



Am I Living Under a Generational Curse? Curses Series (Part II)

Deuteronomy 30:19: (NASB) *I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,*



Our God is a God of order. Psalm 89:14 says that righteousness and justice are the very foundation of His Heavenly Throne. This means that all He does must be based in what is right and just. While some of us may look at this through fearful eyes, this is actually great news because it means God is and always will be dependable and trustworthy. If this is the case, why did God seem so over-the-top angry in the Old Testament? Why did He seemingly curse not only wrongdoers, but the generations that followed them as well? Did these “curses” of God work the same way the curses of our day are said to work? Were they wishing evil upon someone or something? Did God give anyone the authority to curse others?



Episode 1195: Are Curses Real? Curses Series (Part I)

Examining the complexity of curses and whether they are real or not

recap
recap

A brief recap from Part I:

We explored how there are various psychological and physiological explanations for why some people have a greater tendency than others to believe curses are affecting them. Science is discovering that we inherit more from our parents and grandparents than ever thought possible. Anxiety from curses is real, but we cannot let that keep us from finding the faith and courage to overcome! We cannot forget who we are in Christ.

We looked at:

- how our feeling that we are in control or out of control of our future influences our feelings of being cursed,
- the Placebo Effect and the Nocebo Effect, and
- the science of Epigenetics to see how character traits and diseases can come from our family.

We lined all of this up with specific scriptural guidance to help us cope with our fears.

Execrate

/ˈɛksəkrāt/

verb: feel or express great loathing for

Imprecate

/ˈɪmprəˌkāt/

verb: a spoken curse

We discussed two important words that appear in the definitions of the several biblical words translated curse.



We will return to these words several times and review their definitions to help us understand how curses were used in the Old Testament.

In Part I we discussed Genesis 3:14,16-17 when God cursed (execrate - expressed a great loathing for) Satan.

God also cursed the ground because of Adam’s sin:

Genesis 3:14,16-17: (NASB) ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, **cursed <779>** are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; ¹⁶To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat from it; **cursed <779>** is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

Curse: Strongs #779 ‘*arar*; to execrate (feel or express great loathing for)

Now let’s put those “curses” (loathings) into a fuller context.

Before there was any loathing, there was blessing:

Genesis 1:27-28: (NASB) ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸God **blessed <1288>** them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

God was saying: Here is my gift to you. I love you!

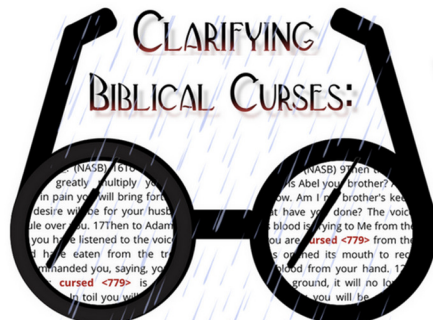
Blessed: Strongs #1288 *barak*; to kneel; by implication to bless God (as an act of adoration), and (vice-versa) man (as a benefit); also (by euphemism) to curse (God or the king, as treason)

God blessed and adored Adam and Eve.

God did not *remove* the blessing (a direct expression of His love) from Adam and Eve, but He did make its value MUCH harder to find. Pain in childbirth, inequality and cursing (execrating, having a great loathing for) the ground were all done within the context of God’s expressed love for them.



The blessing was still there **but His protection was removed**, making life much harder. Blessings now would be in the context of an imperfect, sinful world.



When God cursed the ground it was a disciplinary action put in place as a consequence for sinful actions.

It would inevitably prove to be an act of eternal love.



This specific Hebrew word for *blessed* is generally used as an expression of adoration, but it is also occasionally translated *curse* as an expression of treason.

How can this same word mean opposite things? There are only a few examples of this in the Bible. We will look at one of them in the book of Job where Satan is challenging God over Job's loyalty to Him.



Satan told God that Job was only loyal because He treated him well:

Job 1:9-11: (NASB) ⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have **blessed <1288>** the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Blessed: Strong's #1288 *barak*; 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)

Satan sarcastically said: He loves You because You give him everything - You blessed Job (the same word used for God blessing Adam and Eve).

Here is what Satan proposed:

¹¹But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely **curse <1288>** You to Your face.

He will surely curse You - the Hebrew word translated *curse* in English is the same as the word for *blessed*. This is where the treasonous part of the definition comes into play. Satan is saying that once Job has nothing, he will be treasonous to God.



Have You not made a hedge about him - a hedge or fence of protection. This may give us a glimpse as to how it works.

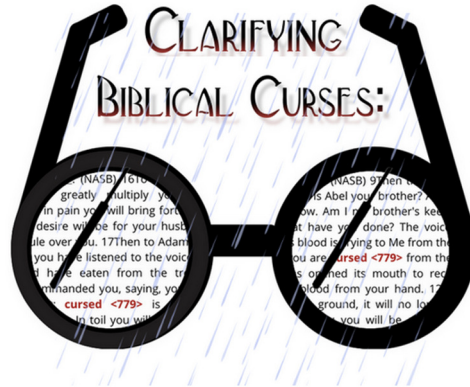
It is not that we should interpret that God curses us when things go wrong in our life, but He might lift up that hedge or fence and allow things to affect us either from natural consequences, or for something we need to specifically learn or experience for our highest spiritual welfare.

