

24-0707a Transcript

24-0707a - A Look At Three Curses, Jim Lokenbauer

Bible Readers: John Nousek and Tom Freed

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A Look At Three Curses

Transcript (0:04 - 37:15)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: John Nousek

(0:03) So this morning's first reading comes to us directly from the mouth of the Lord, (0:10) from Isaiah 24. It's the first six verses. Isaiah 24 verses 1 through 6. (0:18) Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface (0:24) and scatters abroad its inhabitants.

And it shall be as with the people, so with the priest, (0:32) as with the servant, so with his master, as with his maid, so with her mistress, (0:42) as with the buyer, so with the seller, as with the lender, so with the borrower, (0:51) as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, (1:01) for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth mourns and fades away.

(1:09) The world languishes and fades away. The haughty people of the earth languish. (1:18) The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, (1:26) changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

(1:31) Therefore, the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. (1:41) Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. Amen.

2nd Reader: Tom Freed

This morning's second scripture reading transcription.

(1:53) Morning. We're doing the second scripture reading. Genesis 8:21 and 2 Peter 3:7. (2:02) That's Genesis 8:21 and 2 Peter 3:7. Genesis 8:21.

And Jehovah smelled a sweet savor, (2:12) and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, (2:19) for that the imagination of man's heart is evil. From his youth, (2:25) neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done. (2:31) Now 2 Peter 3:7. But the heavens that are now on the earth by the same word (2:38) have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction (2:44) of ungodly men.

Transcript

Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

Good morning, everybody. Hope everyone is doing well. (2:55) Well, from the readings, I think the men were reading those gloom and doom verses.

(3:02) If you notice, there was sort of a theme. The theme, of course, involved curses. (3:09) And you wonder, why, Jim, are you going to preach on curses? Because a lot can be learned from (3:17) curses.

When we're Christians, of course, we want to learn about our God, learn what makes (3:27) them happy, learn what makes them angry. And in this case, what would cause the most loving (3:37) being in the universe to actually curse someone or a nation? What would bring him to that point? (3:48) So we're going to look at a few curses in the Bible and look at some of the underlying (3:56) attitudes that brought about the curses. So when you think of cursing, what's the (4:02) first thing that comes to mind? Is it the use of vulgar and inappropriate language? (4:09) Well, it's not that.

That's what we call cussing. Webster defines a curse as to utter a wish of (4:17) evil against somebody. The word cursed, as used in the Bible, is defined this way, (4:25) devoted to destruction, afflicted, vexed, or tormented.

A curse means separation from society (4:37) or the privileges of citizens, rejected or banished. And when done by God, a curse is a (4:44) type of judgment or a sentence of punishment. Sacred, on the other hand, means wholly separated (4:54) from what is common or vulgar or open to public and pertaining to God or his worship.

A curse (5:03) and a cursed are the opposite of blessing and sacred. We know that we are not supposed to (5:12) curse anybody. And Paul, in his Roman letter, says, bless those who persecute you.

Bless and (5:19) do not curse. Paul's teaching was in harmony with the gospel of Christ. Jesus said in Luke 6, 28, (5:29) bless those who curse you.

Pray for those who mistreat you. So most of the cursing (5:37) that we see in the Bible occurs in the Old Testament. What did people do to receive (5:44) such a pronouncement upon them? And I think you'll notice that the attitude and what state of mind (5:51) these people are in, whether they believe in their God or not, is certainly a contributing factor.

(6:01) We know that God, being loving and benevolent, full of mercy and grace and kindness, so generous, (6:15) you know, what can make him curse his creation? And I believe there is much we can learn from (6:23) examining these. So the first curse I want us to look at, of course, happens in the Garden of Eden. (6:31) So early on in man's history, we see curses.

So in Genesis 3, a synopsis of that story goes like (6:43) this. After God created everything, he planted a garden and put Adam in it to tend to it. (6:52) There, God gave Adam one law, and that was not to eat of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge (7:00) of good and evil.

And he warned Adam, he said, on that day in which you eat of it, (7:06) you shall surely die. So God thereby established what we call the law of sin and death, (7:14) which is still in effect today for those who are outside of Christ. A simple principle is (7:21) implied to follow this law.

