

Day One

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On
this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel.*

Numbers 6:22-23

—*M*—

Imagine a camping trip—a camping trip lasting forty years! To those of us who have grown fond of our society's creature comforts, life in a tent for four decades seems, well, challenging!

The Old Testament details events of the forty years ancient Israel spent camping in the desert learning to know, love, and trust God. But despite the hardships, a bright thread of hope winds its way through each account. Everywhere we look, we see assurances that God loves his people with a fierce and committed love.

As if to underscore that hope, Numbers 6 includes an explicit expression of blessing commonly referred to as the Aaronic benediction. "Tell Aaron the high priest and all the priests that follow him down through time to bless my people," God says in essence. "And this is precisely how to do it, precisely what to say!" Following that brief introduction are some of the most beautiful—and familiar—words in all of Scripture: "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee" (v. 24).

"Be blessed!" God says through Moses and Aaron.

"Bless you," we say when someone sneezes. Probably most of the time our words are empty words. "Be blessed!" God says to us in contrast. No empty words here! We know that, because we know the One who speaks them. The covenant-making God who led Israel through deserts and oases also leads us through the spiritually dry and spiritually lush times in our lives.

"Be blessed!" he says as he kneels like a tender friend beside us to wipe away our tears. "Be blessed!" he says as he reminds us of his promises to meet all our needs "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). "Be blessed!" he exclaims as he forgives all—each, and every one—of our sins because of his Son's death on the cross. When this God says, "Be blessed!" we are!

The devotions in this book will explore many more facets of what God's blessing means for our everyday lives. As you read them and think about them, I pray that you will truly "Be blessed!"

**Lord God, I am blessed to
know you and your Son—
Jesus, my Savior! Amen.**

—*M*—

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—*M*—