Satan again came before God and pressed the issue to go beyond Job's possessions:

Job 2:5-6: (NASB) ⁵However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will **curse <1288>** You to Your face. ⁶So the LORD said to Satan, Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.

Satan challenged God, attempting to have Job follow him in his own treasonous ways. Satan was trying to create Job in *his* image.

Cursing God to His face would have been a treasonous act of rebellion. Satan wanted Job to dishonor God by having Job let go of his allegiance to God and be treasonous, just like Satan. Eventually he got to Job's wife where even she encouraged Job to *curse God and die* in Job 2:9.



"Treason" is a biblical curse that obviously does not come from God, **BUT FROM SATAN** - the father of all treasonous thoughts and actions.

After the original sin, the next biblical curse God issued is closely related to His first human-related "curse/loathing" of the ground.

Cain had just murdered his brother:

Genesis 4:9-14: (NASB) ⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? ¹⁰He said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. ¹¹Now you are **cursed <779>** from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.



Curse: Strong's #779 'arar; to execrate (feel or express great loathing for)



Cain was driven from the already cursed/loathed ground because he defiled it with his brother's blood.

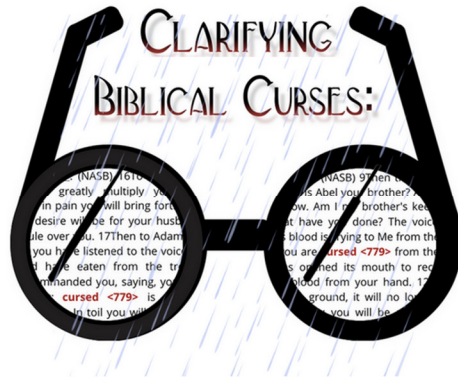
Is this a curse that fits today's definition of wishing evil on someone or something?

No, it is a *consequence* of a heinous sin. This is based on justice.

¹³Cain said to the LORD, My punishment is too great to bear! ¹⁴Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.

Cain's answer reveals that he did not question God's authority in proclaiming the consequences of his actions, but he was overwhelmed by them.

He knew he did wrong, and God marked him in some way that people were not allowed to kill him (Genesis 4:15). He was punished as a consequence, but God was not magically wishing evil upon him. That is the difference between God's cursing and people trying to curse other people.



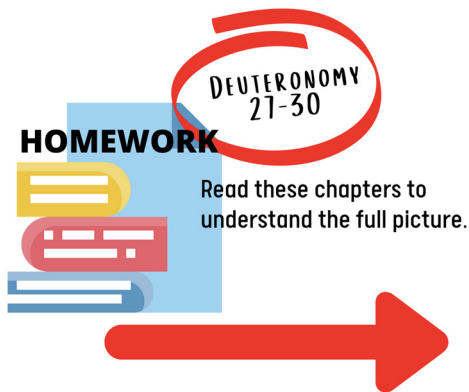
Cain was "cursed/loathed" from the ground. God's penalty was to have Cain's disrespect for life be reflected in the very ground disrespecting his cultivation attempts. God's curse was a just and merciful consequence for a heinous sin.

Real fatherly consequence does not wish for evil and harm, but for the hardship of the experience to produce a fruit of goodness, integrity and righteousness. From God's perspective, hardship is in place to be a wakeup call.

We can see a marked difference between God's intentions with curses and Satan's intentions with curses. Who will we follow?

God's loathing brings just and serious consequences. Did God ever "curse" His people generationally?

The idea of generational curses does have its foundation in the Bible. As a matter of fact, we will shortly examine God's greatest generational curse of all time (aside from original sin). Before we do, we need to clearly set the context to help us understand what this massive curse really means.



After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were preparing to finally cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land. Deuteronomy 27-30 contain both hope and warning.

The requirement in Deuteronomy 27 was for Israel to honor and follow God. God wanted them to "bless" Him as He "blessed" them.

Deuteronomy 27 begins with God commanding the people to remember His Law.

The requirement was for Israel to honor and follow Him. God wanted them to "bless" Him as he "blessed" them:

Deuteronomy 27:11-13: (NASB) ¹¹Moses also charged the people on that day, saying, ¹²When you cross the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to **ble**ss <1288> the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. ¹³For the **cur**se <7045>, these shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

Curse: Strongs #7045 *qlalah*; vilification: (ac-)curse (-d, -ing)

This Hebrew word for *curse* is a noun meaning vilification, which means condemnation or strong criticism.



There are two mountains in the West Bank in Israel about a mile from each other - Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. A list of blessings the nation would have if they obeyed the Law were shouted from Mount Gerizim.

Corresponding curses were shouted from Mount Ebal and the people would be able to hear all of it from the valley below. The decisions they would make from this point forward would have a dramatic effect on their lives and on the future trajectory of their nation. God was very clear.



For the curse, these shall stand on Mount Ebal – the Hebrew word for curse (vilification) helps us see how it is the opposite of bless. When someone is blessed by God they are protected, embraced and built up by God’s ACTIVE favor. To curse is to push away with disdain. When cursed/loathed/vilified by God, a person is out of His ACTIVE favor and left to the consequences of sin in a world run by Satan’s treacherous rule. It is like that hedge of protection being removed, and we are left with having to deal with the treachery of Satan and all it brings into our lives.

