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(Peter Lok) 駱沅祺

[lokpeter@outlook.com](mailto:lokpeter@outlook.com)

[Bibleao.com](http://Bibleao.com)

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YouTube Prayer Link

### God's blessings and curses

The Book of Joshua (Chapter 8)

8:34 Then Joshua read all the words of the blessing and curse of the Law according to everything that is written in the Book of the Law.

Blessing and curse are two very different concepts. A blessing is a positive expression that means good wishes or prayers for someone or something. It can lead to happiness, success, and health. Whereas, a curse is a negative expression that means a malicious curse on someone or something that brings bad luck or misfortune. In many religions and beliefs, blessings are seen as a good deed, while curses are seen as bad deeds.

God's blessing and God's curse sometimes seem to go hand in hand, and this is often the case in many religious or literary works. This opposition can be seen as a kind of divine balance and the consequences of actions and choices throughout human history.

In many stories, God is portrayed as a being who is both loving and severe. God's blessings may be associated with a believer's loyalty, good deeds, or obedience to God's will. However, God's curses may arise when people turn away from God's ways, make mistakes, or turn away from God's instructions. This curse is not God's malice, but rather a reaction to misconduct or violation of the principle of God's nature.

This simultaneous phenomenon reflects the notion of a balance between good and evil, reward and punishment. It is also a reminder to think about the consequences of one's actions and the possible consequences of one's choices. This idea is embodied in numerous religious and philosophical systems, emphasizing the importance of moral choices and behavior in an individual's life.

The simultaneous appearance of God's blessings and curses can be seen as a response to human behavior and moral choices, reminding people to think about the consequences of their actions.

There are passages in the Bible that contain blessings and curses, both God's reward for human behavior and punishment for infidelity and sin. Here are some of the relevant chapters:

Deuteronomy 28 - This is a more detailed chapter of blessings and curses, which clearly states God's reward for obedience to His commands and punishment for disobeying His will. As mentioned in this chapter, those who obey God will receive blessings, while those who rebel against God will suffer all kinds of misfortunes and curses.

Jeremiah 17 - This chapter deals with the curse of those who depend on human life and who hope in their own arm. On the contrary, those who trust in Jehovah will be blessed.

Psalms 1 - This is a chapter that describes the way of life and the end of the good and the evil in a contrasting way. Those who walk according to God's law are blessed, while those who turn their backs on God's will are described as cursed. There are many passages in the Bible that carry God's blessings, which may be promises to humanity, encouragement to obedient, or well-meaning blessings to all believers. Here are some passages from the Bible that carry God's blessings:

Numbers 6:24-26 - This is the scripture called the "Prayer of Blessing," where God asked Aaron and his descendants to bless the Israelites: "May the Lord bless you and protect you, may the Lord make his face shine upon you and give you grace!"

Isaiah 41:10 - Here God promises His presence with the obedient and gives strength and help: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you, and do not be dismayed, for I am your God." I will strengthen you, I will help you, and I will sustain you with my righteous right hand. "

Ephesians 1:3 - Paul writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in Christ gave us every heavenly spiritual blessing." "

The blessings in these verses are not only promises to the ancients, but also encouragement and comfort to modern believers. They remind us of God's care and grace and encourage us to seek His blessings in our faith.

There are passages in the Bible that speak of God's curse on those who turn away from Him. These highlights the gravity of rebellion against God's will and the consequences of sin. Here are some of the chapters that contain God's curses:

Isaiah Chapter 24 - This chapter describes God's curse on the inhabitants of the earth, with a special emphasis on the destruction and punishment that comes with their sins.

Malachi 2 - This speaks of the misdeeds of the priests, the curse of God for their rebellion against His law, which threatens the fate of their descendants. Deuteronomy 28 - This chapter contains both God's blessings for the obedient and God's curses for the betrayals. In this chapter, the consequences of disobedience to God's law are listed in detail, including sickness, calamity, and hardship.

Leviticus 26 - Similar to Deuteronomy 28, this chapter also contains blessings for the obedient and curses for the disobedient. God warned people that if they did not obey His laws, they would be cursed, including sickness, famine, and misfortune.

