A) With the acc. of person expressed or implied, to pray for one's welfare as God perceives it for His actions in their lives. Matt. 5:44 [TR], Luke 6:28, and Rom. 12:14 do not mean that we should say good things about those who curse us, but rather that we should invoke God's blessing upon them by praying that they may be turned from their ways through God's intervention in their lives. The same applies in 1 Cor. 4:12 and 1 Pet. 3:9. It is the assurance that Jesus gave His disciples prior to His ascension that He was going to be acting in their lives and that He was not going to forsake them (Luke 24:50, 51). Mark 10:16 refers to Christ's goodwill and action toward children. See Luke 2:34 regarding Simeon's blessing upon Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus, in that he praised and spoke well of them. Of infants (Mark 10:16 [TR]), we consecrate them to divine use. Melchizedek blesses Abraham in Heb. 7:1, 6 in that he praises him and speaks well of him, and in Heb. 7:7, the lesser is blessed or well-spoken of by the better. In Heb. 11:20, 21, we see Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau, speaking of the good things that were going to take place. See Sept.: Gen. 14:19; 27:23, 27; 48:9, 15, 20.

(B) With acc. of thing expressed or implied, in the NT of food, to bless, i.e., to ask God to use that which is consumed so that those who consume it may praise God (Mark 6:41; 8:7; Luke 9:16, of bread). Implied in Matt. 14:19. Of the Lord's Supper where we may render by implication the meaning of to consecrate, to use it for God's glory and the believer's edification (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 24:30; 1 Cor. 10:16, "the cup . . . which we bless," meaning which we attribute as belonging to God and of which we speak well). Used of a sacrifice and feast (Sept.: 1 Sam. 9:13); the Jewish formulas of benediction and at the Paschal Supper (Matt. 26:26).

(III) Of God toward men, to bless, i.e., to distinguish with favor, to act in man's life and accomplish His purposes instead of allowing men to have their own way. When the subject is God, His speaking is action, for God's speech is energy released. When God is said to bless

us (eulogize or speak well of us), He acts for our good as He sees our need and not necessarily our desire. Therefore, He blesses by intervening. In Acts 3:26, God sent His Son to bless us, to intervene in our lives with what He planned to do for us. Eph. 1:3, referring to God who blessed us with all spiritual blessings, means the one who intervened and acted so that our spirits might be made conformable to His Spirit. In Heb. 6:14, quoted from Gen. 22:17, “blessing I will bless thee,” i.e., since it is My nature to bless or to act in people’s lives, I will act in yours as well (the pres. part. eulogón indicates the nature of God and the fut. indic. eulogésō indicates God’s definitive action in the future). This means that God cannot act in individual cases contrary to His nature. Pass., to be blessed of God. In Gal. 3:8, we have the comp. with the prep. en (1722), in, and the verb in the fut. pass. eneulogēthēsontai (1757), they shall be blessed in; and in Gal. 3:9 eulogountai, are blessed (Sept.: Gen. 24:1, 35; Ps. 45:3; 67:2, 7; pass. Is. 61:9).

(IV) Eulogēménos, the perf. pass. part. of eulogéō, refers to one upon whom God has acted or who has experienced His blessing (eulogía [2129]) of God (Matt. 21:9; 23:39; 25:34; Mark 11:9, 10; Luke 1:28, 42; 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13). The eulogía of God is His action or intervention in men’s lives to bring them into the desired relationship with Himself. Eulogēménos is used in joyful salutations to indicate that the blessing of the individual is due to God’s intervention in his or her life.

In the case of the Messiah and His reign, “Blessed [or well favored] is the One coming in the name of the Lord” (a.t.), as having the concurrence of God the Father (Matt. 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9, 10; Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13). In Matt. 25:34, “the blessed ones of the Father” (a.t.) means those who have been acted upon by the Father and have been saved. Luke 1:28, speaking of the virgin Mary, “You are blessed above all women” (a.t.), means uniquely favored or acted upon favorably from among all women (Sept.: Deut. 28:3; Ruth 3:10; 1 Sam. 26:25). Blessed, but more accurately one well-spoken of and the recipient of God’s action.