Cursing from God is based on righteous consequences and not the hex or jinx we think of today.

Then came warnings of many ungodly actions that would bring curses/loathing from God:



Deuteronomy 27:14-15,17: (NASB) ¹⁴The Levites shall then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice, ¹⁵**Cursed <779>** is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. ¹⁷**Cursed <779>** is he who moves his neighbor’s boundary mark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Just like a natural father would be, God is deeply disappointed when we disobey.

Those are just a few of the “curses” in a long list that were shouted out from Mount Ebal. The actions that would cause loathing from God were all individually-based. The pronouncements did not address corresponding penalties, as the Law handled that part.

Next were blessings, the results of diligent obedience to God. These blessings were expressions of God’s love for them:



Deuteronomy 28:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ²All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: ³**Blessed <1288>** shall you be in the city, and **blessed <1288>** shall you be in the country. ⁴**Blessed <1288>** shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God - what a beautiful picture!



These were the very lofty results from the blessing of heartfelt obedience. This is not just blind obedience but *observant* obedience because of their love for God.



It can be said these people were either living under a blessing from one mountain or a curse from the other. Does this apply to us today? Are we living under a blessing or a curse?

We cannot use that word so arbitrarily. We are either living within God's favor or outside of God's favor. It is not a magical curse to be outside of God's favor; it is the natural consequences of sin and death and Satan.

Next were the dark results of disobedience, which would affect the very things previously blessed. These are read like bookends - there are BIG blessings and equally BIG curses - big consequences for sins like idolatry.



Deuteronomy 28:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ¹⁶**Cursed <779>** shall you be in the city, and **cursed <779>** shall you be in the country. ¹⁷**Cursed <779>** shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ¹⁸**Cursed <779>** shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

God is basically letting the nation know: Obey Me from your heart and walk towards Me, and you will have great blessing. Disobey Me from your heart and walk away from Me, and you will have great consequence.

God is giving this nation of Israel a righteous path to walk on. There are consequences to walking away from goodness towards sin and evil. Curses from God are consequences. This is justice at work - not something big and spooky.

This curse, this pronouncement of loathing, leaps forward into a generational result.

We believe this prophetically brings Israel forward to its Roman captivity in the day of Jesus:

Deuteronomy 28:49-51: (NASB) ⁴⁹The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle (the symbol of Rome) swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, ⁵⁰a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young. ⁵¹Moreover, it shall eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed, who also leaves you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the increase of your herd or the young of your flock until they have caused you to perish.

This was a serious prophecy of disobedience and Israel's Roman captivity. Rome actually accomplished all of the things mentioned in these verses. This generational "curse" or loathing went even further.

The generational issues continue, as Israel would be scattered:

Deuteronomy 28:64-65: (NASB) ⁶⁴Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. ⁶⁵Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul.



In Matthew 23:38, Jesus said, *your house is left to you desolate*. Israel was scattered among all nations and only regathered when they became a nation in the year 1948. That is a generational curse.



Deuteronomy 27-30 are difficult chapters. In Israel's history, when prophets came on the scene, it meant there was trouble and disobedience. They came to proclaim the trouble and to try and bring the people back to God. When the people followed the correction, they received blessing. When they followed their own way, they encountered the natural consequences of disobeying God. Our actions affect those generations who follow us.

Deuteronomy 29 begins by reminding Israel of their miraculous deliverance up to this point, as well as how they are God's only chosen people.

God lets them know that if they were unfaithful, it would become their legacy. Faithfulness is a legacy; unfaithfulness is also a legacy:

Deuteronomy 30:15,19-20: (NASB) ¹⁵See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the **blessing <1293>** (benediction, by implication prosperity) and the **curse <7045 from 7043>** (trifle with, bring into contempt). So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding close to Him...



Curse: Strongs #7043 *qalal*; verb to be (causatively, make) light, literally (swift, small, sharp, etc.) or figuratively (easy, trifling, vile, etc.): abate, make bright, bring into contempt, (ac-)curse, despise, (be) ease (-y, -ier)

There are similar blessing/curse comparisons found in Leviticus 26 where God outlines the penalties for disobedience, just like He does here in Deuteronomy. However, the end result in Leviticus 26:44 was God let Israel know that ultimately He was not going to forget them or cast them away.



This reminds us of when the Israelites wanted a king and not judges, and God gave them a list of consequences if they insisted on a king. But they did not care and accepted His consequences. This is a great example of what disobedience brings.

God loved Israel and kept working with them. We cannot say that God was cursing them because He kept sending them the remedy for their disobedience.

God's generational curses, His loathing against His disobedient chosen people, were not a reactive wish for harm like the curses of today. Instead, they were *a response to disobedience*, removing them from his ACTIVE favor.

God responded with generational calamity for their eternal wellbeing:

Amos 3:1-2: (NASB) ¹Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt: ²You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

A child is not treasonous when they disobey; they just need correction.



