

The Lord Bless Thee

Numbers 6:24-26

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FOCAL Read Responsively Numbers 6:24-26 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.

I am often asked what my favorite “Bible Translation” is. Though I most frequently use the “King James” translation (for I was saved under the preaching of that precious text), I will sometimes quote from other “translations” that are a little closer to modern English. Why? Because in my heart of hearts I know that the most important thing for a person when it comes to the Bible is that you *clearly understand what God is saying*. The Lord wants you to understand what He has to say. God always wants His creation to understand Him. When someone comes to me and says “Did you hear they just discovered some new portion of the Bible that was withheld by evil men” my reply is “Hogwash! The Bible is GOD'S Word, and He has made sure that we received all of it that He wants us to have.

God did not write His Word so that you could hear it babbled in Latin. He didn't allow great truths to be hidden, as Dan Brown in *The DaVinci Code* insinuates. He didn't write His Word so that only certain clerics, robed and trained in fine seminaries, could understand it. Divine Truth was clearly conveyed in the Holy Scripture, truth that God not only wants you to *know* but also to *believe*. The worst translation of the Bible is the one that is “Unused and Unapplied”. God wants you to know and apply His Word to your hearts. He wants you to be “**a hearer and a doer of the Word**” (James 1:23-25). It is

never God's intention to leave you confused, for **“God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33)**. If God had a waiting room in Heaven, it wouldn't be filled with old magazines and expired, years old newspapers. God wants you to understand His Word, and to understand His intention and purpose for your lives. What does God say to a confused and sin filled population? He tells us:

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

“Let us reason together”. Think on God's loving long-suffering for just a moment. We are in error, not He. Yet the Immortal calls to the mortal and fallen, **“Come, let's reason together. Let's talk about your spiritual condition – where you are and where you need to be. I know your sins are like scarlet. They stand out in My sight, shocking like spattered blood. But if you would but come to Me, oh, how I could give you rest.”** Jesus said:

Matthew 11:28-29 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

During times of war our enemies have planted *land mines* just underfoot, terrible devices that grievously wound the unwary. Often after our armed forces have

taken an area we spend weeks looking for and removing land mines. I have seen terrible pictures of children and animals hurt and killed because they inadvertently stepped on land mines left by the enemy. The innocent as well as the not so innocent suffer when a land mine is triggered.

The Bible tells us that there are *spiritual land mines* that the devil – the enemy of all – has planted all around us. If we are going to avoid these land mines we need to ignore Satan, **that liar and deceiver (John 8:44)**, and we need to turn to God and His Holy Word. The Old Testament saints who kept their eyes on the Lord, doing what He said, were richly blessed. **Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Daniel; the three Hebrew children Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; and King David**, just to name a few. The Old Testament saints who took their eyes off of God, refusing to do what He said, were just as richly cursed. The most obvious example is the first generation of Israel who spent their days murmuring against the Lord. They died in the wilderness, lost and undone, just in sight of the Promised Land.

God wants you to know that He loves you, and He has reached out to you through His Word and in the Person of Jesus Christ. Avoid the land mines of the enemy.

Avoid The Land Mine Arrogant Self Salvation

FOCAL Numbers 6:24 The **LORD bless thee, and keep thee:**

Who can **bless** a person? Can a man, dressed in a suit or

in some fancy robes, **ble**ss you? Can you **ble**ss yourselves by some *self help*, Oprah – Dr. Phil styled *system*? The testimony of the Scripture is this: **The LORD bless thee and keep thee.**

Only God can bless a life. Though the Lord told the Priests of Aaron to speak this blessing, the blessing did not originate in them. Blessings *always originate in God*. Cursings originate in us – when we try to do things our way and in our own power. What does the Scripture say?

Jeremiah 17:5-7 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. {6} For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. {7} Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Did you get that? **Cursed**¹ - literally **bitterly cursed** - is the **man who trusts in man, who makes flesh his arm, whose heart departs from the LORD – the Eternal God.**

When your heart drifts from God, when you cease to love Him and His holy Word, then you bring **bitter cursing** into your life.

Only God can bless a life. Only God – the **Author of**

1 H779, אָרַר, 'árar, *aw-rar*', A primitive root; to *execrate*: - X bitterly curse.

Life – can give life. What does the text say?

FOCAL The **LORD**² **ble**ss ...

