

## CURSED OR BLESSED

When God blesses someone, it suggests His “approval” of that one. When He curses one, it suggests His “disapproval.” He is the only One who can make final judgment of what will ultimately be the destiny of anyone. The word “curse” when applied to man, is to “bring down a prayer” upon one and to “judge” him, while only God can be the final judge (Jas. 4:11-12). Our ability to make final judgment is lacking in not having all the evidence or authority to make final judgment. When God curses, He does not have to use strong, corrupt or ugly language as men often do when they pronounce judgment on another. God just announces that one or something is wrong in His sight, and doomed for destruction. He does not have to “bring down” a prayer which is suggested when “man” curses. Man's “cursing” is mostly the “vain” asking of God to condemn someone on man's limited knowledge, and usually without any intent of asking God to send another to hell, but is a habitual use of strong condemnatory words to another, oftentimes in a time of anger or bitterness. This ought not to be done (Jas. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:29).

The words “curse” and “bless” (in their varied forms) are often found in the same verse or context of scripture in the Bible. Some examples are Gen. 12:3; 9:25-26; Mat. 5:44 and Rom. 12:14. A very interesting contrast is found in Jer. 17:5-10, as the prophet speaks for God. Jeremiah states “Cursed is the man” and “Blessed is the man.” These statements do **not** describe the same “man”, but different men, when we compare what is said about both men.

**First, the “cursed” man is one who trusts in man.** He is like a warrior or soldier who depends on his own wisdom and strength, or the efforts of other men to win the battle or to accomplish any endeavor. He “makes flesh his strength” (v. 5). This is because his “heart departs from the Lord” (v.5). Then Jeremiah says he is **like** a shrub in the desert (v. 6). He will not have “good” results (v. 6). He will be like a wanderer or vagabond as he “inhabits” desolate places (v. 6). We sing the song “Stand up for Jesus”, which has the words “The arm of flesh will fail you; Ye dare not trust your own.”

**Second, the “blessed” man is one who trusts in the Lord.** This is true for various reasons. It begins because he knows the Lord, and has “hope” in Him (v. 7). He has a good foundation and purpose, as he is **like** a tree (rather than a shrub), planted in a good location, “by the waters” which can sustain him (v. 8). The “tree” spreads out its roots to the river, and he is ready for the “heat” or “drought” that may come (v. 8). The continued results will be good, as the tree's “leaf will be green”, full of life and energy. He will never cease from bearing “fruit” (v. 8). This is a good time to look at the same kind of comparison David makes of the the “blessed” man and the “ungodly” man of Psa. 1:1-6.

The “cursed” man 's “heart” had departed from the Lord. The “blessed” man trusted in the Lord, because his heart was right. Jeremiah goes on to write about the “heart” of man. He says it is “deceitful above all things”, and is “desperately wicked” (v. 9), and no one can really “know it” (v. 9). But, **God** searches the heart and tests the mind, and blesses man according to His ways and the “fruit of his (man's, dwt) doings” (v. 10). If God's “ways” are followed by man's “doings”, one will be blessed. The “doings” of man will not bring God's approval.

With this comparison in mind, let's look at the “cursed” and the “blessed” of our day. The blessed man is one who does **not** trust in men, but in God. Man does not have within himself the ability to direct his steps in a way to please God (Jer. 10:23). Man cannot please God in his own wisdom, but glories in the fact that he understands and knows God, which brings “delight” to the Lord (Jer. 9:23-24). Solomon wrote, “Be not wise in your own eyes, Fear the Lord and depart from evil” (Prov.3:7). Also, “The man who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed”

(Prov. 13:20).

Man's wisdom today will **not** bring one into the favor of God to enjoy salvation. It is the wisdom of man that advocates salvation by "faith only", apart from and without repentance and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Faith itself is the "work of God" because it is commanded of God (John 6:28-30). Baptism is **also** the "working of God" for He commands it (Col. 2:12). Neither does the "sinner's prayer" as advocated by so many in our time, bring salvation.

God's wisdom and power is in Christ and the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:17-21; Mark 16:15-16). Paul said "It is **not by** works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by** the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5). Notice that Paul says we are **not** saved by our works of righteousness (cf Rom. 10:3), "but" **by** "the washing", which is in baptism (Acts 22:16), when sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5; 22:14, ASV).

Are you "cursed" or "blessed"? Christ became a "curse" for us that He might "bless" us with salvation (Gal. 3:13). He depends on those who are still under the curse of condemnation to "trust in the Lord", and put their "hope" in Him (Jer. 17:7).

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