I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else? – Teyye, Fiddler on the Roof

When we put all this together, we see a picture of God's grace expressed through His anger and righteous indignation. He allowed Israel to see the consequences, depth and hurt of sin.



Because Israel was blessed with God's exceptional favor above all others, God's cursing, His loathing of them, would also be exceptional. Great knowledge of and experience with God's blessings brings great responsibility and consequences when His ways are rejected.

Generational curses let everyone know that going down the path of sin leads to disdain and separation from God.

What do other curses - other statements of loathing - from God in the Old Testament focus on?

There are many examples of Old Testament loathing and consequences at the hand of God. These range from simple statements we might not think much about, to statements of anger and statements regarding not fulfilling the Law. The common theme in all of them is the sovereignty of God as it relates to the sinfulness of humanity.

Justice and righteousness are the foundation of God's throne. Indeed, He is a God of profound wisdom and foresight. Next, we are going to look at the common Scriptures quoted by some who believe God uses generational curses today.

These are one of the most popular texts quoted by those who believe generational curses are happening today:

Exodus 20:4-5: (NASB) *⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

Of those who hate me - if you disobey My Law in relation to idolatry, then evil and punishment will follow. There is no halfway with an idol. They could not say, "I love both God and the goddess Diana." For that matter, we cannot say, "I love God, and I love (anything of self-interest - money, power, etc.)." This is a specific part of the Commandments.

This "third and fourth generation iniquity" is only mentioned on three occasions:



1. At the giving of the Ten Commandments in [Exodus 20:4-6](#) and repeated in [Deuteronomy 5:8-10](#); the same event recorded in a different book of the Bible.
2. God repeated this generational iniquity to Moses in [Exodus 34:7](#) when Moses went back up the mountain to replace the broken tablets of the Law.
3. Moses repeated it as he pleaded with God as Israel faithlessly rejected entering the Land of Canaan ([Numbers 14:18](#)).

This is it! This is not a curse; it is simply a consequence for disobedience - *you disobey Me and that disloyalty will fester and grow for generations.*

It is basically the same context of the Law of Israel repeated three times - not three separate instances throughout the Bible. Whenever Israel stopped being idolatrous, that “hedge of protection” was put back and they were again blessed.

Reading this out of context loses the full meaning of the consequences of moving away from God’s laws. By disobeying laws set up in their best interests, the Israelites’ bad choices were reflected down on their offspring resulting in suffering to *the third or fourth generations*. Not because God afflicted them - they afflicted themselves - and God withdrew His protection.

It is wrong to pull this out of context and apply it to generational sins for the Christian or even the rest of the world at this time. The punishment on the third and fourth generation was at a specific time for a specific people for a specific purpose.

We know God forgives our sins when we ask in the name of Jesus. We are to live a repentant life where we do not have to look back through our lineage in fear.

God “curses” when He pronounces a logical punishment or consequence for sin or disloyalty.

The outworking of that sin and the influence we all have on our children and grandchildren causes the effects of the sin and consequent separation from God to naturally be visited on the second and third, possibly even the fourth and more generations, depending on whether these further descendants follow the practices of their ancestors.

The beauty of God’s curses is that He sets the whole process in motion and lets man’s use free will to choose.

Who can complain – we are causing our own punishment by separating ourselves from God’s provisions for our well-being!

The internet is littered with checklists to diagnose whether you are under a curse or not. Check “yes” if you’ve had continuing financial problems, mental illness, injuries, your children have bad sleeping habits, business failures - any possible thing wrong in your life is said to be attributed to a “curse.”



1. Do curses continue down through the generations unless reversed or broken?
2. Are we spiritually connected with our ancestors?
3. Are we blaming life’s problems on curses from God or from other people?

The answer to all three of these questions should be a resounding NO! If you want the correct answer, go to Scripture and leave the paganism behind.

Abraham’s Promise had a “curse” in it as well:

Genesis 12:3: (KJV) *And I will **ble**ss <1288> them that **ble**ss <1288> thee, and **cur**se <779> him that **cur**seth <7043> thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be **ble**ssed <1288>.*

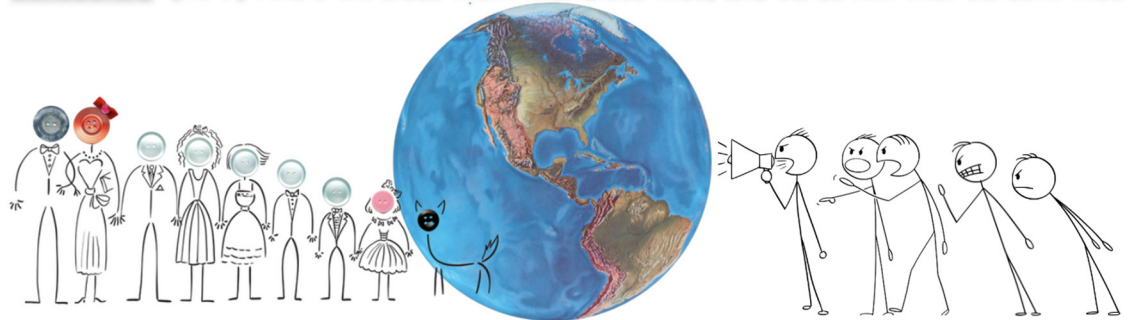
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This is another “bless” and “curse” pair. Curse is not some voodoo ritual here; it means consequence. There is great *loathing* for those who would seek to harm God’s people.

