

CURSE

- ātor* 1. Shut up, close, bound (used only once)
- 'el* 2. Motion toward something, against, both physical and/or mental
- ta'ōlâ* 3. Punishment for broken oath (used only once in Lam. 3:65, dullness of heart)
- lāror* 4. To bind with a spell, hem in with obstacles, render powerless to resist (used 63 times)

Most of these curses fall into 3 categories:

- A. The declaration of punishment (Gen. 3:14, & 17)
- B. The utterance of threats (Jer. 11:3, 17:5; Mal. 1:14)
- C. The proclamation of laws (Deut. 27:15-26; 28:16-19)

All these curse-sayings are a reflex of one violating his relationship to God - see Deut. 27:15-26

- v. 15 - Idolatry
- v. 16 - Disrespect to parents
- v. 17 & 24 - Deceiving ones neighbor
- v. 18 & 19 - Manipulating the disadvantaged
- v. 20 - 23 - Sexual aberrations
- v. 25 - Bribery
- V. 26 - Not observing God's laws

All these bring the condemnation of the curse.

- bārak* 5. To kneel, bless, praise, salute, curse. When used to bless in the OT, it means "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc. It is frequently contrasted with "to esteem lightly, curse (cf. Deut. 30:1, 19)

God controls blessing and cursings (Num. 22). The transposition of blessing and cursing with life and death in Deut. 30:19 and elsewhere reaches the heart of the OT concept of blessing. From Adam mankind has been under the curse of death, in all his works, in all his relationships. The power to beget life was understood by even the pagan to be a supernatural

blessing. God demonstrates from Gen. 12 onward that He alone has power to bestow this blessing. In the patriarchal narratives, blessing is linked very specifically to reproductive powers. The lesson is clear. God gives life. Neither god, nor man, nor rite can do so. Nor does God have to be cajoled to give His blessing. He wishes to give it to all who will trust Him (Gen. 12:3). From this base the understanding of God as the life giver is extended to its ultimate expression in John 3:16 and 10:10.

mahšib

6. Metaphorically the verb connotes the devastating effect that the words of the prophets had on Israel (Hos. 6:5)

his

7. Often this refers metaphorically to the bitter, violent words hurled at the godly (Ps. 57:4, 64:3; Jer. 9:7). God is the one who nullifies these dangerous arrows (Ps. 58:7, 91:5) and makes His arrows drunk with the blood of His enemies (Deut. 32:42), yet God's arrows of judgment are aimed at Israel (Deut. 32:23) and the Psalmist, Job and Jeremiah all complain about God's arrows sunk deep into them (Ps. 38:2; Job 6:4, Lam. 3:12)

heren

8. Devoted thing, ban. It is related also to an Ethiopic root, meaning "to forbid, prohibit, lay under a curse. Usually means a ban for utter destruction, the compulsory dedication of something which impedes or resists God's work, which is considered to be accursed before God. (Num. 21:2-3) Any Israelite city that harbored idolators was to be "utterly destroyed" (Deut. 13:12-15; Ex. 22:19). The noun - devoted thing, devotion, ban, is used twenty eight times in the OT to refer either to the object devoted or to the ban itself. (The story of Jericho's fall to Israel provides a clear example of the first use. The whole city is called a "devoted thing" (Josh. 6:17), and all Israelites were warned to keep themselves from the "devoted thing", which likely is a reference to items within the city. All of which had to be burned if flammable and if not, given to God. When Achan disobeyed and took of these items, Israel's army was defeated by the people at Ai, and God said that Israel had now become a "devoted thing" itself until the "devoted thing" (Achan in his sin) was destroyed from its midst. (Josh. 7:12-13). So, then, Jericho the

heathen city was "devoted" because it stood in the way of God's work through Israel in making conquest of Canaan. Israel became "devoted" because of sin which entered and made the nation unuseable in God's work. Achan in his sin became "devoted" because he was the reason for Israel's hindrance of the people of God.

nāgal 9. Pierce, bore; blaspheme; against. This verb also translates curse, blaspheme. Is this so because one is thereby distinguishing another as bad, or is there not a closer tie with piercing, striking through?

qābal 10. This word conotes the act of uttering a formula designed to undo its object. This word may well be a loan word since it appears either on the lips of (or is applied to) Gentiles (or persons of mixed parentage, Lev. 24:11), or in poetical passages. The most frequent use of our root relates to the incident involving Balaam and Balak. Certainly the "magical" belief and intent here. (For the effect of such cursing and Balaam's understanding of it, see and the discussion of Num. 23:8). Perhaps the same overtone is present in Lev. 24:11, where the man of mixed parentage may have used the name of God as a magical formula.

qāla 11. The heathen felt that men could manipulate the gods (God). Hence Goliath cursed David (I Sam. 17:43), and Balaam was called to curse Israel (Num. 22:6). The baseless curse, however, has no effect (Prov. 26:2). Only God's formulas are effective (Ps. 37:22). As God said to Abraham, "he who curses you" (pronounces a formula), I will curse him" (put him in the state). To curse God's prophet was to attack God and to bring on ones head divine judgment, as was the case with the boys who vilified (cf.) Elisha and were cursed () by him (II Kings 2:24). See also Neh. 13:1-3 where the descendants of Moab and Ammon are barred from worship (a form of spiritual death). To enunciate a baseless formula is to intend or accomplish a violation (or reversal) of the created structure and to intend real harm, as by sympathetic magic. This is what children (or servants) are forbidden to do with parents (or lords, life givers Ex. 21:17). Such action is an attack on God Himself and is punishable by death (Lev. 20:9). It is deep rebellion

against God to curse ones parents and then as-
sert ones ethical purity (Prov. 30:11; Ezek.
22:7). The ultimate offense is to rob God of
His honor by using His name to express anger
or frustration (Lev. 24:11-23). The noun,
, represents a formula expressing
lowering from election. Thus, when informed
of Rebekah's scheme, Jacob fears he will bring
a - removed from the blessing
of election - upon himself (Gen. 27:11-12;
also especially Jer. 24:9).

Taken from Harris, Archer Jr., Waltke Theological Wordbook of
O.T.