

## #7 “Blessing and Cursing”

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In the beginning, God created the world, and He said that it was all good. In other words, the world started out blessed by God with the very approval and satisfaction of God. Yet when man sinned, He fell from this state of blessing, succumbing to the effects of the curse, sin, and death. God in His holiness punished the man and woman, the creation, the serpent, and the earth because of Adam and Eve’s rebellion and disobedience. Since that time, the curse has been a reality. It is like some of the ancient fairytales of kingdoms or forests that have become dark, defeated, and ugly because of some curse by some evil foe. Yet the curse in the real world is from God, not from our evil foe, the devil. The curse is a reminder that God is holy, that man has broken fellowship with God, and that God is the only One Who can restore things to their original glory, purity, and beauty.

The fascinating thing is that even as God issued the curse, He gave hope in saying that the head of the offspring of the serpent will be crushed by the seed of the woman, which is obviously Christ Himself (Genesis 3:15). God had a plan all along to restore what was damaged and to redeem what was put under the bondage of sin, death, and the devil.

God’s plan was further revealed when He told Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him "all the families of the earth will be blessed." Jesus Christ would ultimately be born through a line that could be traced back to the Jewish nation, of which Abraham was the father. God through Christ promised to restore blessing that had been lost. How could He do this? The only way was to put the effects and penalties of the curse upon His one and only Son. As Galatians 3:3 says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, 'CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.'" The curse of the Law was that we could not keep it because of our sinful ways (1 Corinthians 15:56). Christ Himself bore the penalty of the curse, dying on the cross, fulfilling the righteous requirements of the Law, and making it so that we could be righteous and overcome the effects of the curse. The Father cursed the Son and put upon Him our sin and its wages of death. God instituted the curse, and only God could revoke it. The only way to revoke it was through the sacrificial death of His Son. Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us (1 John 3:1)!

In Christ, then, all mankind has the opportunity to be blessed through repentance and faith so as to be spiritually freed from the curse and its effects. The unbeliever is dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) and doomed to die physically and spiritually (Genesis 2:17), unless he repents. He is a slave unto the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), and he is a captive of the devil (2 Timothy 2:26). He lives in a cursed world as one who is himself cursed. The curious thing is that many unbelievers seem to prefer living out a cursed life in a cursed state rather than being redeemed and having the hope of restoration, blessing, newness, and redemption. This is so sad, but may more come to know their Creator.

The Christian has the great blessing of being made new. The old self that was succumbed to the curse, enslaved by sin, and captive of the devil is no longer operative. Believers, having been born again of the seed of Christ by the Word of God, are now free to live as slaves of God. They do not have to do the devil's bidding, for they are made new. The curse is broken in that the penalty of sin, namely spiritual death, no longer holds any power over them. Death has no victory or sting any longer (1 Corinthians 15:55). We can present our members as slaves of righteousness, not having to continue in sin. The only part of the believer that is still cursed is the body, which will be raised immortal and incorruptible in the day of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:53). Even the pain and suffering that our mortal bodies experience will one day be gone. Thus, the physical elements of the curse such as pain in childbirth and the strain of physical work still remain until Christ gives us new bodies. But the moral and spiritual elements of the curse, such as roles and behavior in marriage, can be lived out as Christ desires as described by Ephesians 5:21-33 because of the grace that Christ supplies. As for the creation itself, it will still have to deal with the corruption of sin until Christ sets up His kingdom on the earth (Romans 8:21). At that time, the lion will lay down with the lamb, rather than devouring it (Isaiah 11:6). Things will be different then, restored to a state of blessing.

We have much to be thankful for in the undoing of the curse. We are already more than conquerors in Christ Who leads us in a victory procession over sin, death, and the devil (2 Corinthians 2:14). Praise God that we do not have to fear death, that we do not have to continue in sin, and that one day we will even be freed from these decaying, cursed bodies. As believers, we can be a blessing to a world that is fighting the effects of the curse. We have the cure, we have been freed, and we are to shine brightly the light, beauty, and holiness that is Christ in us. We bear an aroma of Christ, which shows those who are still cursed that they are indeed cursed. Some will respond to the light, and some will hide from the light or even curse it. Yet the only way to be freed from the curse and its penalties is through Christ. May we be clear lights and testimonies of the blessing, redemption, regeneration, and renewal that are found in Christ. People ought to ask about the hope that we have, and I pray that more do because they see that we are indeed changed and changing people, becoming more and more like we were created to be. This is what it truly means to be a blessing.