Genesis 12:3: (KJV) *And I will **ble**ss them that **ble**ss thee, and **cur**se him that **cur**seth thee:*



and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God is assuring Abraham that His favor upon him and his posterity includes seeing him from different eyes than God will see those who would stand against him. This is the same blessing/loathing relationship established when original sin was dealt with. This same comparison follows throughout the Scriptures. When bad things happen to us, it is not God cursing us; it is the consequence of sin.

We know this next example from the Old Testament is cringe worthy on all levels viewed in today’s light, but it is important to examine it to see the important lessons.



We intentionally chose difficult scriptures to examine, and this certainly qualifies. In our present day, it may come across as sexist and mystical. Remember, the Old Testament was a male-driven society and Israel's Law was set down by God as a strict guideline for fidelity in life on every level.

This is about the Jewish Law regarding marital fidelity and a jealous husband suspecting his wife of adultery:

Numbers 5:12,14-15: (NASB) ¹²Speak to the sons of Israel...*If any man's wife...is unfaithful to him, ¹⁴if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself, ¹⁵the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring...a grain offering of jealousy...*



Observations:

- No, there was no provision in the Law to test if a husband was cheating on his wife.
- If guilty of adultery, however, both parties could be put to death. This is how serious a crime this was. Marriage involved sacred vows based on fidelity.
- This death penalty required a third-party witness.
- This describes the procedure where there is no witness and the husband thinks the wife has cheated. It provided a way the woman can prove her innocence beyond a shadow of a doubt and move on with her life. This protects the woman.

Fidelity was paramount and this was the way to test it:

Numbers 5:16-19: (NASB) ¹⁶Then the priest shall... have her stand before the LORD, ¹⁷and the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel; and he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. ¹⁸The priest shall... place the grain offering... of jealousy, (in her hand) and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a **curse <779>**. ¹⁹The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, *If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, being under the authority of your husband, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a **curse <779>**.*

Curse: Strong's #779 'arar; to execrate (feel or express great loathing for)

This makes more sense when we understand the sacredness of the Tabernacle. It was a movable tent where the Israelites could be in contact with God's presence as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.



Unlocking the secrets and symbols God gave to ancient Israel

**Additional observations:**

- This benefited the woman because if she was guilty, she should have confessed and faced the consequences. But if she was not guilty and unjustly accused, she was putting herself in the hands of God, not imperfect man who could wrongly sentence her to death.
- This is not mysticism or magic spells and potions. This is dust and water from the Tabernacle wherein God Almighty dwelled. This is the age where He miraculously communicated with His people. God was very much physically present in the decision-making for Israel at that time.
- There is no record of this actually happening. This lays out the procedure should it have been necessary.

Under the Law, a man could divorce his wife for matters of *uncleanness*. This “test” would be for a man who really believed there was infidelity.

Likely it would not have been done to humiliate his wife as people might do today:

Numbers 5:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰*if you, however, have gone astray, being under the authority of your husband... ²¹(then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the **curse <423>**, and the priest shall say to the woman), the LORD make you a **curse <423>** and an oath among your people by the LORD'S making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell; ²²and this water that brings a **curse <779>** shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away. And the woman shall say, Amen. Amen.*

Curse: Strong's #423 *'alah*; an imprecation: curse, cursing, execration, oath, swearing

By the LORD'S making - He would cause a physical response if she was guilty - it was not the water.

This woman was standing before God, not some man.

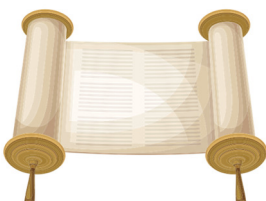
The LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people - a guilty woman was an evil result of sin. This procedure or test served as a promise that evil will not go unpunished by God. Israel was God's chosen people, and infidelity was not tolerated in God's Law. She had become an example of gross darkness to the people.

Your thigh waste away - likely a euphemism having to do with a woman's reproductive system.

There was complete disclosure for this ritual. The woman, standing before God, understood the gravity of guilt before the test was to be done.

This whole procedure should have been a deterrent. If we had such a test, would we think twice about committing such a sin? This was a harsh consequence, but it was in God's hands. This was not witchcraft. This allowed a woman to definitively prove her innocence and then the husband had to get over his unfounded jealousy.

Numbers 5:23-24: (NASB) ²³*The priest shall then write these **curses <423>** on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness. ²⁴Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness.*





The time it took for the priest to write out the penalties would give a guilty party more opportunity to confess.

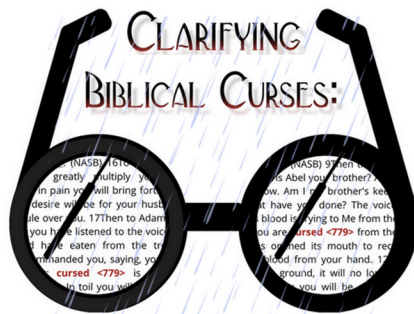
Numbers 5:27-28: (NASB) ²⁷...if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband... the woman will become a **curse** <423> among her people. ²⁸But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children.

