

As children of God, one of our main goals in this life is to strive to be pleasing in God's sight. This should be done out of a deep gratitude to his mercy and grace having spared us from eternal punishment for our sins; we should be devoted to this task. To help us accomplish this we need to have our noses in the bible as often as possible and search the scriptures to know what pleases God and what displeases him and do the things that please him. Studies in the Old Testament are a gold mine for this subject, in fact Paul even says, "Everything written in the past was written to teach us." So God wants us to be students of bible history for this very reason. To observe God interacting with mankind and by learning from others mistakes as well as their triumphs. That is why my sermon Sunday evening was about curses. I wondered what could make our loving God so upset that he would curse individuals and curse nations. To know that is invaluable to us. If we know what makes him so angry that the only solution left for him is to curse, we will want to avoid that behavior at all costs. Our God is loving and benevolent, and he wants to bless his children and not curse them. Paul tells us because of God's love for us, he will punish us as a father punishes his children in order to change our bad behavior. If things aren't going well for us, we may be going through a period of testing, or a period of punishment, God will do both. In either case it should be a time of self evaluation to see if we are walking in the light or not, and a time of prayer to the Father to help us through our time of need. A while back in our Wednesday bible class we went over when Jesus passed through Jericho, and healed some people there as he was making his way to Jerusalem. At the time we also looked at a brief history of Jericho's past. Jericho was the first city in the Promised land to be conquered by Joshua and Israel. The land of Canaan and Jericho in particular represented everything that can go wrong with a nation that turns its back on God. Jericho worshipped false gods, and that form of worship enticed the people by incorporating sexual activity in their corrupt worship. They had temple priests and priestesses who were known as temple prostitutes, and both men and women would have to pay their dues by visiting them for their services in order to have them bless their land and their crops and their harvests. God tells us that the false gods they worshipped were actually demons, and being of Satan, who was called a murderer from the beginning, required the people of Jericho to offer their children by fire, which they willingly did. They were a people in a constant downward spiral of ever-degrading sin, getting worse and worse over time so that they reached a point of no return, they saw no need of repentance and what started out as a prophecy and curse from Noah on his son Ham and his son Canaan after the flood due to their evil heart, their evil attitude that was unrepented of over the span of 1,000+ years turned into an entire nation being so corrupt that God told Israel to devote them to destruction. God told Israel not to even spare anyone. Young and old, men, women and children along with all of their animals were to be put to the edge of the sword. They were punished for unrepented evil behavior, sexual immorality and idoltry to name a few. That behavior is enough to make God curse. We need to examine our lives to see if we have any unrepented of sin and change. Jim