

Did the Lord intend us to continue blessing Children?

Jesus blesses the little children

Mark 10 : 13-16 **13** And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.**14** But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. **15** Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.**16** And he **took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.**

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Then were brought little children - See also [Mark 10:13-16](#); [Luke 18:15-17](#). Probably these were brought by some of his followers, **who desired not only to devote themselves to Jesus, but all that they had - their children as well as themselves. All the Jews were accustomed to devote their children to God by circumcision. It was natural, therefore, under the new dispensation, that it should be done. Luke says they were infants. They were undoubtedly those who were not old enough to come by choice, but their coming was an act of the parents.**

Put his hands on them and pray - It was customary among the Jews, **when blessings were sought for others in prayer, to lay the hands on the head of the person prayed for, implying a kind of consecration to God. See [Genesis 48:14](#); [Matthew 9:18](#). They had also much confidence in the prayers of pious men, believing that those blessed by a saint or a prophet would be happy. See [Numbers 22:6](#); [Luke 2:28](#).**

The disciples rebuked them - That is, reprov'd them, or told them it was improper. This they did, probably, either:

1. because they thought that they were too young; or,
2. because they thought that they would be troublesome to their Master.

Clarke's Commentary on the Bible

Then were there brought unto him little children - These are termed by Luke, [Luke 18:15](#), τὰ βρεφῆ, infants, very young children; and it was on this account, probably, that the disciples rebuked the parents, thinking them too young to receive good. See on [Mark 10:16](#) (note).

That he should put his hands - It was a common custom among the Jews to lay their hands on the heads of those whom they blessed, or for whom they prayed. **This seems to have been done by way of dedication or consecration to God - the person being considered as the sacred property of God ever after. Often God added a testimony of his approbation, by**

communicating some extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. This rite has been long practiced among Christians, when persons are appointed to any sacred office. **But this consecration of children to God seems to have grown out of use. It is no wonder that the great mass of children are so wicked, when so few, are put under the care of Christ by humble, praying, believing parents.** Let every parent that fears God bring up his children in that fear; and, by baptism, let each be dedicated to the holy trinity. **Whatever is solemnly consecrated to God abides under his protection and blessing.**

People's New Testament

19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children. Compare Mr 10:13-16 Lu 18:15-17. It was the Jewish custom to bring **children to the synagogue on their first birthday for the Rabbi to bless them.** So these persons came to one whom they regarded the greatest of all Rabbis.

III Nephi 8 : 12, 23 12 And it came to pass that he commanded **that their little children should be brought...**23 And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bear record of it, and he **took their little children, one by one, and blessed them,** and prayed unto the Father for them.

III Nephi 12 : 34-35 Verily, verily I say unto you, **This is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do,** that shall ye also do; **For that which ye have seen me do, even that shall ye do;** therefore if ye do these things, blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

Examples of blessings where the father is use to bless his children OT

Genesis 27 : 24-36 24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. 25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine and he drank. 26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: 28 **Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.** 30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 And he also had made savory meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. 32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. 33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. 34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a

great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. **35** And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. **36** And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing...**38** And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. **39** And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy **dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; 40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.**

Genesis 48 : 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

Genesis 49 : 1-28 Each of the 12 sons of Israel blessed

Moses and Priesthood to bless Children of Israel

Numbers 6 : 22- 27 **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.

Exodus 39 : 42- 43 And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and **Moses blessed them. 42** According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work.

1) to bless, kneel

Bless or Blessed OT Strong's H1288 **1)** to kneel **2)** to bless **b)** (Niphal) to be blessed, bless oneself **c)** (Piel) to bless **d)** (Pual) to be blessed, be adored **e)** (Hiphil) to cause to kneel **f)** (Hithpael) to bless oneself **2)** (TWOT) to praise, salute, curse

Fathers to pray over and in the family that the children will be blessed

Alma 16 : 219-222 Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in **prayer unto him**; cry unto him when ye are in your fields; yea, over all your flocks; cry unto him in your houses, **yea, over all your household**, both morning, mid-day, and evening; yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the devil, which is an enemy to all righteousness.... **222** Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him **continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those that are around you.**

III Nephi 8 : 52 Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.