Obedience to the law means blessing and peace with God. (7:29) Disobedience to it is rebellion against God, and you are punished with a death sentence. (7:37) Then God made a mate for Adam from his own body so that he wouldn't be alone.

(7:43) And nobody can say with certainty how much time Adam and Eve had there together in the garden (7:48) before their fall. We're not told. The first couple encountered a serpent in the garden.

(7:57) Now, Adam was in charge of naming everything, so he was the one who named that creature serpent. (8:05) So he's familiar with it. But this particular serpent that day was a proxy of Satan.

(8:14) Satan was using, like a sock puppet, this serpent. I don't know how he did it, (8:20) but he made that serpent talk. And anyhow, in the garden, probably close to the tree (8:32) of the knowledge of good and evil, they observed this serpent.

And by various means, (8:42) this serpent, or Satan, beguiled Eve. Kind of did a Jedi mind trick. You will eat of the fruit.

(8:52) I believe. But anyhow, Adam listened to his wife and ate of the fruit as she did. (9:03) They both ate it.

We don't know why Adam ate the fruit. His wife was beguiled. (9:10) What was his excuse? Well, if she's going to die, I'll die too.

I don't know. (9:16) So, they chose to listen to the serpent, Satan's proxy, rather than obey God and what he said. (9:26) So Satan got two to fall for the price of one.

Sort of a bogo. Beguile one, get one. (9:36) Sorry, I couldn't help myself.

Thanks, John. Loads can be said about this whole matter, (9:43) about what happened in the garden, but I want us to focus on what God says in regard to these (9:50) curses. God confronts the guilty couple.

There was lots of finger pointing and admitting to eating (9:57) of the fruit, but little to none of owning up to what they did, or any sign of remorse, (10:05) if you look at what happened there. Though God knew in time this was going to happen, (10:11) it was actually part of the plan of salvation that was devised from the beginning, (10:17) before creation. After he conducts his interview with Adam and Eve, his first course of action was (10:25) to curse the instigator, the serpent, who was the devil.

The proxy was cursed to crawl on its (10:34) belly through the dust for the rest of its days, and a prophecy curse was pronounced upon Satan. (10:43) There would be enmity between the seed of woman, which ultimately means Christ, (10:51) and his seed, who are the godless people of the world and himself. (10:55) There would be a confrontation between the two, which would result in the woman's seed crushing (11:05) the head of the serpent, and the serpent bruising her seed's heel, Christ's heel.

(11:12) So even all women after this point, after her, would be subject to their husbands, (11:20) and they would have pain and childbearing. That was part of her punishment. They didn't receive (11:26) immediate death.

And men, Adam and all men after that point, would have to toil at their work. (11:38) They'd have to work at their work. Work wouldn't be easy.

So God cursed the ground to make sure (11:45) that they would have to work at their work. So they together were cut off from the tree of life (11:52) in the garden, so they could become completely mortal, and would die someday and return to the (12:00) earth. But their punishment of death for disobeying God's command was deferred until a better sacrifice (12:08) could come along.

So there was a temporary substitute in the meantime. To cover Adam and Eve's (12:18) nakedness, God took animals and used their skins to cover their sin and their nakedness. (12:28) So God instituted animal sacrifice until one day he would become the Lamb of God, (12:36) who would once and for all take man's sin away.

And that is what the crushing of Satan's head (12:43) was going to be about, and how Satan bruised the woman's seed's heel. Christ's bruise was hanging (12:51) on the cross. So in Matthew 18.6 it says, but if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe (13:01) in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and be drowned (13:08) in the depths of the sea.

So Adam was part of God's creation, which he said was good (13:15) when he made things, and Eve included. Those two innocents who were good were able to fall. (13:25) Satan caused God's little ones to sin, and he got cursed for it.

He will have a millstone (13:34) hung around his neck and be cast into the lake of burning fire for the rest of eternity on the (13:41) great day of the Lord. Other than Satan, who up to that point hadn't done anything wrong on earth, (13:49) as far as we're told in scripture, the world at that time was a perfect place. (13:54) Adam and Eve had no worries.

