

## **From Curse to Blessing** **(Parallel: Abraham's Future is Ours Series – Part II)**

9/13/2009

The notes that follow each question below come from discussions that occurred after the sermon or further consideration of some of the issues raised. They should not be considered the “correct” answers by any means. It is hoped that they will provide a starting point for developing your own discussion of Pastor Steve’s sermons.

NOTE: Until Gen. 17:5, Abraham has the name of Abram, but to simplify the discussion we will be using the name God gives him, Abraham.

1. Since the message focus on curses and blessings, take time to define and contrast each of those two terms.

While “blessing” is pretty easy to define, you may find that “curse” is a bit more difficult. Curse – condemn, damn, hex, afflict, humiliate, revenge, desire for negative things to happen to someone else.

Blessing – Prosper, favor, happy, spoken well of, fortunate, lift up, ability to feel God’s love through anything.

2. Given the tone of the words describing curse, read Gen. 3:14, 17 and see if you need to add some more words.

Note that the serpent (Satan), Adam, and Eve all brought their curses on themselves by their bad choices. The curses were part of a judgment from God. The curses affected others and other objects that weren’t party to the decision, but were merely in the wrong place at the wrong time.

3. Now look at the curse described in Gal. 3:13 and compare and contrast it with what you just saw in Genesis.

In Galatians Christ is described as taking on our curse brought about by the sins of man and actually becoming a curse. However, in this case, His was a perfect choice, not a bad choice, and because of His taking on our curse, He broke the cycle. Further, His was a temporary situation.

4. Read Deuteronomy 33:29 and see if this makes sense in relation to your definition of blessing.

It’s hard to think of Israel as being blessed in the way we normally describe the term, given the amount of time the Jews have spent in captivity, in exile, or in hiding. But they have been chosen by God. That knowledge should bring a special peace and feeling of being loved.

5. Now read Matt. 5:3 – 12 and describe the message of the passage as a whole.

The NIV Study Bible calls this “The Picture of Kingdom Life”. It is a code of ethics that describes the behavior of believers with sincere faith as opposed to the scribes and Pharisees who are self-serving. These verses describe a road map to happiness, but it is not a road map to salvation. One doesn’t have to do these things in order to gain eternal life, but it is what Christians are like because they want to serve God.

6. So, is Abraham blessed or cursed? Read Gen. 12:1-3 and describe what you find there.

Abraham is blessed and thus will be a blessing to others. That is a model for us. As we are blessed, we should turn and be a blessing to others. If we are in a place of authority, we need to turn around and bless others.

7. Gen. 12:2 describes a chain reaction in which Abraham is blessed and then becomes a blessing to others. Have people done things that changed the course of your life for the better? What did that feel like?

It may take some time for the group to contemplate this one, but once it gets started it will probably go for as long as you want to let them share. Everyone has significant people in their lives who have been a blessing to them.

8. At the end of life we will likely look back and see where God’s hand has been supporting us and blessing us throughout our lives. Why is it that we can’t see it while it is happening to the same extent that Abraham did?

We probably could if we were not so egocentric, wanting to make decisions on our own while needing to prove that we can make it on our own. Actually, many of us do from time to time catch a glimpse of the extent to which God has blessed us. If we will be still and sense the presence of God in our lives, we will gain an appreciation for all He has done. The more we do that, the better at it we get, and, thus, the more blessed we feel. It is clearly a positive feedback loop. Abraham had a close relationship with God that included relatively direct communication. We need to be open to God speaking to us through those around us as well as through the opportunities He places in our path.