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Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics

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Introduction

There are few phrases in the Christian tradition that carry as much weight, beauty, and comfort as the ancient blessing known as the Aaronic Benediction. When set to music, these words transcend mere recitation and become a profound emotional and spiritual experience. Among the most cherished musical adaptations is the choral anthem based on the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** . Whether sung by a full cathedral choir, a small congregation, or played softly during a moment of personal reflection, this piece has become a staple of worship, graduations, and moments of farewell. In this article, we will explore the biblical roots of these timeless words, the most famous musical settings, the lyrical structure itself, and why the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** continue to resonate deeply with listeners around the world.

The Biblical Origin of "The Lord Bless You and Keep You"

Numbers 6:24-26 – The Aaronic Blessing

The exact text of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** is drawn directly from the Old Testament, specifically the book of Numbers. In Numbers 6:22-27, the Lord instructs Moses to tell Aaron and his sons to bless the Israelites with these specific words: *"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."*This is often called the Priestly Blessing or the Aaronic Benediction. It is one of the oldest known biblical prayers still in use today, and its lyrical beauty has inspired countless musical arrangements.

Meaning and Context

To fully appreciate the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** , one must understand that this blessing was given to the Levitical priests as a way to invoke God’s favor upon the people of Israel after the exodus from Egypt. The threefold structure of the blessing corresponds to the name of the Lord (Yahweh) and emphasizes protection, grace, and peace. The phrase **"keep you"** implies guardianship and preservation, while **"make his face shine upon you"** suggests divine favor and intimacy. Ultimately, the blessing culminates in the gift of *shalom*—a comprehensive peace that includes health, prosperity, and wholeness. Understanding this deep theological context makes the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** more than just pretty words; they are a covenant promise.

Musical Settings of the Lyrics

John Rutter's Beloved Choral Anthem

When most people think of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** , they immediately recall the soaring, ethereal setting by the British composer John Rutter. Composed in 1981 as part of his larger work *Requiem*, Rutter’s version has become one of the most performed and recorded choral pieces of the late 20th century. The music begins softly, with a gentle, rising melody that echoes the intimacy of the blessing, then builds to a

"the Lord bless you and keep you" is the phrase. Rutter's use of overlapping voices and a warm, accessible harmonic language makes the lyrics feel both ancient and fresh. For many, this is the definitive musical interpretation of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics**.

Other Notable Compositions

While Rutter's arrangement is perhaps the most famous, many other composers have set the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** to music. One of the earliest and most enduring is the anthem by Peter Lutkin (1858–1931), composed in 1900. Lutkin's version is a staple of the Anglican choral tradition, featuring a simple, reverent melody that gradually expands into a majestic sevenfold "Amen." Another beloved setting is by Howard Goodall, used in the BBC series *The Vicar of Dibley*, which brought the lyrics to a wide television audience. There are also numerous contemporary worship bands and gospel choirs that have recorded the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** in modern arrangements, proving the timelessness of the text.

Lyrics and Text Analysis

To fully appreciate the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** , it helps to examine the text line by line. Below is the complete text as it appears in most choral settings, followed by a brief analysis of each phrase.

- "The Lord bless you and keep you" – This opening line invokes God's active protection and provision. The word "keep" implies not just protection from harm but also a nurturing, sustaining presence.
- "The Lord make his face shine upon you" – In ancient Hebrew culture, the "face" of God represented His presence and favor. A shining face indicates joy and acceptance.
- "And be gracious unto you" – Grace is unmerited favor. This line reminds us that God's blessing is not earned but freely given.
- "The Lord lift up his countenance upon you" – Lifting up the countenance is a gesture of personal attention and care. It signifies that God is looking directly at you with love.
- "And give you peace" – The final line delivers the ultimate gift: peace. Not just the absence of conflict but a deep, abiding wholeness.

Many musical settings repeat the opening line multiple times, especially Rutter's arrangement, which uses the words **"The Lord bless you and keep you"**as a recurring motif. The repetition serves to internalize the blessing, allowing the listener to meditate on each word.

The Power of Repetition

One reason the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** have become so embedded in the Christian consciousness is the power of repetition. In liturgical use, the blessing is often intoned at the conclusion of a service, and its musical settings frequently echo the same phrase multiple times. This repetition is not monotonous; it is liturgical and hypnotic, reinforcing the reality of God's blessing. When sung, the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** become a prayer that lingers in the mind long after the music stops.

Theological Significance

Theologically, the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** encapsulate the heart of the Gospel. The blessing is Trinitarian in structure (three parts, each invoking a different aspect of God's character) and echoes the biblical themes of covenant, presence, and grace. In many church traditions, this blessing is used to send the congregation out into the world, reminding them that they go with God's protection and peace. The lyrics thus serve as a transition from worship to mission, making them deeply meaningful for both personal devotion and corporate worship.

Using the Lyrics in Worship and Personal Devotion

In Liturgical Settings

Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics are sung as a benediction or closing anthem during Sunday services. The Rutter arrangement is particularly popular for weddings, funerals, and ordinations, where the theme of blessing is especially poignant. When sung by a choir, the lyrics fill the sanctuary with a sense of sacredness and hope. Some churches use a simpler chanted version, allowing the entire congregation to sing the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** together, making the blessing a communal act.

As a Prayer or Benediction

Beyond formal worship, many individuals use the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** as a personal prayer. Parents may sing or speak the blessing over their children at bedtime. Caregivers may whisper it over a sick loved one. Because the lyrics are compact and powerful, they are easy to memorize and carry in one's heart. Writing the lyrics on a card or placing them in a Bible or journal can serve as a daily reminder of God's promises. The versatility of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** makes them a valuable resource for anyone seeking a simple yet profound expression of faith.

The Enduring Popularity of "Lord Bless You and Keep You"

Why This Setting Resonates

The popularity of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** (especially in Rutter's setting) can be attributed to several factors. First, the text is universally applicable—it speaks to the human need for security, love, and peace. Second, the music is accessible; even those with no formal training can be moved by its beauty. Third, the piece has a timeless quality that transcends cultural and denominational boundaries. Whether you hear it in a traditional Anglican cathedral or a contemporary evangelical church, the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** evoke the same response: a deep sense of being held by a loving God.

Recordings and Performances

Countless recordings of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** exist, ranging from professional choirs to amateur groups. The classic recording by the Cambridge Singers under John Rutter remains a benchmark, but new interpretations appear regularly on YouTube and streaming platforms. Interestingly, the piece has also found a secular audience; it is often performed at commencements and memorial services as a non-denominational expression of blessing. This widespread use testifies to the universal appeal of the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics**.

Conclusion

From its ancient origins in the book of Numbers to its modern embodiment in John Rutter's choral masterpiece, the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics** have carried the promise of God's peace across millennia. The words are short, yet they encompass the entire scope of divine care: protection, favor, grace, and peace. Whether you encounter them sung by a full choir, spoken in a quiet prayer, or read in a Bible, these lyrics have the power to calm anxieties, inspire hope, and remind us that we are never alone. The next time you hear the **Lord Bless You And Keep You Lyrics**, let them wash over you as a timeless benediction—from ancient times to your own heart.

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