Other blessings through man from God

Luke 2 : 23-25;28, 33-34 **23** (As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) **24** And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. **25** And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him...**28** Then **took he him up in his arms, and blessed God**, and said,...**33** And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. **34** And **Simeon blessed them**, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Blessed G2127 – *eulogeō* **1)** to praise, celebrate with praises **2)** to invoke blessings **3)** to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers **a)** to ask God's blessing on a thing **b)** pray God to bless it to one's use **c)** pronounce a consecratory blessing on **4)** of God **a)** to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on **b)** favoured of God, blessed

Alma 4 : 6 Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and **mighty prayer, in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God.**

Mosiah 11 : 167-169; 175 **167** And again, the angel saith, Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant Alma, which is thy father: **168** For he hath prayed with much faith concerning thee, that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; **169** Therefore for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith....**175** And now I say unto thee, Alma, go thy way, and seek to destroy the church no more, **that their prayers may be answered;** and this even if thou wilt of thyself be cast off.

James 5 : 14 **Is any sick among you?** let him **call for the elders** of the church; and **let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:**

Priesthood of Early Church continued to Bless

For on whom does the presbyter **lay his hand? Whom does he bless?** Clement of Alexandria (c. 195 A.D.), 2.286.4

Concerning the canons I the same make a constitution. **A bishop blesses**, but does not receive the blessing. **He lays on hands, ordains, offers, receives the blessing from bishops**, but by no

means from presbyters. A bishop deprives any clergyman who deserves deprivation, excepting a bishop; for of himself he has not power to do that. A **Presbyter (Elder –DLT) blesses**, but does not receive the blessing; yet does he **receive the blessing from the bishop or a fellow-presbyter**. In like manner does he give it to a fellow-presbyter. **He lays on hands**, but **does not ordain**; he does not deprive, yet does he separate those that are under him, if they be liable to such a punishment. A **deacon does not bless**, does not give the blessing, but receives it from the bishop and presbyter: **he does not baptize**, Apostolic Constitutions (275-360 AD) 7.494

X. Neither do we permit the laity to perform any of the offices belonging to the priesthood; as, for instance, neither the sacrifice, nor baptism, nor the laying on of hands, **nor the blessing**, whether the smaller or the greater: for “no one taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God.”⁷⁸¹ For such sacred offices are conferred by the laying on of the hands of the bishop. But a person to whom such an office is not committed, but he seizes upon it for himself, he shall undergo the punishment of Uzziah Apostolic Constitutions (275-360 AD) 7.430

Nor must either a presbyter or a deacon ordain from the laity into the clergy; but the presbyter is only to teach, to offer, to baptize, to **bless the people** Apostolic Constitutions (275-360 AD) 7.960

“The earliest explicit mention of infant baptism is found in Tertullian's De Baptismo written in A.D. 202. He says, “Therefore, according to every one's conditions and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children. For what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? Because they may either fail of their promises by death, or they may be deceived by a child's proving of a wicked disposition. Our Lord says indeed, **‘Do not forbid them to come to me,’ therefore let them come when they understand, when they are instructed whither they are to come. Let them become Christians when they are able to know Christ. Why should their innocent age make haste to the forgiveness of sin?’** Tertullian is clearly opposed to infant baptism.” (http://www.missionprinting.us/html_pubs/InfantBaptism.html) Additions by Chris Moran

BLESSING OF CHILDREN:

Among the Ancient Hebrews.

In the domestic life of the ancient Hebrews the mutual respect existing between parents and children was a marked feature. While prominent among other Semitic peoples (Smith, "Rel. of Sem." p. 60), it was of first importance with the Hebrews, as is evident from the frequent mention of the duties toward parents (Ex. xx. 12, xxi. 15; Lev. xix. 3, xx. 9; Num. xxvii. 4; Deut. xxvii. 16; I Sam. ii. 25; II Sam. xix. 20; Jer. xxxv. 18; Mal. i. 6; Prov. i. 8, iii. 12, x. 1, xxix. 3, xxx. 11; I. Chron. xvii. 13). The natural accompaniment of this was the value placed on the favor of parents, and notably on their blessing pronounced upon the children. The words spoken by parents were supposed to be fraught with power to bring good or ill, blessing or curse. Happy was he who was so fortunate as to receive the father's blessing; wretched he upon whom

rested the father's curse. These statements are based particularly upon incidents in the lives of the Patriarchs, as set forth in the Book of Genesis. Noah (Gen. ix. 26) blesses Shem and Japheth, the sons who had covered his nakedness, and curses Ham, the disrespectful son; and that blessing and curse were looked upon as determining the future superiority of the descendants of the two first-mentioned sons and the eternal servitude of the offspring of Ham. In the story of the blessing of Isaac (*ib.* xxvii. 7 *et seq.*), Rebekah makes every effort to secure the paternal benediction for her favorite son, Jacob. The importance attached to the blessing appears also from Esau's heartrending cry, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me, also, O my father" (Gen. xxvii. 38). The blessing, even though obtained by deceit, could not be recalled. The father's voice was the instrument through which God spoke; and the words, once pronounced, were regarded as the declaration of the Deity.