They had no enemies. They were at peace with the world, (14:01) but Eve was beguiled, amazed that a creature which previously had never talked to them (14:08) was suddenly speaking and reasoning with them, and she most likely saw the snake eating that fruit (14:18) of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and figured that's how that snake must have learned (14:23) how to talk, by eating that fruit. So she saw the fruit was good, and the beguiling continued.

(14:33) You will be like God. God doesn't want you to be like him, but this fruit will get you there. (14:40) So Eve was beguiled, more like having a spell put upon her with the words of the evil one, (14:56) and then Satan said, put the icing on the cake after Eve recited what she was told about the (15:05) tree of the knowledge of good and evil, about how God said that they would die.

He said, (15:11) you surely shall not die, and he was living proof. He was eating that fruit. That's the only (15:22) conclusion you can come to that made her want to take that fruit needed, (15:29) and that's like saying God's a liar, and she believed that.

She believed the lie, (15:38) or as apologetics press called it, she believed the knot in the serpent's tail. (15:45) This is a good lesson for us that Satan can beguile us, making sin seem pleasing to the eye. (15:55) So be alert.

He is a ravaging lion seeking whom he may devour. The second curse we will examine (16:06) is found in Genesis 4, another story early on in man's history, and it's the story of Cain (16:14) murdering his brother Abel. We all know this story, and the Reader's Gigest version of it is (16:22) that God expected mankind at that time.

There weren't many of them, but it's implied that he (16:31) expected a sin offering, and so Abel offered fat portions from his flock as his offering to God, (16:46) and God looked on favor. He looked favorably upon that sacrifice, and in Hebrews 11 for it (16:57) tells us, by faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith, he was (17:05) commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offering, and by faith, he still speaks (17:14) even though he's dead.

So the lesson is for Cain, and for all of us, by doing what God said was (17:22) doing it by faith. We show our faith by doing what God says. By doing what God said was being (17:35) righteous.

We get righteousness by doing what is right, which is by doing what God said, and that (17:44) makes us faithfully righteous. But Cain, on the other hand, disobeyed God and offered the produce (17:58) of the land. He brought potatoes when he should have been bringing a fat portion from the flock.

(18:07) He was practicing what's called will worship. I'm going to offer what I want to do. I think it's (18:16) okay to worship God this way.

I'm going to do this. Will worship. Well, God rejected his offering (18:29) because he didn't offer what was required, and so rejecting Cain's offering, Cain went off (18:39) and brooded.

He stewed. He bubbled. He was angry. Rather than being angry at himself for not (18:48) listening to God and doing what he was told, his rationale was all perverted, (18:55) and God was concerned for Cain. He could see his heart and that it wasn't right. God personally (19:02) counseled Cain.

He was concerned about the way he felt. God asked him, why are you angry? (19:10) Why is your face downcast? Anger and despair are powerful emotions, (19:19) and they can make you not think clearly. When you let anger or despair govern your reasoning ability, (19:32) bad things can happen.

Bad choices get made. So God gave him instructions how to be accepted. (19:40) He said, if you do what is right, will you not be accepted? And then he warns Cain about sin, (19:48) crouching at his door, and that he must master it.

That's a command for all of us. We have to master (19:59) sin in our life, and when you do what's expected, then you don't put yourself through all the (20:11) negative emotions like anger and despair and resentment towards your own brother. (20:20) Even after personal one-on-one attention with God, Cain chose to cling to his anger and to harbor (20:30) ill feelings towards his brother.

He was unrepentant. Don't you know people like that, (20:38) who just love to hang on to anger? They're angry all the time. They've got issues that aren't (20:48) getting worked out correctly.

God doesn't want us to live that way. (20:55) It not only destroys us spiritually, but it actually even affects our body. So many of David's (21:03) Psalms and so many of Solomon's Proverbs warn against not dealing with negative emotions in (21:11) our life.

They wear the bones down. They trouble the soul. It's not worth it.

Jesus tells us, (21:21) so we think in our hearts, so we are. John, in his first letter, confirms this. 1 John 3.12. (21:30) Do not be like Cain, he said, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother.