Jeremiah 17 - This chapter warns of the consequences of those who rely on human strength and turn away from God. These people will be like grass in the desert that grows in drought and loses its roots.

The curses described in these verses are a warning to those who go against God's will and against His laws. These warnings remind us that God's expectations of humanity and His laws are not negligible but have serious consequences. However, the Bible also teaches us about God's grace and mercy, and that He is also willing to forgive and accept people when he repents and comes unto Him.

These verses highlight God's punishment for disobedience to His will and sin. They are a reminder of the misfortunes and curses that can result from the consequences of rebellion against God. However, the Bible is also full of messages about repentance and asking God for forgiveness. Even in the face of God's curse, people can still receive His grace and forgiveness by repenting and returning to God's ways.

These chapters are not entirely limited to blessings and curses, but emphasize the relationship between human behavior and God's will. They reveal that obedience to God's ways and teachings will bring blessings, while deviation from His will will lead to misfortune and curse. These passages are intended in Scripture to teach people to obey God's ways and to warn of the consequences of falling away from God's will.

### We pray

Heavenly Father, thank You for your life and blessings. As I experience Your blessings, help me not to forget the grace that comes from You and to learn to share this blessing and be a blessing to those around me. When I or others face a curse, please give me the power to respond with love and forgiveness, not with evil for evil. Help me understand that this is a test for me to learn compassion and understanding towards others.

Let me not be swayed by my own emotions and pride, but seek Your guidance and wisdom. In this challenging time, please strengthen my faith and let me believe in Your good intentions to follow Your path steadfastly even in difficult times.

Thank You, Heavenly Father, that You are always with me, no matter what circumstances I face. Help me to bring Your love and grace into this world as a witness of light and hope.

In the name of Jesus Christ I pray, amen.

### Joshua chapter 8

Jo. 8:1 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.

Jo. 8:2 You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.” Jo. 8:3 So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night

Jo. 8:4 with these orders: “Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go very far from it. All of you be on the alert.

Jo. 8:5 I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them.

Jo. 8:6 They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are running away from us as they did before.’ So when we flee from them,

Jo. 8:7 you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will give it into your hand.

Jo. 8:8 When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the LORD has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.” Jo. 8:9 Then Joshua sent them off, and they went to the place of ambush and lay in wait between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai — but Joshua spent that night with the people.

Jo. 8:10 Early the next morning Joshua mustered his men, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai.

Jo. 8:11 The entire force that was with him marched up and approached the city and arrived in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city. Jo. 8:12 Joshua had taken about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city.

Jo. 8:13 They had the soldiers take up their positions — all those in the camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it. That night Joshua went into the valley.

Jo. 8:14 When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city. Jo. 8:15 Joshua and all Israel let themselves be driven back before them, and they fled towards the desert.

Jo. 8:16 All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city.

Jo. 8:17 Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel. Jo. 8:18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Hold out towards Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city.” So Joshua held out his javelin towards Ai.

Jo. 8:19 As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.

Jo. 8:20 The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising against the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction, for the Israelites who had been fleeing towards the desert had turned back against their pursuers.

Jo. 8:21 For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from the city, they turned round and attacked the men of Ai.

Jo. 8:22 The men of the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites

on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives.

Jo. 8:23 But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.

Jo. 8:24 When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the desert where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it.

Jo. 8:25 Twelve thousand men and women fell that day — all the people of Ai.

Jo. 8:26 For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai.

Jo. 8:27 But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua.

Jo. 8:28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day.

Jo. 8:29 He hung the king of Ai on a tree and left him there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take his body from the tree and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.

Jo. 8:30 Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel,

Jo. 8:31 as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses — an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings.

Jo. 8:32 There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua copied on stones the law of Moses, which he had written.

Jo. 8:33 All Israel, aliens and citizens alike, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing those who carried it — the priests, who were Levites. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel. Jo. 8:34 Afterwards, Joshua read all the words of the law — the blessings and the curses — just as it is written in the Book of the Law.

Jo. 8:35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the aliens who lived among them.