Here we see the Eternal Name of God, illustrated in your King James Bible by ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. **The LORD bless thee.** God has given His creation many descriptive Names that we can call Him. He is to us who believe **Shepherd, Savior, Friend, Father, Son, Spirit, Redeemer.** The Names of God describe Him in relationship to His creation. Sometimes we sing combinations of these Names, like the names Savior and Shepherd in:

**Savior, like a Shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us Thine we are.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us Thine we are³.**

Of all of God's Names one stands out, and that is **YAHWEH – the Eternal Ever Living God.** This Name shows us that God is higher than we can ever understand. He tells us in another place:

Isaiah 55:6-9 Seek ye the LORD while he may be

2 H3068, יְהוָה, y^hhōvâh, *yeh-ho-vaw*', From H1961; (the) *self Existent* or eternal; *Jehovah*, Jewish national name of God: - Jehovah, the Lord. Compare H3050, H3069.

3 *Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us*, Dorothy Thrupp's *Hymns For The Young*, 1836. Tune Bradbury, 1859.

found, call ye upon him while he is near: {7} Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. {8} For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. {9} For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Seek ye the LORD – The ETERNAL I AM – while He may be found.

Avoid the land mine of self sufficiency – you are not YAHWEH!

You are not eternal, He alone is eternal. You are not Almighty, yet He is Almighty.

He calls unto you, and He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way – return to the LORD – and He will have mercy on you. He will abundantly pardon! This is the promise of the Eternal I AM, the God Who always is and has always been. It is never too late to come to Him. Our sins are never too grievous. God says “I am higher than you, My thoughts are higher than yours. Just hear My Word. Just come, trusting Me, believing Me, and you will see I am good to My Word. I will save you, if you will but turn and come.”

God loves to be gracious, and loves to bestow pardon. But Beloved, you must come! Look further at our text:

FOCAL The LORD bless⁴ ...

This word “bless” literally means to kneel or to make kneel.

ILLUSTRATE When an ancient person came into the throne room of the King to receive a blessing, he always received that blessing with head bowed and knees bent. When a person came before the King to be *knighted* that person would kneel before the King, bow his head, then the King would draw his sword and gently lay it on first one shoulder then the other shoulder of that knight. The symbolism is so great here I pray that God will open your eyes to see it. The King had the power of life and death. With that drawn sword he could have easily lopped off the head of the kneeling person. Yet judgment was withheld, and blessing given, because that knight knelt and pledged his allegiance to the King.

Dear friends, if you want to be blessed in this *life and beyond* the only way that this will ever occur is *by kneeling before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords*. He desires to bless you, but cannot do so if you will not surrender your lives to Him. The Sword of God hangs over your heads, you who will not believe, and is poised to strike at any moment. Will you not kneel before your

4 Piel Imperfect of H1288, בָּרַךְ, bārak, *baw-rak'*, A primitive root; to kneel; by implication to bless God (as an act of adoration), and (vice-versa) man (as a benefit); also (by euphemism) to curse (God or the king, as treason): - X abundantly, X altogether, X at all, blaspheme, bless, congratulate, curse, X greatly, X indeed, kneel (down), praise, salute, X still, thank.

God and believe. What does the Scripture say?

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

We see Jesus. We see Him Who is very God of very God, and yet see Him lowered – MADE a little lower – for the suffering of death for you and for me.

The judgment of God, the Sword of God hangs above the head of every person who ever lived. That Sword was poised to bring judgment on us all. **But we see Jesus**. See Him yonder hanging on that Tree. We see Jesus, bruised and bleeding, for you and for me. The King swung the Sword of Judgment, and Christ took its blow for us. He **tasted death for every man**. He paid for your sins on Calvary's Tree. Will you not come to Him? He died for you bearing your penalty so that He could **bring many sons unto glory (Hebrews 2:10)**. Without Christ you stand before God condemned, separated from the Great I AM by sin that resides in you. But **through Christ ...**

Ephesians 2:18-19 ... we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. {19} Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

If you have believed on Him, if you have come to God

bending the knee of faith then you are no longer of this world. You are **fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God**. Reconciled to God by the Blood of the Lamb, purchased and God's wrath appeased by what Christ has done, you now live your lives for Him. **Avoid the land mine of arrogant self salvation**. Turn unto Jesus and be ye saved, all the earth. **Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17)**.

Avoid The Land Mine Of Arrogant Self Sufficiency

God had saved Israel from Egypt. She had been brought out of that place of slavery and death with a mighty hand, and brought to the brink of the Promised Land. Yet God's Israel refused to cross the Jordan and take the land. Why? Because they were arrogantly self sufficient. Their thoughts were not “What would God have us do?” but instead it was “what do I want to do?”

Those whom God saves, He also guards and protects.

What did Jesus say?

John 10:28-29 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. {29} My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and **no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand**.

