

## **Blessing**

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We use the word “Blessing” in so many different ways without knowing the meaning, the types or how do we receive blessings?

To get started, remember what happened when the Lord visited Egypt. Blessings must have surely come, as prophesied by Isaiah the prophet:

✠ “In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the Lord will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the Lord and perform it...Blessed is Egypt My people” (**Isaiah 19:19-25**)

Since blessing is everlasting, it did not only come to Egypt and all Egyptians but also to their descendants, no matter where they go. Also, Egypt is the place where God will come and bless, which could be your own heart, your house, your church, your city or your country.

However, the meaning of blessing could be countless. Let me share with you just a few.

### **First, what is the Meaning of Blessing?**

#### **1. Blessing could mean multiplication and creation:**

As God said to Adam and Eve:

✠ “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth” (**Genesis 1:28**)

Also, the Lord blessed the five loaves and two fish to feed a multitude of five thousand not including women and children. God also blessed the land for Moses on the sixth year in order to bring enough fruits because God asked him to rest the land in the seventh year (**Leviticus 25**) and the bin of flour and the jar of oil in the widow’s house until the day the Lord sent rain on the earth during the time of Elijah the prophet (**1 Kings 17:14**).

#### **2. Blessing could mean sovereignty and authority:**

God said to Adam and Eve about the earth:

✠ “Subdue it and have dominion over it” (**Genesis 1:28**)

That same blessing was also given to Noah and his family after they got out of the Ark and the flood was over (**Genesis 9**).

#### **3. Blessing could also mean Consecration:**

When we say, “The Lord blessed the seventh day” it means our Lord consecrated the seventh day by making it holy:

✠ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20: 8)

The same is true through the blessing of the first-born male when God said:

✠ “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine” (**Exodus 13:2**)

In Leviticus 23, consecrated feasts and made them holy:

✠ “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them ‘The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts’” (Leviticus 23: 2)

#### **4. Blessing could mean success:**

Our Lord blessed Joseph the righteous and through this blessing he succeeded in every work he did:

✠ “The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man” (**Genesis 39:2**)

Similarly, God blessed the righteous man and made him succeed and prosper:

✠ “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (**Psalms 1:3**)

#### **5. Blessing could mean provisions:**

✠ “Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand” (**Deuteronomy 28:4-8**)

### **Types of Blessings**

#### **1. Blessing for food:**

It is not right for a person to start eating before blessing the food by a prayer. The food is blessed by the prayer of the priest in his presence or by the head of the house.

#### **2. Blessing for marriage:**

The prayer for the engaged and married, so that their life becomes full of grace and blessing and live together in lasting happiness and holiness.

#### **3. Blessing for new born and new houses:**

In the Bathing Prayer for new born after the seventh day of birth, the priest bathes the new born by the blessed water to bless him and his family. Same for the Prayer of Blessing of Houses where the priest raises incense and sprinkles the house with blessed water. Also, at any time the priest visits a house, he blesses the people and the house through prayers and sprinkling of water.

#### **4. Blessing for altar coverings, vessels, and service garments:**

The bishop blesses all new altar coverings and vessels to be used in Liturgical services. The bishop or the priest also blesses his service garment and the garments of the deacons (Tonyas) before the Holy Liturgy.

### **Ways of Receiving Blessing**

### **1. Blessing is through prayers:**

The bishop or the priest can bless by praying for the person. Same could happen from the head of the household to bless his children.

### **2. Blessing through the cross and the kissing of the hands of the priests:**

When we make the sign of cross we receive the blessing of the cross. Also, a person receives the blessing of the cross when he kisses the cross and the hands of the priests (if you believe that this hand held the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ). Remember the story of the woman who touched the garment of the Lord:

✠ “And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself: If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well, But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well" And the woman was made well from that hour” (Matthew 9:20-22)

If touching the garment that was placed on the Lord’s body healed this woman when “she believed”, how about the hands that hold the body?

### **3. Blessing by laying on of hands and breathing into the face of a person:**

Exactly like what our Lord Jesus Christ did with the children and the disciples. The people brought Him children and He laid His hands on them and blessed them (Matthew 19:15). He also breathed into the face of His disciples (John 20:22). This is also done by the priest or the bishop for those asking for blessings.

### **4. Blessing through the final prayer after any service or assembly in the church:**

Therefore, it is not right for a person to leave the church before receiving the final blessing; otherwise, he resembles Judas the Iscariot.

### **5. Blessing through sprinkling of water on people or touching their forehead:**

This usually occurs in the church after the Holy Liturgy and in prayers at people’s houses.

### **6. Blessing through the Laqan water:**

The church prays the liturgy of blessing the water (Laqan prayers) three times per year – during Covenant Thursday, the Feast of Apostles, and the Holy Epiphany.

### **7. Blessing through the Holy oil:**

Whether it is the oil that is placed in the church, or the oil for anointing the sick in the church or at home, or the oil of Apocalypse or the simple oil that Abouna carries at all time.

We should not forget that the person to be baptized is anointed with three oils: A simple oil mainly composed of olive oil (could be Apocalypse oil – It helps the one to be baptized to accept faith) and Ghaliloun Oil (called an ointment of joy, which helps the soul to rejoice in the Word of God, the acceptance of faith and entry to the Church Community) both are used before baptism. Finally, after baptism the person is anointed by the Holy Myron oil (Chrism) - the seal of the Holy Spirit or confirmation. Through the Myron oil, the person’s body becomes the temple of God and the Holy Spirit dwells in them.

### **8. Blessing through short expressions of blessings:**

Example, when the priest prays for you and says short expressions full of grace and blessing:  
May the Lord bless you in your life. May the Lord sustain and help you. May the Lord protect you and save you. May the Lord be with you. May the Lord fill your heart with joy and peace. May the Lord delight your heart. May the Lord give you power and strength. May the Lord will heal you. May the Lord keep you in His mighty hands ... and so on.