And why did he (21:38) murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brothers were righteous. Cain was envious (21:50) of Abel because of the good attention he got for doing what was right, something that he (21:57) could just as easily have done. But he chose to be angry.

He chose to be bitter and envious. (22:08) And when God confronts Cain for murdering his brother, he asked him where his brother was. (22:16) And then we see the real Cain, what kind of a person he was by the way he answered God Almighty.

(22:27) We see the disrespect and contempt he has towards God. I don't know, am I my brother's keeper? You can just hear (22:39) the cheeky attitude by that answer. This was also both a lie and devoid of any kind of love.

(22:51) God responded, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me (22:57) from the ground. And here comes the second curse I want us to look at. Genesis 4.11.12 says, (23:08) and now, this is God speaking, and now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth (23:15) to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you till the ground, it shall no longer (23:22) yield its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. The one thing that Cain (23:30) was good at, which happened to be farming, since he offered produce of the field rather than what (23:36) he was supposed to do, was no longer going to respond to his hard work.

The land, and he (23:45) was cursed. Plus, he was going to live as a fugitive. A fugitive is somebody who's on the (23:54) run from the law.

He was a lawbreaker. And he's going to be always looking over his shoulder (24:05) the rest of his days. And we know that because of the answer he gives to God.

(24:13) Cain's response to God was very self-centered. Cain said to the Lord, my punishment is greater (24:23) than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me this day away from the ground and from your face.

(24:33) I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and wander on the earth. Whoever finds me will slay me.

(24:42) Do you see how self-centered he is? There's no remorse for the life that he took of his own (24:49) flesh and blood. No acknowledgement of the crime he did. No concern for how God or his parents (24:58) might have felt that Abel was murdered in cold blood.

He whines that his punishment was more (25:07) than he could bear. He's lucky they weren't living in the time of an eye for an eye. (25:15) The only regret Cain showed was that he was concerned that someone from the family, (25:22) as small as it was at that point, may come after him to avenge the brother's blood.

(25:29) Whoever finds me will slay me. Where's the guilt? Where's the shame? (25:37) Wasn't he at all sorry for what he had done? And the answer is no. Cain would become the father (25:45) of a people who turned their backs on God.

A cursed people. And think about that. (25:54) Because not very long after this, I don't know how many generations, but they lived pretty long, (26:03) the earth became filled with people who had turned their backs on God.

(26:09) The earth became filled with a violent people. When people fall away, they go the way of the (26:18) world. It refers to those who reject God.

Cain was the first to do this. And that is why Jude, (26:25) in his letter, refers to such people as having gone the way of Cain. Cain would fill the world (26:34) at that time with godless offspring.

It would be full of violence and corruption. And it became so (26:45) bad that God would end up repenting, regretting that he made man. That's (26:58) what terribleness it drove a loving God to.

Oh man, why did I go through with this? (27:05) Look at those people, the way they're behaving. Look around today. I hope we're not behaving that (27:17) way.

So he ended up cursing the earth because of man and his bad attitude, which can be traced (27:31) back to Cain. Cain was cursed and ultimately the earth at that time would get cursed. So the third (27:40) curse we're going to look at is right after the time of the flood.

This curse was made by Noah, (27:51) believe it or not, who had the spirit of God because he was a prophet. Once they were back (27:58) on dry ground and the task of getting all the animals off the ark, Noah and his wife and his (28:04) three sons with their wives could settle in and begin repopulating the earth. Some time had passed (28:14) and then Noah planted himself a vineyard and it produced a harvest and Noah made some wine and (28:22) enjoyed the fruit of his labor and he got inebriated from it.

He got drunk. (28:30) So he went to his tent where he disrobed and fell asleep and somehow his youngest son, Ham, (28:38) saw his father in the state that he was in and had a good laugh and had to tell his brothers about it (28:45) and the brothers covered their father's nakedness with a blanket without looking upon him and when (28:53) Noah awoke he knew what Ham had done to him. We're not told exactly what he had done to him (29:03) other than looking upon him not being dressed.