Fidelity brings blessings! Conceiving children was considered a tremendous blessing. She would be free from all accusation and would be blessed.

Under the Jewish Law, adulterers were to die. How then, is she a curse, an “imprecation,” (spoken loathing) among her people? *The woman will become a curse among her people* - her actions of infidelity would become a stain upon the nation in the same way idolatry was a stain upon the nation. Idolatry stains the fidelity of their nation. Why do this kind of test? It gave public testimony to the importance of fidelity for God’s chosen people.

We mentioned earlier that there is a common theme of the sovereignty of God shown through the many Old Testament examples of “curse” consequences. The sovereignty of God was the centerpiece of the Jewish nation. He was the Lord, their God. He delivered them out of slavery and they were following His Law. Only God’s way was and is the correct path. This is about fidelity to God, to life, to family, to your spouse - fidelity in all aspects of our lives. Infidelity brings loathing and disgust from God.

God’s actions are consistent. He loathes every expression of sin and disloyalty, but the ultimate purpose is beneficial.



God's intention behind His "cursing/loathing" any of humanity has **NEVER** been and **NEVER WILL BE** to want them harmed. On the contrary, His loathing of sin and disloyalty and His pronouncing of consequences are entirely centered on the highest eternal end result for all people!

Can we curse like God does? Do we have the permission or authority to have a loathing for others?

This really is a big question. One would logically think that if God wanted us to have the authority to “curse” or to loathe others, we would see many examples of it in Scripture. So far, the only being in the Bible who set up someone to curse was Satan, who sought to have Job curse God. This is NOT a good example.

We could not find any examples in the Old Testament (we look at the New Testament in Part III) where individuals successfully cursed someone else. By this we mean, saying magical words intending evil and accomplished by a supernatural power - be it good or evil. This includes any biblical accounts of witchcraft.



We looked closely. We always want to find what the Bible is teaching us. We cannot be afraid of any scripture, no matter what it says. This is why we chose the hard examples for this episode. We want to face the topic to find the godly perspective, rather than what we think or want it to mean.



If the thought of curses, voodoo and hexes is not scriptural, where did the idea that we might be under a curse - or that we can curse others - come from?

It all comes from paganism! Paganism comes from Satan. It is about worshipping that which is created, not the Creator. Satan was first to do so and taught humanity how to do the same. In the absence of God, Satan had free rein to influence people who turned away from God before the Flood, and in nations other than Israel after the Flood. This is where some get these ridiculous (and terrifying) ideas of manipulating others with curses.

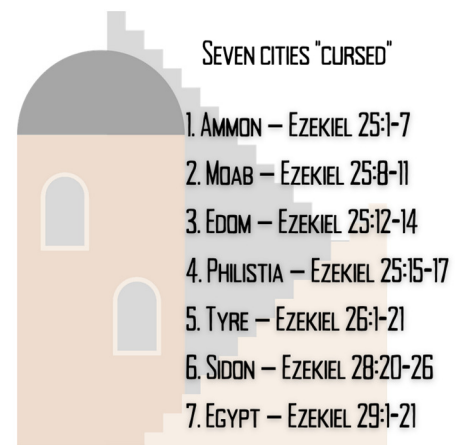
Let's look at some scriptures that seem like people are cursing others.

Ezekiel is said to have cursed seven cities.

Here is the first:

Ezekiel 25:1-4: (NASB) ¹And the word of the LORD came to me saying, ²Son of man, set your face toward the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them, ³and say to the sons of Ammon, 'Hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD, because you said, Aha! against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into exile, ⁴therefore, behold, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession...

Since when is a prophecy of consequences for evil a curse? Ezekiel is NOT cursing these cities; he is *revealing the providence of Jehovah God* because they were enemies of righteousness. These examples where nations or people are committing evil, and therefore will have bad consequences and punishments, are found throughout Scripture and are not called curses.



In this next example, King Saul proclaims a curse. Saul is a questionable source of information since he often did things he should not have done.

King Saul wanted his soldiers to focus on the battle avenging Saul of his enemies, not on anything else, like eating:

1 Samuel 14:24-26,28-29: (NASB) ²⁴Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, **Cursed <779>** be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies. So none of the people tasted food. ²⁵All the people of the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground. ²⁶...but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

Saul threatens his people to keep them from losing focus on battle. Is this a justification for cursing?



Saul's son Jonathan had been out slaying some of the enemy in a daring and dangerous move. He had slain many all by himself and was now returning to the main army, famished. He had not heard his father give this curse and reached down and picked up honey on the ground.

Jonathan was refreshed:

²⁸Then one of the people said, your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, **Cursed <779>** be the man who eats food today. And the people were weary. ²⁹Then Jonathan said, my father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

Jonathan said that his father, King Saul, was being arbitrary with his prohibition against eating until the end of the battle. Saul's own son Jonathan calls out his "cursing" as an inappropriate reaction.



We have looked at Ezekiel, who was not cursing anything but was revealing God's providence against several evil cities. Then we looked at King Saul, who made a feeble attempt at a threat to keep his people fighting, not eating. None of this included anything magical; it was just about the appropriate wrath of Jehovah against Israel's enemies and the inappropriate wrath of King Saul with his own people.