High Value of Paternal Blessing.

The paternal blessing was the most valuable heritage that parents could bequeath to children. In recognition of all the good that he had enjoyed at Joseph's hands and of all the honors received during his sojourn in Egypt, Jacob bestowed a particular blessing upon Joseph's sons: "Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them" (Gen. xlviii. 9). Especial importance attaches to this blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh by Jacob, because it became the formula by which, in later days throughout Israel, the children were blessed by their parents, in accordance with the word of the patriarch, "In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh" (*ib.* 20). And the favorite son Joseph was given the assurance, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (Gen. xlix. 26). It is thus evident from the whole spirit of Biblical ethics that the parents' good-will and blessing were regarded as the greatest happiness that could come to children, and it is well known to those who are at all familiar with Jewish domestic life that this sentiment continues to the present day.

In Later Jewish Literature.

The customs of a people do not always find expression in its literature. The most prevalent sentiments are frequently not set down in words, for the very reason that, being so commonly held, they do not call for comment. Fortunately, however, there are several expressions in later Jewish literature showing the value attached to the parents' blessing. The author of Ecclesiasticus undoubtedly voices the belief of his generation when he declares, "The blessing of the father builds houses to the sons, the curse of the mother destroys them" (Ecclus. [Sirach] iii. 9); and the Rabbis indicate their attitude by the remarkable statement, "Scripture ranks the cursing of father and mother with the cursing of God" (Ḳid. 30b). The feeling of reverence and awe for the parental benediction well expresses the sentiment that has always prevailed in most Jewish communities. One of the most beautiful of Jewish customs is the blessing of the children by the father on all important occasions, notably on the Sabbath eve, on the holidays, on the setting forth on a journey, etc. Ludwig Philippson, in his memoirs ("Allg. Zeit. des Jud." 1887, p. 750), mentions that his grandfather blessed him on Sabbath morning after divine

service. This blessing as pronounced upon the boys is, "May God make thee like Ephraim and Manasseh" (Gen. xlviii. 20), and upon the girls, "May God make thee like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah" (compare Ruth iv. 12); and, in addition to this regular formula, any special blessing may be added according to the desire of the one bestowing the benediction.

Occasions for the Blessing.

There is no means of knowing how old this beautiful custom may be. The earliest mention of it is found in a passage in the "Brautspiegel," a popular treatise on morals, written by Moses Henochs; the book appeared in Basel in 1602. In the forty-third chapter, which is devoted to advice on the training of children, the writer says, "Before the children can walk they should be carried on Sabbath and holidays to the father and mother to be blessed; after they are able to walk they shall go of their own accord with bowed body and shall incline their heads and receive the blessing (Güdemann, "Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Unterrichts und der Erziehung bei den Deutschen Juden," p. 167). Buxtorf, in "Synagoga Judaica," which was first published in 1604, writes in the fifteenth chapter of the book entitled "How the Jews Prepare for the Sabbath and Begin It," the following: "After the service [on Sabbath eve in the synagogue] is finished, they seek their home; in parting from one another they wish each other not good-day nor good-night, but a happy Sabbath: the parents bless their children, the teachers their pupils." At the beginning of the seventeenth century the custom was general. Another mention of it, at a much later date, occurs in the prayer-book of Rabbi Jacob Emden, printed first in Altona, 1748. A long passage in this book begins with the words: "It is the custom in Israel to bless the children on Sabbath eve after service or upon entering the house." He says further that this blessing brings God's spirit upon the children who are not yet old enough to secure it by their own deeds. This indicates that as in early Biblical days, so in later times, the parental blessing was believed to be invested with a certain higher power, and to be efficacious for good. To this day this blessing is prized highly by the children.

The value thus laid upon the benediction spoken by the father and mother represents the constancy in Jewish life of the working of forces that make for righteousness; and it is one of the constituent factors of what Lazarus has so well termed the "continuity of the Jewish spirit" ("Ethics of Judaism," pt. ii., p. 213). [Additions by Tom Arnold](#)