Number 6: Priestly Blessing found

In June 1986 archaeologists of Tel Aviv University announced discovery of two small silver amulets. These two *silver scrolls* were found in 1979 deep inside a burial cave at a site known as Ketef Hinnom, west of the old city of Jerusalem. They were hidden at the back of the tomb embedded in pottery fashioned as early as the seventh century BC.

The location of the find and analysis of the Hebrew on the scroll confirm a date close to 600 BC, perhaps earlier - long before the capture of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile.

The importance of this find can hardly be overstated. It proves this section of Numbers was written at least 2,600 years ago. This Old Testament passage is 400 years older than the oldest Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts, and perhaps even older yet. The age of the text may prove a nail in the coffin of the Documentary Hypothesis theories that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, or that it was not even known in Moses' time.

Until this time no inscriptions with the name of God had been found in Jerusalem.

The larger of the two scrolls was only about three inches long when it was unrolled. The smaller one was just over two inches long. Barkay said the thin fragile silver of each scroll was etched with 19 lines of tiny, Hebrew script. It was years before researchers realized that the inscription was an almost exact representation of the priestly blessing found in Numbers. Careful study revealed that the Hebrew characters used were distinctive of the 7th century B.C.