Eulogēménos is distinguished from eulogētós (2128), well-spoken of, inherently praiseworthy (which is spoken only of the personalities of the Triune God), and from makários [3107], blessed (which is used in the Beatitudes and means to be indwelt by God permanently because of Jesus Christ [Matt. 5:11] and thereby to be fully satisfied [Luke 6:20–22]). Makários refers to a permanent state of being and not a temporary effect such as eulogēménos would imply. Eulogēménos is syn. with makários when referring to man, while eulogēménos refers to the action of God in man’s life and makários to the blessed state of being indwelt by God and thereby being fully satisfied.

Deriv.: eneulogéō (1757), to bless, blessed; eulogētós (2128), blessed; eulogía (2129), blessing.

Syn.: makarízō (3106), to pronounce as blessed. The verb is found in Luke 1:48 referring to the virgin Mary who was going to be acclaimed as having been indwelt by God in that she was to bear the Lord Jesus within her as the God-Man, and in James 5:11, improperly translated “happy,” which in its Gr. equivalence is not found in the NT. Happy means to rejoice because of outward favorable circumstances and good luck (eutuchés, successful, lucky, fortunate, prosperous; or eudaímōn, equipped with a good genius, fortunate, happy). The verse speaks of those who endure suffering. “Behold, we bless [makarízomen] them” (a.t.), means we recognize in them the presence of God Who fully satisfies them in spite of

their suffering. With the meaning to praise or speak well of, used always of praise (ainéō [134]) to God by angels (Luke 2:13) or by men (Luke 2:20; 19:37); epainéō (1867), to commend; humnéō (5214), to sing, laud, praise.  
Ant.: kataráomai (2672), to curse; epikatáratos (1944), cursed; anáthema (331), something cursed because it is to be sacrificed.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

בָּרַךְ (bārak) to kneel, bless, praise, salute, curse (used euphemistically). (ASV and RSV similar.)

### Derivatives

- 285a בָּרַךְ (berek) knee.
- 285b בְּרָכָה (bērākâ) blessing.
- 285c בְּרֵכָה (bērēkâ) pool, pond.

This root and its derivatives occur 415 times. The majority are in the Piel stem (214) which is translated “to bless.” The Qal passive participle “blessed” occurs sixty-one times. The meaning “to kneel” appears only three times, twice in the Qal (II Chr 6:13; Ps 95:6) and once in Hiphil (Gen 24:11). On this basis some argue that bārak “to kneel” is a denominative verb from berek “knee” and is unrelated to bārak; “to bless.” However, there may have been a felt association between kneeling and the receiving of a blessing (cf. II Chr 6:13, also Arabic baraka, which shows the same range of meaning). To bless in the OT means “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” It is frequently contrasted with qālal “to esteem lightly, curse” (cf. Deut 30:1, 19).

בָּרַךְ (berek). Knee. Used in relation to submission and obedience (Isa 45:23), fear and weakness (Nah 2:10 [H 11]), prayer (I Kgs 8:54), motherly care (the lap) (II Kgs 4:20), etc. The great formula of blessing, the Aaronic benediction still used on some occasions in churches today, was primarily a prayer for the Lord’s presence, grace, and keeping power. It was summed up in the expression “they shall put my name upon the children of Israel,” i.e. God himself would be their God (Num 6:23–27).

In general, the blessing is transmitted from the greater to the lesser. This might involve father to son (Gen 49), brothers to sister (Gen 24:60), king to subjects (I Kgs 8:14). The blessing might be conveyed at departures on special occasions (II Chr 6:3) or upon introduction (Gen 47:7, 10). Its major function seems to have been to confer abundant and effective life upon something (Gen 2:3; I Sam 9:13; Isa 66:3) or someone (Gen 27:27f.; Gen 49). (In this respect, notice that Michal, despising her husband’s blessing, was afflicted with barrenness, II Sam 6:20–23). It could, however, become merely a form. This was especially true of the greeting (I Sam 13:10; 25:14; Ps 118:26).

The verbal blessing, as just discussed, was normally futuristic. However, it could be descriptive, an acknowledgement that the person addressed was evidently possessed of this power for abundant and effective living (Gen 14:19; I Sam 26:25, etc.). This address

becomes a formalized means of expressing thanks and praise to this person because he has given out of the abundance of his life. Very commonly, the Lord is addressed in this way. It is significant that *ḥesed* “kindness” and *’emet* “faithfulness” are very frequently those attributes for which God is praised (e.g. Ps 31:21 [H 22]; 106:48). It is clear that for the OT the abundant life rests directly upon the loving and faithful nature of God.

