



THE CURSES OF THE COVENANT

Deuteronomy 27-28; 30:15-20; 2 Kings 6:24-30; Lamentations 1:1-2, 16-21; 2:1-3, 11-17; 3:22-26; 4:1-16; 5:1-2, 16-18; Psalm 137; Ezekiel 24:14; 37:21-28; Jeremiah 31:27-34; 39:15-18; Galatians 3:10-29

Backstory: The Promises of Abraham

The Promised Land – Kingdom of God

Because the Old Covenant was a physical kingdom as a type of the future Consummated Kingdom of God, physically being in the land was very much tied to their identity as God's people.

The Connection to the Land

The kingdom split and the people stopped worshiping God and followed other gods. Because the land was so intimately connected with their identity as a people of God, living in His kingdom and following His ways, this led to their exile from the land and the destruction of the Temple – the place of God's presence in the land among them.

Lamentations 5:1-2, 16-18: Remember, Lord, what has happened to us; look, and see our disgrace.

Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners... Because of this our hearts are faint, because of these things our eyes grow dim for Mount Zion, which lies desolate, with jackals prowling over it.

Exile from the Land

The exile from the land was way more theologically significant than just losing their home. It meant they were being exiled from God's presence and His promises. Like Adam and Eve, they were being kicked out of the "heaven on earth" that God had created in His kingdom.

Curses of the Covenant: Deuteronomy 28 (see also Leviticus 26)

Amending the Curses

"Amen" means "so be it." When you say Amen to something, you are agreeing to it.

The Curses: Executing Justice

The exile was good because it was executing justice, but even more, because it brought them back to the Lord, which is always God's goal – not punishment for punishment's sake, but for repentance.

Details of the Curses

- a. Parallelism: between the blessings and the curses
- b. Plagues like Egypt
- c. God Prophesied in Detail
- d. Reversal of the Promises
- e. The Natural Consequences

The curses of the covenant were not random punishments God inflicted on them for breaking the rules. They were the natural results of not being in God's presence, living as His people.

Biblical Accounts of the Fall of Jerusalem

1. Chronicles & Kings – short summaries, focused on not listening to the prophets and the destruction of the temple, the symbol of God's presence among His people
2. Jeremiah – Summary of the Fall of Jerusalem & the Destruction of the Temple, with prophecy
3. Ezekiel – the Messianic promise of a future eternal kingdom of God with Jesus on the throne

Lamentations

Structure

A series of five poems written in "limping meter," a cadence used in funeral dirges, which has a chiasmic structure – it climaxes in the middle and ends with a whimper, mirroring the city's destruction.

Lament

Biblical lament shows us we can share every emotion with God, even "negative" ones. They are real and raw and honest about their feelings, but always end in trust and praise of God.

The Fall of the City

1:1-2: How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!... She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave... Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her.

God's Wrath

4:11,16: The Lord has given full vent to his wrath; he has poured out his fierce anger... The Lord Himself has scattered them; He no longer watches over them.

And Yet... Hope in God's Love and Compassion

3:22: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

The Heart of God for His People

Jeremiah's heart for Israel reflects the heart of God for His people. God does not delight in the destruction of the wicked; He mourns over it. And He never pronounces a message of judgment without a message of hope.

The New Covenant

A Different Kind of Covenant

It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors. Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jesus Became A Curse: Galatians 3:10-20

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Galatians 3:10 (Deuteronomy 27:26)

Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God. Galatians 3:11a

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." Galatians 3:13

Faith and The Law: One Big-Picture Story: Galatians 3:21-29

The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. Galatians 3:17

The promise and the law are intimately connected, and all of it points to salvation by grace through faith.

Rules vs. Relationship

This doesn't mean the law is bad, just that it was temporary. It served a purpose in the redemptive history of mankind by creating a picture of God's kingdom in a physical kingdom on earth. The fact that we are "*no longer under the law*" doesn't mean that the law no longer matters (Matthew 5:17). What it means is that we are no longer children, but adults who don't need that tutor/guardian anymore. We can do what is right without the tutor/guardian by the power of the Holy Spirit!

"No longer under the law, but under faith" means if you are a person of faith, you should *want* to keep God's law out of love for Him and a desire to follow Him, not just because you're afraid of the curses of the covenant if you break the rules. This changes our entire perspective. It's not about rules, it's about relationship. We are still keeping God's law, but it's not out of fear of punishment or curses, but out of love for God and a desire to be like Jesus. The covenant doesn't change, our hearts are changed.