Some scholars think that he and or his grandson (29:14) Canaan did something very untoward to him and they have their reason for thinking (29:22) that because they think just a few short generations from then you would have the (29:30) plains people of the Canaanites in Sodom and Gomorrah where most of the men were (29:41) in lust with each other and they were violent and would do man rapes. (29:50) As Lot found out when visitors came to him and those visitors were angels who were there to see (29:58) how bad things got and notice you can trace all the way back to where bad attitudes start. Bad (30:10) attitudes that were never properly addressed or corrected since the text really doesn't say or (30:20) even imply what was done.

We have to believe that he simply looked upon his father's nakedness and (30:28) talked about it with others rather than remedying it himself. In the law of Moses there's a law (30:35) that forbids children from looking upon their parents' nakedness in Leviticus 18.7 but this (30:42) is long before

the law of Moses so it's most likely a principle that was in effect. It's a (30:50) common decency thing.

The ancients certainly did have laws that they followed even though they (30:57) weren't written down. In Genesis 26.5 God said to Isaac that Abraham obeyed his laws, statutes, (31:06) and commands. So there were laws and there were principles and part of the principle of honoring (31:13) your mother and father were certainly in effect and Ham was guilty of dishonoring his father.

(31:22) So no one may have known what Ham did to him because he was a prophet also. Prophets have (31:29) the spirit of God in them and God knows the hearts of men. With the help of the spirit he (31:36) may have discerned in his son and grandson that they had rebellious and perverse hearts.

(31:44) In this curse upon his son Ham and grandson Canaan, Noah utters a prophetic curse, another (31:53) prophetic curse because of people with bad attitudes. He said cursed be Canaan, (32:03) a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers. He also said blessed by the Lord (32:12) God Almighty be Shem and let Canaan be his slave.

God in large, (32:18) Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem and let Canaan be his slave. (32:24) So the two brothers who honored their father were blessed by their father. Japheth who would be (32:34) dwelling peacefully in Shem's tent.

This was a prophecy that wouldn't be fulfilled for a long (32:41) time until the future. The Jews would come through Shem's bloodline, including a savior (32:48) who is the third promise to Abraham that there would be a king who would bless the world, (32:54) including Gentiles. And Japheth who migrated north and became all the Gentile nations, (33:05) anyhow, represents the Gentiles.

And they would be led into the fold of the Shemites or (33:15) of the future Israelites. And the two would become one in one tent. And doesn't that sound (33:24) like John chapter 10 when Jesus said, I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen, (33:32) I must bring them also.

They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock (33:38) and one shepherd. So once again, we see that those who believe and obey receive blessings. (33:46) And those who disbelieve and rebel, those who have bad attitudes and actions receive curses.

(33:57) When Israel conquered Canaan in the promised land, they failed to remove the inhabitants, (34:05) all of them, from the land as they were commanded. So the descendants of Ham and Canaan would once (34:12) again be snares to God's people. They would eventually corrupt Israel to abandon their God.

(34:22) And that's what John read for us this morning from Isaiah. They would receive the curse that (34:30) Moses said would happen from the book of Deuteronomy if they broke covenant with God. (34:40) So Isaiah prophesied this imminent doom in Isaiah 24.

So true to his word, the rebellious Israel (34:49) would be destroyed and carried away forever by their enemies, Syria at the time. Isaiah's words (35:01) of verse 6 says, therefore the curse has devoured the earth and those who dwell in it are desolate. (35:09) Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and men who are left are few.

(35:17) These words of curses, fire and destruction, were not only a warning for their time, (35:23) but for our time as well. Because Peter, as was read for us, 2 Peter 3.7 says, by the same (35:30) word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment, (35:40) for the destruction of ungodly men. And in chapter 3 verses 11 and 12 it says, (35:51) since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? (36:00) You ought to live self-controlled lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

(36:10) That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and everything will melt (36:19) into heat. So there's still a final curse looming over our heads. It's the curse Peter talks about, (36:30) the curse Jesus promised that would happen to the earth in the gospels, final judgment.

(36:38) This earth is reserved for fire the same way that the earth was destroyed by water from the (36:45) beginning. Curses, why? Because of people with unrepentant hearts. If you've been living an (37:01) unfaithful life or have been unrepentant in any way, right now is the time that you can come (37:08) forward and straighten things out.

We'd be glad to pray for you. This is your invitation call.