



WILL YOU BE BLESSED . . .OR CURSED?

Visualize this: You are among the Israelites as they camp on the desert of Arabah, just south of the Dead Sea and at the southeastern edge of Canaan, the Promised Land. You are a part of the generation fathered by the disobedient generation which God brought out of Egypt. As a result of their disobedience, with the exception of obedient Joshua and Caleb, God did not allow any of the two million plus that left Egypt to enter the Promised Land. Their bodies were left in the wilderness where you and your people wandered for forty years.

Disobedience has resulted in forty tortuous years of wandering on a journey, from Egypt to Canaan, that historians tell us should have taken only eleven days!

You and your compatriots, through God's grace, are about to enter the land that God promised to Abraham more than 400 years in the past. God's people have been given a law and Israel is will be born as a nation with its own land. In preparation, Moses will address the people. Almost all of the book of Deuteronomy is this speech by Moses. Moses reminds the people of God's goodness to them. Then, in Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Moses presents them with an awesome choice, ***Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God . . .***

In Deuteronomy 28, Moses details to the Israelites the blessings they will receive if they obey and the curses for them if they do not. As you perhaps know, the Israelites *disobeyed*. Read Deuteronomy 28:15-67 to see the curses which were to fall upon them. History vividly records fulfillment of Moses' prophecy.

The choice that God offered the Israelites is just as true today for you as it was for the Israelites back in the time of Moses. Obedience brings blessings, disobedience curses. Jesus says, in Matthew 7:21: ***Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My father in heaven.*** If you want to go to heaven, you must be obedient!

Jesus goes on to say, in this same chapter, Verses 22-23, ***Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*** Those who are disobedient will be cast into outer darkness, *banished from the presence of the Lord!* What curse could be greater than this!

We have taught you truth. We have given scripture for each truth taught. You have learned how to be saved,

how to live as a Christian, which church is the church of the Bible, how to grow as a Christian through God's word, and much more. You now know truth. So, now, your decision is before you. There are only two choices: Obedience or Disobedience.

Jesus pictures you as *soil* which receives the *seed* from a sower. You can read this account in Luke 8:4-15: ***And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.*** When He had said these things He cried, ***"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*** Jesus then goes on to explain the parable in Verses 9-15:

Then His disciples asked Him, saying, *What does this parable mean?*

And He said, *To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ' Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'*

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

Ask yourself this question, ***Which soil am I?***

Since you have just heard the truth, you most likely are one of these two soils described by the Lord:

1. *You are by the wayside, hear God's word, but then Satan comes and takes the word out of your heart before you obey.* Satan may come in the form of a friend who tells you we have not taught you truth or who urges you to follow some man-made religion. Most likely, this friend is well-meaning and does not realize he is doing Satan's work. Your family may do Satan's bidding because obedience will mean you must leave the family's religion or church. It takes great courage on your part to stand firm in obedience to the truth.
2. *Or, you are the good ground on which the word fell,*

was heard by you with a noble and good heart, you keep it and bear fruit with patience. This is the obedient response, one who hears the word, believes it, repents of sin, confesses Christ as his Savior, and is immersed (baptized) into Christ. God adds this obedient one to the others saved, His church (Acts 2:47). You live faithfully, telling as many others about Christ and His gospel and leading as many as you can to Him. This is the abundant life, one of great blessings and tremendous purpose which will end with you as a child of God in heaven with Him. Obedience *does* bring blessings!

Now, the choice is yours. No one else can make this decision for you. You will have to give an account to God for the decision you make. Read Romans 14:2. **But Satan will not give you up easily!** He will fight with all his power to win you. He will use every method possible and, make no mistake, he is *powerful, powerful*. Read Jude 9 to get a glimpse of his might: *Yet Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' (NIV)* Think of the power held by an archangel of God, yet even this Michael did not dare to personally rebuke Satan. He used the word of the Lord when confronting him.

The apostle Peter, in 1 Peter 5:8, warns us of the devil's power when he says, *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*. Imagine a roaring lion walking about you, probing for weakness, and ready to pounce and devour you. Satan is a real person. He is powerful, and much more real than you can imagine. There's a war going on for your soul right now. Satan is your enemy in this war!

We have given you one way that Satan works. He uses family and friends, who unknowingly are working for him when they tell you not to obey as God has commanded. Many, unwittingly, are urging you to remain as you are, practicing a false religion or living in disobedience, mired in sin. You must ask yourself the question, *Do I love Jesus more than my family?* Jesus forces this question to you in Luke 14:25-26:

Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. What does Jesus mean here? *Hateth* in these verses means to *love less*. Matthew 10:37 perhaps gives the same thought in a different way when Jesus says, **He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me . . .** So, you can see that if parents or any family come between you and obedience and you opt for the family side and reject Jesus, you are not worthy and will be cursed. So, no matter how painful, put Jesus *first!* That will bring blessings. One of those blessings may be that you will lead your family in truth to Christ, and as a result, their souls will be saved, too.

A major weapon that Satan uses is to induce you to procrastinate, delay being baptized. We see this probably more than any other reason for not obeying. The Biblical examples are all *immediate*. There was no delay. The 3,000 baptized on the day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter Two were all baptized the *same day*. Acts 2:41 tells us that all these received the word

gladly and were baptized the *same day*. We know, too, that God added them to the church the same day from Acts 2:47. *Today is the day of salvation!* Jesus said this in Luke 19:9. Your baptism is too important to wait! The longer you wait, the more time you give Satan to work his wiles. As Ananias said to Saul, in Acts 22:16, *And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

We say the same to you. What are you waiting for? Arise and be baptized, washing away your sins.

Your baptism is in obedience to our Lord's command. And, as you have learned, obedience brings blessings! In this case, obedience brings washing away of sins, addition to the Lord's church, continual cleansing of sin if you live faithfully (1 John 1:7), and a home in heaven. Obedience provides more blessings than you can count . . . And for all eternity!

No matter where you live, any place in the world, we probably have a man of God nearby who can come, answer questions you may have, and baptize you. If you are ready, contact us:

Email us at raycox1927@comcast.net

Write us at:

Agape Bible Studies Online
A Ministry of the Rainbow Church of Christ
2201 Rainbow Drive
Gadsden, AL 35901
USA

Our website is www.agapebiblestudiesonline.org.