Let's look at our next example:

Balak the King of Moab feared Israel and sought out Balaam the prophet of God to curse Balaam's own nation, Israel:

Numbers 22:2-6: (NASB) ²Now Balak...saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. ³So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel. ⁴Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field. ⁵So he sent messengers to Balaam...at Pethor...to call him, saying, Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me. ⁶Now, therefore, please come, **curse <779>** this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you **bless <1288>** [adore] is **blessed <1288>**, and he whom you **curse <779>** [loathe] is **cursed <779>**.

Blessed: Strongs #1288 *barak*; 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)

Curse: Strongs #779 *'arar*; to execrate (feel or express great loathing for)



Question: Balak says: Balaam, please come curse this people for me! He is not asking for a loathing; he's asking for a good old-fashioned curse, right? Poof! Doesn't he want them destroyed permanently?



Answer: From a pagan perspective, maybe he did want a curse as we know it today, but think about what he says: *this people came out of Egypt*. He knew of the miraculous deliverance of Israel, so he knows that Israel's God shows Himself to be incredibly powerful.

Balak was pagan with all kinds of gods, but not like Israel's God. So, Balak goes to a prophet of that God (like he would do with his own prophets - bribe in hand) to beg for a favor. He wants Israel's God to stop protecting Israel. He tells Balaam that if he can just get God to stop protecting Israel then Balak and his nation Moab might just have a chance of driving these Hebrews *out of the land*.

This is the same scenario we saw in previous scriptures with blessing and cursing - only here a pagan king wants a curse placed on God's people:

Numbers 22:7: (NASB) *So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him.*

Fees for divination - bribes or pay-offs. Pagan people paid the prophets and priests of their gods for divination (the act of foretelling future events or the use and revealment of occult knowledge through alleged supernatural agency).

This is not the way God works, nor is it how He instructed Balaam:

Numbers 22:12: (NASB) *God said to Balaam, Do not go with them; you shall not **curse <779>** the people, for they are **blessed <1288>**.*

These are the same two cursed/blessed words we have seen before. This started way back in the Garden of Eden. The pairing of blessing and cursing continues - it has nothing to do with magical thinking or magical wishes. It has to do with God adoring and protecting (blessed) or being outside of that protection (cursed).

Balaam tells them no, but Balak is determined. He ups the value of the bribe and enhances his entourage. He figures he will impress Balaam with his importance. A typical pagan response - more money and more glamour!

Balaam, in his fleshly weakness, gives an answer that is good but incomplete:

Numbers 22:13: (NASB) *So Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak's leaders, Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you.*

He does refuse to go with them but does not tell the leaders all that God said. God told Balaam, *you shall not curse the people for they are blessed*. Why did he leave that part out?

Perhaps he was thinking in his weakness that when there is money involved, there might be another opportunity to earn some money if he did not burn his bridges and turn them down. This is not the right thinking, of course, especially because Balaam was a prophet of God. He should have listened carefully to what God said, but he did not.

Numbers 22:18: (NASB) *Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God.*

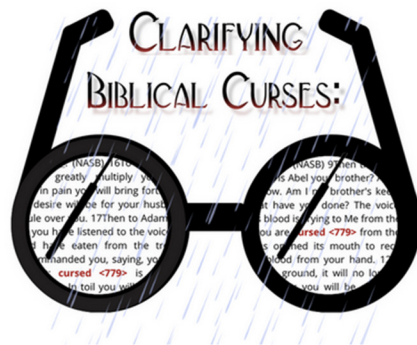


This is good! As a prophet of God, Balaam was bound to only speak words given to him by God. We need to take a hint from this - we are bound by the will of God as well. We also do not have a right to curse others. Here Balaam spoke correctly. He knew what was right but did not stand firm enough.

Balaam does end up going with Balak later. Balaam goes before God and God tells him to bless Israel:

Numbers 23:7-8: (NASB) ⁷He took up his discourse and said, from Aram Balak has brought me, Moab's king from the mountains of the East, Come curse Jacob for me, and come, denounce Israel! ⁸How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how can I denounce whom the LORD has not denounced?

What a beautiful testimony! He says he speaks for God - he cannot *curse* (loathe) *whom God has not cursed* (loathed). However, Balaam did not have the strength to cut it off. This happens twice more! Then, in the fourth proclamation from Balaam, he prophesies (under God's direction) Moab's downfall. Balaam, even in his weakness, teaches us to *never* speak outside of God's will. The Scriptures do not give us permission to curse anyone else.



God does NOT give us permission or authority to "curse" others. Further, when God Himself issues a "curse," it is a proclamation of the godlessness of a matter. In the Old Testament, these proclamations sometimes had just consequences attached to them and were **ALWAYS** designed to be for the **ultimate benefit of everyone**.

From our examination of the Old Testament, we have found that when God loathed sin and unrighteous actions and put consequences in place, He did so for the ultimate benefit of everyone. That has nothing to do with the way curses are said to work today.

In Part III, we will be looking at curses in the New Testament in order to answer these questions and more:



What role did curses play in the New Testament?

How are curses defined in the New Testament in relation to those in the Old Testament and today?