Chapter 8 tells the story of the Israelites' victory over Ai, the city that had defeated them in the previous chapter. This time, God gives Joshua a specific plan for how to take the city. The Israelites are to set an ambush and pretend to flee, drawing the people of Ai out of the city. Then, a second group of Israelites is to attack the city from behind.

The plan works perfectly, and the Israelites are able to capture the city and destroy it. The people of Ai are all killed, and the city is left in ruins.

After their victory at Ai, the Israelites gather at Mount Ebal, where they offer sacrifices and renew their commitment to follow God's laws. They also read the blessings and curses that God had commanded Moses to write on stones, reminding them of the consequences of disobedience. Chapter 8 emphasizes the importance of following God's plans and the idea that victory comes from God, not from military might. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of renewing one's commitment to following God's laws, and the consequences of disobedience.

Joshua chapter 8 contains several important verses in the Christian Bible. Here are a few examples:

1. "Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.'" (Joshua 8:1)
2. "So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day. He impaled the body of the king of Ai on a pole and left it there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take the body from the pole and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day." (Joshua 8:28-29)
3. "Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used." (Joshua 8:30-31)
4. "There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the Lord, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. Both the foreigners living among them and the native-born were there. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel." (Joshua 8:32-34) These verses demonstrate the power of God to bring about victory in battle, and the importance of obedience to His commands. The destruction of Ai and the punishment of its king emphasize the severity of sin and its consequences. The construction of the altar on Mount Ebal and the copying of the law of Moses on stones highlights the importance of the written Word of God and its role in the life of the Israelites. The unity of the people, both native-born and foreigners, in the presence of the Lord underscores the inclusive nature of God's covenant and His desire for all people to be part of His people.

In Joshua chapter 8, we witness the redemption and victory of the Israelites at the city of Ai after their previous defeat. This chapter provides us with insights into the importance of learning from past mistakes, the faithfulness of God's guidance, and the significance of strategic planning.

One of the central themes in this chapter is the importance of learning from past mistakes. After the defeat at Ai in the previous chapter, Joshua seeks God's guidance and is given a new strategy for the conquest of the city. This time, the Israelites follow God's instructions faithfully, and as a result, they experience victory. This demonstrates the importance of reflecting on past failures,

seeking God's wisdom, and adjusting our approach accordingly. It reminds us that we can learn from our mistakes and experience redemption and triumph when we align ourselves with God's guidance.

The chapter also highlights the faithfulness of God's guidance and His commitment to fulfilling His promises. God instructs Joshua on a strategic plan to conquer Ai, and the Israelites follow His commands precisely. Through their obedience and reliance on God's guidance, they are successful in their mission. This serves as a testament to God's faithfulness in leading His people and His desire for them to walk in obedience to His word.

Furthermore, the chapter emphasizes the significance of strategic planning and wisdom in carrying out God's commands. Joshua devises a plan to lure the people of Ai away from the city and then ambush them, resulting in their defeat. This demonstrates the importance of seeking God's wisdom and utilizing strategic thinking and planning in carrying out His purposes. It reminds us that while we rely on God's guidance, we are also called to use the resources and wisdom He has provided to accomplish His will.

In reflection, Joshua chapter 8 teaches us several valuable lessons. It highlights the importance of learning from our past mistakes and seeking God's guidance for a renewed approach. It reminds us of God's faithfulness in leading and guiding us as we navigate challenges and pursue His purposes.

Additionally, the chapter encourages us to be intentional in our strategic planning and wise in utilizing the resources and wisdom God has given us. It prompts us to seek God's guidance in every aspect of our lives and to be open to adjusting our approach as He directs.

Moreover, the chapter reminds us that victory and success come when we align ourselves with God's guidance, walk in obedience to His commands, and trust in His faithfulness. It reinforces the truth that our strength and triumph ultimately come from Him.

Overall, Joshua chapter 8 calls us to learn from our mistakes, trust in God's guidance, and exercise strategic thinking and planning as we pursue His purposes. By reflecting on these lessons, we can grow in our faith, experience victory over challenges, and walk in alignment with God's will.