



Star Trek and the Bible

Truth about the priestly blessing

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Star Trek is one of the most recognizable film franchises in the world. The original television series launched the entire sci-fi genre and the careers of many Hollywood stars. The characters of Captain James T. Kirk and Spock have become engraved into the American culture. Statements like “beam me up Scotty” and “live long and prosper” are well known to both the young and old. The Vulcan hand salute of parted fingers has an interesting Biblical origin.

It was 1968 when William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy were filming a Star Trek episode that called for Spock to give a special greeting. The original Star Trek novel by Alan Dean Foster had the human-alien hybrid kneeling before others. However, the idea of such a strong character bowing in reverence seemed uncomfortable. Shatner and Nimoy drew upon their Jewish roots and knew exactly what symbol should be used. The Vulcan hand salute was then transferred from the memories of the Holy Temple to the television screen.

For thousands of years, the “w” shaped symbol of parted fingers has been used by the genealogical descendants of Jewish priests called “Kohanim” and other spiritual leaders. The Vulcan gesture is a picture of the windows of heaven and the Hebrew letter “shin.” It is raised high as a special blessing from Numbers 6 is proclaimed. The phrase “live long and prosper” could be considered a paraphrase of this special prayer. “May YHWH bless you, and keep you; May YHWH make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; May YHWH lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace,” Numbers 6:24-26.

For Christianity and Judaism this is the final benediction of many worship services. It is a prayer of mercy, protection, substance, and peace. This blessing calls for the Creator’s favor and holy name to be upon all who follow the Scriptures. It is not some magical practice on the part of the priests, as they have no power over the

divine. The text makes it very clear that while the priests may pronounce the words, it is the Almighty who does the actual blessing.

The Jewish people have a rich faith that is full of symbolism and Spiritual power. Such traditions have great meaning that can be lost if one is totally closed to the Hebrew roots of Christianity. "What advantage then has the Jew? Much in every way; chiefly as they were entrusted with the very oracles of YHWH," Romans 3:1-2. Judaism isn't all bad. Judaism isn't all good either. One must earnestly search for the true path of faith that hangs between the balance of our ancestor's practices and the Almighty's divine will.

The Almighty chose the Jewish people to preserve the Scriptures from error. Many of the traditions that surround their devotion, like the Vulcan hand symbol, bring added significance to life. Such traditions can be adopted by Bible believers if they are void of pagan origin, not prohibited in the Scripture, and if the action does not grieve the Holy Spirit. The Bible never bans tradition but it does speak against actions that make void the word of YHWH. There are many customs of Judaism and Christianity that are beneficial for the Believer. For example, during the synagogue service the worshippers are not to look at the person who gives the blessing of Numbers 6. This is because the focus should be placed on the words of the prayer and not the personality of the one speaking.

Leonard Nimoy wrote of this in his autobiography, "The special moment when the Kohanim blessed the assembly moved me deeply, for it possessed a great sense of magic and theatricality... I had heard that this indwelling Spirit was too powerful, too beautiful, too awesome for any mortal to look upon and survive, and so I obediently covered my face with my hands. But of course, I had to peek." The world hasn't been the same since that quick glance towards the hand of blessing.