

From Curse to Blessing



Claiming Our Inheritance (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue to study together our rich and exciting theme for this week, "Claiming Our Inheritance." In my talk yesterday I presented the two great opposing kingdoms: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan.

Today I'm going to explain the nature and the scope of our redemption through Christ. Our first scripture will be Galatians 3:13-14, where Paul says this:

> "Christ redeemed us [notice the word redeemed] from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us for it is written, 'CURSED IS EVERY ONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE' in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (NAS)

Paul is referring there to a scripture in Deuteronomy in the Law of Moses where God says that everyone who is put to death by hanging on a tree or a piece of wood and that includes a piece of wood that makes a cross everyone who dies in this way is under a curse. And the evidence that such a person is under the curse is they're hanging there visibly on that piece of wood. So in order to redeem us from the curse of the Law, Christ became a curse for us, and this was visibly demonstrated when He hung there on the cross. It was necessary for Christ to become a curse because the curse of God follows against all sin and disobedience against God.

The secret of what took place on the cross in this, that there was a divinely ordained exchange; something which could not be seen by the natural eye but could only be perceived through the revelation of God through the Holy Spirit and through the Scripture. The exchange was this: Christ became a curse. He took the curse due to our sin and disobedience that we in return might have access to the blessing that was due to His obedience. Let me say that very simply and briefly, it's important that you understand it. Christ became a curse. He took the curse due to our disobedience that we in turn through faith in Him, might receive the blessing of God, the blessing that Jesus had earned for us by His obedience.

Now, this exchange that took place at the cross is more fully pictured in Isaiah 53. In this chapter, Isaiah the prophet

speaks of a nameless servant no name is given. However, all the writers of the New Testament unanimously identify this nameless servant as Jesus, the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. In verses 4-6, which is the very heart of this chapter and of this revelation, we read these words:

> "Surely he [that is Jesus] took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, [more literally, our pain] yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted." (NIV)

That's remarkable that Isaiah says "we," and that's primarily the Jewish race, rather than the whole human race, considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

I remember years ago in Israel talking to a Jewish man and telling him that I believe that Jesus is the Messiah. His comment was remarkable, at least to me at that time. He said, "I can't believe that Jesus was a righteous man because if He had been, God would not have allowed Him to die such a death. It must have been judgment of God upon Him."

Well, that's exactly what Isaiah says, "We did esteem him stricken by God and smitten by God." But in the next two verses Isaiah goes on to point out why Jesus suffered. It was not for His sin, but for ours. This is what Isaiah says:

> "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (NIV)

There are two aspects to the exchange as it's here pictured by Isaiah. There's the spiritual aspect and the physical aspect. Jesus made provision for us both spiritually and physically. Spiritually He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities. Transgressions and iniquities are spiritual. We could translate them acts of disobedience and acts of rebellion. Jesus bore the punishment due to our acts of disobedience and acts of rebellion that we in turn might be reconciled to God and so have peace. So that's transgression and iniquities and the result is peace. That's spiritual.

On the physical side, Jesus took our infirmities, carried our pains with the result that we are healed, or more literally, healing has been obtained for us. That's physical.

So we see that there was a complete exchange, both in the spiritual and in the physical. Jesus took the evil due to us that we might receive the good due to Him. Now the basic problem of the human race is stated there by Isaiah in the 6th verse. "Each of us turned to his own way…" That's the universal guilt of humanity. Not all of us have committed all of the specific sins. Not all have committed murder or adultery or other such sins. But there is one problem of which we are all guilty, each of us has turned to his own way. That's stubbornness, disobedience, rebellion. That's the root problem of the human race. And that's the problem that Jesus dealt with by His death on our behalf, on the cross. "The Lord made to meet upon Him the rebellion of us all." Rebellion and all its evil consequences met together that day upon Jesus as He hung there on the cross. We need to understand that all through the history of the human race, sin and disobedience against God have always brought a curse.

The first example in human history is found in Genesis chapter 3, which records the temptation of Adam and Eve by the serpent, the serpent being the disguise that Satan came in and their subsequent disobedience. When this disobedience was disclosed and God took judgment on it, this is what God said, and notice the recurrence of the word "curse." Genesis 3:14, 16, 17:

> "And the LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat all the days of your life: To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.'"" (NAS)

So we see that as soon as sin entered the human race it was followed by the curse. The curse descended upon the serpent and upon the ground and the result for Adam and Eve was toil and pain. All these are the outworking of the curse brought upon man by his sin.

Now this principle that disobedience against God always brings a curse in its train is more fully worked out in the Law of Moses, in Deuteronomy 28. This 28th chapter of Deuteronomy sets forth two things, two opposite things. First of all, the blessing that will come upon us if we walk in

humility and obedience toward God. Secondly, the curses that will come upon us if we walk in stubbornness and pride and disobedience toward God. These two alternatives are set forth for us very clearly here in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. In the first two verses of the chapter Moses says this:

> "Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God." (NAS)

Notice that when we walk in obedience we don't have to pursue the blessings of God. On the other hand, the blessings of God overtake us. Blessing naturally results from obedience to God. God has ordered the universe according to that law. Then in verse 15, Moses presents the opposite side of the picture, the results of disobedience:

> "But it shall come about, if you will not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you." (NAS)

And there follows a very long and detailed list of curses. We notice as we study this chapter that both the blessings and the curses cover three main areas: spiritual, physical and material. Likewise, the full outworking of redemption through Jesus Christ also covers these three main areas: spiritual, physical and material.

A beautiful picture of redemption and its results is contained in 3 John verse 2 with which I am going to close today. John writes to his friend, Gaius:

> "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers." (NAS)

Notice the complete prayer of John, that his friend may prosper materially and financially, be in good health, even as his soul prospers. Those are the three areas: spiritual, physical and material.

All right, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. For the rest of this week I'll be explaining more fully the outworking of redemption in those three areas: spiritual, physical, material. Tomorrow I'll deal specifically with "The Spiritual Benefits of Redemption."



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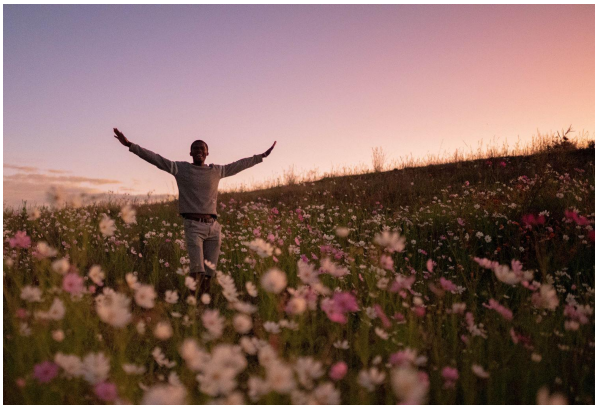

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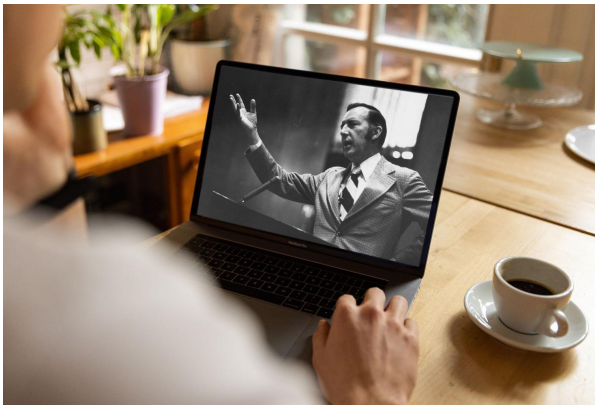

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