Are there real curses today? If so, what is their source of power?

Is God cursing people today?

Are we walking under a blessing or under a curse?



This is an enormous subject in our day, and we need to be clear on where we stand. Let's ask our title question again: Am I living under a generational curse? No, not even close!

We are all living under the severe penalty of sin and death, but there is zero scriptural evidence that certain families in our day have specific curses from God. Any other source that we may believe has cast a curse upon our family



simply cannot stand when confronted with the name of Jesus Christ on our side! This will bring us to Part III - having Jesus standing next to us.

This is about following Scripture and fidelity to God's truth. It is a big subject with a lot of worry, anxiety and even depression. If we just determine what the word of God actually says and follow it, we can be released from believing such things as curses.

*So, am I living under a generational curse?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie, and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on September 27, 2021
Ep. 1197: Can Christians Be Cursed and Curse Others?
Curses Series (Part III)

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Reviewing the scriptures with a "generational curse" in them:

The giving of the Law:

Exodus 20:4-5: (NASB) ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Deuteronomy 5:8-9: (NASB) ⁸You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁹You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Moses before the LORD when he was replacing the broken tablets of the Law:

Exodus 34:6-7: (NASB) ⁶Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, the LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; ⁷who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.



Moses pleading with God not to destroy Israel after the spies came back from Canaan with their reports:

Numbers 14:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared, ¹⁸The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations. ¹⁹Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

The future of Israel, as they find God again, the loathing of God will be lifted and put upon those who persecuted them:

Deuteronomy 30:1-10: (NASB) ¹So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, ²and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, ³then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. ⁵The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. ⁷The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. ⁸And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. ⁹Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; ¹⁰if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

The full account of the infidelity ritual in the Law:

Numbers 5:11-31: (NASB) ¹¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹²Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, If any man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, ¹³and a man has intercourse with her and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is undetected, although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act, ¹⁴if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself, ¹⁵the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of memorial, a reminder of iniquity. ¹⁶Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the LORD, ¹⁷and the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel; and he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. ¹⁸The priest shall then have the woman stand before the LORD and let the hair of the woman's head go loose, and place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a **curse <779>**. ¹⁹The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, being under the authority of your husband, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a **curse <779>**; ²⁰if you, however, have gone astray, being under the authority of your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you ²¹(then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the **curse <423>**, and the priest shall say to the woman), the LORD make you a **curse <423>** and an oath among your people by the LORD'S making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell; ²²and this water that brings a **curse <779>** shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away. And the woman shall say, Amen. Amen. ²³The priest shall then write these **curses <423>** on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness. ²⁴Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse,



so that the water which brings a **curse <779>** will go into her and cause bitterness. ²⁵The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar; ²⁶and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer it up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water. ²⁷When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come about, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, that the water which brings a **curse <779>** will go into her and cause bitterness, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away, and the woman will become a **curse <423>** among her people. ²⁸But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children. ²⁹This is the law of jealousy: when a wife, being under the authority of her husband, goes astray and defiles herself, ³⁰or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife, he shall then make the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest shall apply all this law to her. ³¹Moreover, the man will be free from guilt, but that woman shall bear her guilt.

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1196: Am I Living Under a Generational Curse? Curses Series (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1196-generational-curse/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. How can understanding the context of God's curse after Adam's sin help shed light into the purpose of the curse? What did God curse in these verses? Why did Adam and Eve's lives become so much more difficult - what was removed from their lives? (See Genesis 1:27-28, 3:14,16-17)
2. What do the experiences of Cain and Job teach us about the differences between curses from God and those from Satan? (See Genesis 4:9-14, Job 1:9-11, 2:5-6)
3. What is the context for God's generational curse on Israel? What led God to curse His chosen people? Would Israel be forever cursed, separated from God? (See Deuteronomy 27:11-13, 28:1-4,15-18,49-51,64-65, Leviticus 26:44-45)
4. What blessings and curses did Israel as a nation receive from God? How were these blessings and curses revealed to Israel? How do we apply their example to our lives today? What is the purpose of God's curses (consequences)? (See Deuteronomy 27-30, Amos 3:1-2)
5. What is the true meaning of the "curses" included in Abraham's Promise and the Ten Commandments? (See Genesis 12:3, Exodus 20:4-6, Deuteronomy 5:8-10)
6. What can the Jewish Law's process of when a husband suspects his wife of adultery teach us about the intention behind God's curses? What part does fidelity play in our relationship to God? (See Numbers 5:12-28)
7. What does Ezekiel's prophecy against the seven cities actually reveal? Was this a curse? How should we look at King Saul's "curse"? Where do the mystical, magical curses of voodoo and other sources come from? (See 1 Samuel 14:24-29, Ezekiel 25:1-4)
8. Did God give us the authority to curse others? What can we learn from the words and actions of the prophet Balaam after King Balak asked him to curse Israel? (See Numbers 22:2-7,12-13,18, 23:7-8)
9. God loathes sin and unrighteousness to the point of cursing it in the Old Testament. What was *always* His purpose in pronouncing a curse and setting consequences in place?
10. Are you or someone you know frightened by "generational curses" or any curse in your life today? What scriptural reassurance do you now have to explain curses as described in the Old Testament?