The two always go together. Salvation and security are twins from God! To those that God has given eternal life,

they are also *in His hand*. Jesus said **those to whom I have given eternal life, NO MAN IS ABLE TO PLUCK THEM OUT OF EITHER MY HAND – OR OUT OF THE FATHER'S HAND**. The two go hand in hand. That is why our focal text states:

FOCAL Numbers 6:24 The **LORD bless thee, and keep⁵ thee:**

The word “keep” is a Hebrew word which means “to hedge about with thorns, to guard”.

You who belong to God are a **guarded** people. He did not merely bless you and save you – He saved you so He could **guard or protect** you. You are protected from hellfire – that is sure, for the Scripture says that you have

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 ... turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; {10} And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

We who belong to God *are not God* – but we are saved so that we can serve God. The function of the priest is to serve God. The function of either Israel or local Church is to serve God. King David said:

5 Qal Imperfect of H8104, שָׁמַר, shâmar, *shaw-mar'*, A primitive root; properly to *hedge* about (as with thorns), that is, *guard*; generally to *protect, attend to*, etc.: - beware, be circumspect, take heed (to self), keep (-er, self), mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), watch (-man).

Psalms 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Hear the words: **The LORD bless thee and keep thee The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want**. It is the Lord Who saves us when we surrender to Him. It is the Lord Who guards us *like a Shepherd guards His sheep* as we follow Him. The saint focused on God is immortal, even beyond the veil of death! If the **Eternal God, Yahweh, the LORD is your Shepherd then you shall not want**. What does the Scripture say?

Isaiah 40:10-11 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand ... {11} He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

God loves His people, loves His little lambs. **He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom**. The person surrendered to God in Christ will ride through this life in Christ's arms, hearing the *very heartbeat of God*. He loves you.

But dear friends, precious lambs, you must intentionally follow your Shepherd! If you, like King David, would focus on the Lord and His wants, seeking first His will in your lives, then you would be able to say:

2 Samuel 22:2-8 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; {3} The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge,

my savior; thou savest me from violence. {4} I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. {5} When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; {6} The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; {7} In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. {8} Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

The Lord fights for His own, He cares for His people – but His people must stay close to His side. David made it a point to keep his heart close to the Lord no matter what. God honored that, and placed a hedge around David that could not be broken. When the Great I AM guards you, you are well guarded.

Israel cursed herself by being arrogantly self sufficient. She threw her life and her land away by ignoring God's leading, doing it “my way”.

Avoid the land mine of arrogant self sufficiency. Do as the Scripture says:

Psalms 37:3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Avoid The Land Mine Of Pleasing Others Above God

FOCAL Numbers 6:25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee ...

There is an old saying that goes “You can't please everybody”. That is so true. I daresay if I were to poll favorite colors in this audience (and mine is black) I'd hear a number of colors. People have different opinions about everything, and that's fine. But there is an absolute truth, and that truth is found only in God and in His Holy Word.

The greatest thing in life is to know that God is pleased with you.

The older I get, the more amazed I am the diversity among people. When I started preaching I had some people tell me that I was preaching too loud, too passionately – so I spoke softer. The next Sunday I had people come to me who wondered what happened to the passion. I have been vilified for first *using notes in preaching* and later mocked by others because I didn't use notes. People are hard to please because, the Bible says,

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

When you find yourselves misunderstood by people it is good to remember this:

God wants you to, **follow peace with all men**

(Hebrews 12:14) – yet NEVER NEVER put pleasing people above pleasing God.

The reason that many local Churches are falling to pieces is because they have stepped on the “pleasing people land mine”. God must be pleased, first and foremost, before anyone else is pleased. Stand up for God, for He stood up for you.

Do you believe that **God's face shines on those who mock His Holy Word**? No, not at all! And yet local Church after local Church has compromised the teaching of God's Word. My Beloved, God will not honor such a thing. We cannot modify the message of His Holy Scripture, nor can we modify the Gospel truth, in order to please the lost world. Yet this is what many liberal pastors and flocks do. We would do well to remember the admonition that:

Romans 8:7-8 Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. {8} So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**

The unsaved do not need a Bible compromising Church. They need a Church that will stand up and stand upon the promises of God. God wants all who will to be saved. He has said:

2 Peter 3:9 The **Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should**

perish, but that all should come to repentance.

What is in God's heart? He wants as many saved from the **wrath to come** as is possible. Judgment is coming.

2 Peter 3:10 **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**

May the **LORD'S face shine upon you**. May God be pleased with how you live your life. If you will please God above yourself and above your friends and family, if you will make pleasing God your number one priority, then God will bless your life. The Lord wants to be

FOCAL Numbers 6:25-26 ... **gracious unto thee: {26} The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.**

Will you surrender your lives to Him this day? May God touch your hearts with His holy Word!