Whatever may have been the ancient near eastern conception of the source of blessing, the OT sees God as the only source. As such he controls blessing and cursing (Num 22f.). His presence confers blessing (II Sam 6:11–20), and it is only in his name that others can confer blessing (Deut 10:8, etc.). Indeed, God’s name, the manifestation of his personal, redemptive, covenant-keeping nature, is at the heart of all blessing.

As a result, those who are wrongly related to God can neither bless (Mal 2:2) nor be blessed (Deut 28) and no efficacious word can alter this. Those who are blessed manifest God’s *ḥesed* and *’emet* (Deut 15:14; I Sam 23:21; I Kgs 10:9; etc.). To rely upon the existence of the covenant between oneself and God without manifesting his nature is to bless oneself and to court disaster (Deut 29:18f.).

The transposition of blessing and cursing with life and death in Deut 30:19 and elsewhere reaches the heart of the OT concept of blessing. From Adam mankind has been under the curse of death, in all his works, in all his relationships. The power to beget life was understood by even the pagan to be a supernatural blessing (cf. Ug. 128:III:17; II Aq I:35; etc.). God demonstrates from Gen 12 onward that he alone has power to bestow this blessing. In the patriarchal narratives, blessing is linked very specifically to reproductive powers. The lesson is clear. God gives life. Neither god, nor man, nor rite can do so. Nor does God have to be cajoled to give his blessing. He wishes to give it to all who will trust him (Gen 12:3). From this base the understanding of God as the lifegiver is expanded to its ultimate expression in Jn 3:16f.; 10:10; etc.

בְּרָכָה (*bērākā*). Blessing. Either the verbal enduement with good things or a collective expression for the good things themselves (Ezk 34:26; Mal 3:10, etc.). Sixty-seven occurrences.

Bibliography: Eichrodt, W., *Theology of the Old Testament*, II, tr. J. A. Baker, Westminster, 1967, pp. 349–51, etc. Guillet, J., “Le langage spontané de la benediction dans l’Ancien Testament,” *Recherches de science religieuse* 57:163–204. Hempel, J., “Die israelitische Anschauungen von Segen und Fluch im Lichte altorientalischer Parallelen,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 79:20–110. Mowinckel, S. *Psalmstudien*, V, Amsterdam: Schippers, 1961. *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, II, tr. D. R. Ap-Thomas, Oxford: Blackwell, 1962, pp. 44–51. Murtonen, A., “The Use and Meaning of the Words *lebarek* and *berakah* in the Old Testament,” *VT* 9:158–177. Pedersen, J., *Israel, its Life and Culture*, I-II, London: Oxford, 1926. Richardson, TWB, p. 33. Scharbert, J., “‘Fluchen’ und ‘Segnen’ im Alten Testament,” *Biblica* 39: 1–26. “Die Geschichte der *baruk* Formel,” *Biblisches Zeitschrift* 17:1–28. Towner, W. S., “‘Blessed be Yahweh’ and ‘Blessed Art Thou, Yahweh’—The Modulation of a Biblical Formula,” *CBQ* 30:386–99. Westermann, C., *Das Segnen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche*, Munich: Kaiser, 1968. TDNT, II, pp. 755–61. TDOT, II, pp. 279–307. THAT, I, pp. 353–75. J.N.O.

286 ברם (brm). Assumed root of the following.

286a בְּרֹמִים (bērōmîm) variegated cloth (Ezk 27:24).

287 בָּרָק (bāraq) cast forth (lightning).

#### Derivatives

287a בָּרָק (bārāq) I, lightning.

287b בָּרָק (bārāq) II, Barak.

287c בְּרִיקָת (bareqet) a gem.

287d בְּרִיקָת (bārēqat) a gem.

287e בְּרִיקָנִים (barqānîm) briers.

In MT bāraq occurs only once (Ps 144:6), but BDB and others suggest that the Hebrew text followed by LXX had bāraq also in II Sam 22:15 and Ps 18:14 [H 15] (KB also in Ezk 21:33). KJV seems to follow LXX in Ps 18:14 by translating “he shot out lightnings.” RSV translates by “flash forth.”

The verbal form of the root brq in Akkadian, Arabic and Ethiopic means “it lightens”; the Egyptian cognate denotes “glitter (of water).” Its Ugaritic and Hebrew nominal forms mean “lightning.” Indeed, the Arabic verb baraqa may mean “to emit bolts of lightning (from a cloud).”

