

CURSES AND BLESSINGS

T rue confession time here. When I was younger I felt that the Lord was, predominantly, a bit of an angry old character who basically found fulfillment in waiting for opportunities to be mean. I'm sorry, it's true. But, what a terrible misrepresentation of the God whom **Psalm 23** proclaims will have His relentless love "pursue" you all the days of your life.

Where did I get such a distorted picture? I'm sure we could speculate for hours about that. But, the truth is that an unbalanced scanning of the issue of curses and blessings might cause a person to feel that way.

Therefore, let's see if we can capture a much more accurate picture of what the Lord actually said in the book of **Deuteronomy**. Let's not neglect, ignore, or whitewash the curses. Let's give the full picture by counting the promised blessings too. (Then let's ask some questions in conclusion to see if we can find the healthy truth about this two-sided coin.)

First, the Bad News: Results of disobedience...

- 4:26~ You will perish from the land.
- :27~ I will scatter you among the nations.
- :28~ You will be indentured to the idols that you've chosen to serve.
- 11:17~ The grasslands will wither and the rain will become unpredictable.
- 27:15~25 A specific litany (or chant) of curses for disobedience.
- 28:16 You will have both urban and rural decay.
- :17 Your reserves will become depleted.
- :18 You will suffer barrenness and infertility personally and in your animals.
- :21 Natural disasters will befall your land.
- :22 Diseases will become rampant.
- :23~24 Climatic conditions will become extreme.
- :25 You will be defeated by your enemies.
- :27 Physical plagues and diseases will become commonplace.
- :28 Your people will suffer from blindness and mental illnesses.
- :30 You will be dispossessed by other nations.
- :31 Your possessions will be taken by others.
- :32 Your children will become enslaved.
- :33 Hard earned harvests will be destroyed and stolen.
- :35 You will experienced crippling diseases.
- :36 Other kings will conquer you and you will become a vassal state.
- :37 You will become a mockery among other nations.
- :38~39 Locusts and worms will destroy your crops.
- :40 Blight will decimate your orchards and trees.
- :41 Your children will be taken captive.
- :42 Locusts will overrun your crops.
- :43~44 You will become a debtor nation.
- :48~52 Your enemies will successfully lay siege against you.
- :53 You will be reduced to cannibalism.
- :54~57 You will experience complete breakdown of the moral and social fabric.

First, the Bad News: Results of disobedience... *Continued*

- :59~62 Plagues and sickness will decimate your nation.
- :64~68 You will be scattered and feel completely abandoned.
- 30:18 You will perish.

Now, for the Good News: It doesn't have to be that way. Results of obedience...

- 6:10~11 Already existent productive farms and gardens free for the asking.
- 7:13 You will be loved, blessed, and made wonderfully prosperous.
- :14 Your flocks and herds will be incredibly productive and fertile.
- :15 You will experience a degree of health the other nations will not know.
- :23 Your enemies will be defeated.
- 11:8 You will possess all of your land by my power.
- :9 I will grant you extended life and unique prosperity.
- :14 Your rain cycles will be incredibly predictable.
- :15 The grasslands will be verdant and lush.
- :23 Your enemies will be sent to flight before you.
- :24 You will be able to claim the land without having to fight for it.
- 28:3 Both urban and rural prosperity will abound.
- :4 You'll know fertility both personal and with your flocks and herds.
- :5 Your commerce will flourish.
- :7 Enemies will fall before you.
- :8 Your reserves will be multiplied.
- :9~10 Your reputation will be great among the nations.
- :11 You will experience extended prosperity.
- :12 The nations around will be blessed by you.
- :13 You will hold a position of international leadership.
- 30:1~2 Even if you fail repentance will bring renewed blessings.
- :3~5 After repentance your prosperity will be restored.
- :7 Your enemies will receive the curses that would have befallen you.
- :9 You will become prosperous in every good activity.
- :16 You will be multiplied in every good thing.

Conclusion

Wow, what a list! And if you take the time to list this out specifically you find that the listing is fairly balanced. The volume of the Lord's promises are just about equal to the potential disasters that would befall the people for disobedience. (In fact, though the blessings tend to be more general and "broad-brush" they still get pretty specific too.) Was I supposed to be surprised? I'd challenge you to take this list and do two things with it...

- 1) Speculate as to why the blessings may seem to be more general. I believe there's several strong psychological and nuts-and-bolts reasons for that. What do you think?
- 2) Go back over it in the manner that we've suggested in the daily broadcast. Look at both the curses and blessings and see how many of them might simply be a matter of life consequence and not necessarily the effect of the supernatural intervention of Heaven. I have a feeling you'd be surprised.

*"See, this day I set before you blessing and curse:
blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I enjoin upon you this day;
and curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God,
but turn away from the path that I enjoin upon you this day
and follow other gods whom you've not experienced."*

Deuteronomy 11:26~28 • The TaNaKh