בָּרָק (bārāq). Lightning, glittering, bright. The noun form is used much more widely than the verb. In the KJV it is fourteen times as “lightning,” and, in a figure of speech, as “glittering” or “glitter” six times, and once as “bright.”

Regarding the noun bārāq, BDB rightly distinguish its literal use to denote “lightning” from its metaphorical use to denote the “glitter” of a weapon: of a sword (Ezk 21:10, 15, 28 [H 15, 20, 33]), of a spear (Nah 3:3), of the metal tip of an arrow (Job 20:25) and of a chariot (Nah 2:4 [H 5]).

Its fourteen occurrences to denote “lightning” are theologically significant because in all of these instances lightning is associated with the LORD. This awe-inspiring phenomenon in the heavens reveals God’s greatness and separation from mortal man and accompanies him in his theophanies.

To humble the intrepid fault-finder, Job, the lord challenged him with the question: “Can you send forth lightnings?” (Job 38:35). Daniel was left without strength when the LORD appeared to him in a vision as a man whose face had the appearance of lightning (Dan 10:6ff.).

Lightning accompanied the LORD when he gave his righteous law to his people at Sinai (Ex 19:16). Elsewhere it is associated with his coming in judgment against his wicked enemies. In Ezekiel’s famous vision, the lightning flashing forth from among the living creatures spoke of the LORD’S righteous judgment on the earth (Ezk 1:13). Likewise Israel’s poets describe

the LORD of Hosts' epiphanies when he judges his enemies as being accompanied by lightning. Probably with reference to the LORD'S numerous victories over his enemies by which he displayed his universal reign, the Psalmist celebrates the lightning that accompanied these victories (Ps 97:4; cf. Ps 135:7). More specifically his victory over Egypt at the Exodus (Ps 77:18 [H 19]), through David over his foes (II Sam 22:15 = Ps 18:14 [H 15]), and of Israel over Greece (Zech 9:14) are all heightened by being described as having occurred with lightning.

The association of lightning with the lord also serves as a polemic against Baal, the principal Canaanite nature deity. The Ugaritic texts and artifacts portray Baal as the god of lightning, fire and rain. Thus one text reads: "Baal flashed his thunderbolts" ('nt, IV, 70), and another says: "He flashed lightning to the earth" (Text 51, V, 71). In a stele he is pictured as brandishing a club in one hand, and holding a stylized thunderbolt ending in a spearhead in the other (C. F. A. Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit* (1936), plate XXXII, fig. 2). The stele indicates that Baal had power over the fire and lightning. It is against this background that one must read Jeremiah's warning: "Do not learn the ways of the nations, and do not be dismayed at the signs in the heavens. ...But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, an everlasting King; at his wrath the earth trembles. ...The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens. ...When the lord utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens ... ; he makes lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries" (Jer 10:2–13; cf. 51:16). Indeed Baal has perished from the earth, but the LORD, the Creator-Redeemer continues to be worshiped as King:

בָּרַק (bārāq). Barak. The name of the son of Abinoam, a military commander from Kedesh in Naphtali who was summoned by the prophetess Deborah to form an army of northern Israelites to wage war against the Canaanites.

The man Barak mentioned ten times in Jud 4 and three times in chapter 5 called out ten thousand men from the northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali and with this army routed and destroyed the Canaanite armies of Jabin under the command of Sisera. Though Barak has suffered in comparison with Deborah and Jael, two notable women of that time, his prowess and victory is extolled in the Song of Deborah and Barak, and in the New Testament book of Hebrews where he is listed in the roster of men of faith, doubtless as one who "conquered kingdoms" (Heb 11:32).

בְּרֶקֶת (bāreqet). A gem, carbuncle? This noun occurs twice (Ex 28:17; 39:10) to designate the third gem in the first row of precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest.

בְּרֶקֶת (bārēqat). A gem, carbuncle. Doubtless the same noun as the one above with alternate vocalization. It is a gem in the covering of the prince of Tyre (Ezk 28:13). KJV translates these words as carbuncle but most moderns consider them to be emerald.

B.K.W.

Oswalt, J. N. (1999). 285 בָּרַק. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., pp. 132–134). Chicago: Moody Press.