

Title: The Cursed Man and the Blessed Man

Text: Jeremiah 17: 5-8

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Jeremiah 17: 5: Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. 6: For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited. 7: Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8: For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

We have a great contrast here in verses 5 and 7. **Verse 5: Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD....7: Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**

We must lay down all vain confidence as well as all vain hindrances—we must lay down all our best accomplishments as well as all our very worst failings, lay down all our doubtful fears as well as all our good feelings, our best deeds as well as our worst deeds—we must lay it all down before the word of God. This is not a moral issue, it is a heart issue.

Who does God say is cursed and who does God say is blessed? No word could be plainer than our text.

Jeremiah 17: 5: Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD....7: Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

A man cannot trust in God and trust in man. It is not possible to do both and be saved by grace alone. Salvation is not partly by free will and partly by free grace; partly by man's works and partly by Christ's work. Either a man is saved by his works (which he cannot be) or he is saved by grace (which he must be) but it can never be both. Read these two verses again.

Jeremiah 17: 5: Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD....7: Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Proposition: Salvation is entirely of the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from the works of the flesh.

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Our Divisions will be the contrasts between the cursed man and the blessed man:

1) A Contrast in the Plants They Are Compared To—Verse 6 says of the cursed man: **For he shall be like the heath in the desert,...**Verse 8 says of the blessed man: **For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river;**

2) A Contrast in Sight--Verse 6 says of the cursed man, he : **and shall not see when good cometh...**Verse 8 says of the blessed man, he **and shall not see when heat cometh but her leaf shall be green**

3) A Contrast in Fruitfulness—Verse 6 says of the cursed man: **but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited...**Verse 8 says of the blessed man...**and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**

I. THE CONTRAST IN THE KIND OF PLANTS THEY ARE---Verse 6 says of the cursed man: **For he shall be like the heath in the desert,...**Verse 8 says of the blessed man: **For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river;**

The cursed man: **For he shall be like the heath in the desert**

A heath means destitute. It was some little, low-growing scrubby, shrub, fruitless, seedless and useless. Some say it is “condemned or forbidden in religious uses.” It is a good description of natural man.

The man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength—his will, his works, his power and wisdom—whose heart departs from the Lord, is trusting in a curse and is cursed.

- Under the curse of God
- Under the curse of the law
- Under the curse of sin
- Cursed in body, soul and spirit
- Cursed in everything he touches
- Cursed in every way there is to be cursed
- He is as a fruitless, scrubby little heath plant.

v7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8: For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river;

John 15:1: I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

The blessed man is one who is planted by God in Christ.

- By divine election
- Planted in the likeness of his death and resurrection
- Planted in the house of the Lord by his regenerating, calling grace

ALL OF HIS BLESSING IS OF THE LORD HIMSELF.

Isaiah 60:21: Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:3: To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

The LORD first makes his child see there is nothing good in us to trust. The Holy Commandment comes by the Holy Spirit and declares that **in our flesh dwells no good thing.** We are first shown the evil of our sin before we see Christ’s pure and perfect goodness. Each of those God saves are first made to see we are cursed, before the LORD shows us we are blessed **with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;** we first experience the wrath of God before the smile of God, our best deeds become as filthy rags before Christ our Righteousness becomes altogether lovely; we are made to be like a tree with all its branches broken off in a severe storm before we are made to be like a tree planted by the Lord beside Christ the River of Life.

Application: This is to teach us not to trust in man and make flesh our arm. The danger in a profession made in the wisdom and power of man is that such a man trusts the arm of his flesh. So before the blessing comes the curse, before the gospel comes the law, before the trusting in the arm of the Lord, the arm of our flesh must be broken

Then the Lord turns us to put our trust in the LORD. The Lord turns us to the mercy seat—draws us to Christ. The Lord opens his word to our understanding, gives us eyes to see: Christ is God with us—Immanuel. Christ is the successful Savior—**Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.**

- He has finished the transgression
- Has made an end of sins
- Has made reconciliation for iniquity
- Has brought in everlasting righteousness,
- Has sealed up the vision and prophecy
- And there he sits in the throne of God--anointed the most Holy.

He whispers to our thirsty soul, “Ye are complete in him.” And Christ becomes All—the Blessed Man in whom we are blessed, our River of Life, and the Tree of Righteousness in whom we are engrafted.

Psalm 1: 3: And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Christ is bringing forth his fruit in HIS SEASON. Christ shall never wither—the same yesterday, today and forever. Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper—the LORD said, “He shall not fail.” He said, I give them...

Isaiah 61: 3:...the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Revelation 22: 1: And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Believer's grow in rich soil of his love, with much water of the Holy Spirit and of the word preached, and are evergreen, and fragrant in Christ, by grace through faith.

Ephesians 3: 17: Christ...dwells in your hearts by faith;...rooted and grounded in love

Christ becomes all our trust and all our hope--**Christ in you the hope of glory. Verse 7: Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**

- Blessed redemption from the curse of the law
- Blessed promise of no more condemnation
- Blessed in life, in all of providence, in death and to all eternity

What a contrast between the little, scrubby, fruitless heath plant in the dry desert and the believer, the planting of the Lord as a tree planted by the River of Life with our roots spreading out into his fullness.

II. THE CONTRAST IN SIGHT--Verse 6 says of the cursed man, he : **and shall not see when good cometh...**Verse 8 says of the blessed man, **he and shall not see when heat cometh but her leaf shall be green.**

The cursed man—the man trusting in man, in the power of his flesh—like the heath plant--v6: shall not see when good cometh

The heath plant receives no advantage by the rain falling upon it. Likewise, those looking to the arm of the flesh, without spiritual sight, are not benefited in the least by the rain of the gospel. He is like the self-righteous Jews who did not see when Christ came—who is goodness, righteousness itself. They rejected Christ, rejected his gospel, rejected those he sent to preach his gospel and went on in their works trying to establish their own righteousness.

Application: One of the saddest things in the world is to see men hear the gospel of Christ preached and regard it with complete indifference. Or to see men who remain for a time then become contentious and walk away from the gospel. The man trusting in man, in the arm of the flesh, **shall not see when good cometh. It had been better not to have heard it than afterward to turn away**—such a one has refused the good and chosen the evil—there is nothing good for him.

Hebrews 10: 26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

The cursed man **shall not see when good cometh...**

But now look at this contrast—verse 8 says of the blessed man, he shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green.

When the heat comes:

- Heat of persecution for the truth
- Heat of trials
- Heat which requires commitment and faith in the Lord

It withers and dries up the man whose root is in self rather than in Christ. But the man whose root is in Christ—is given a continual supply of the Water of Life from Christ the River of Life, given strength from Christ the Tree of Righteousness—so the heat only makes him more fruitful—makes her leaf green.

Application: This heat comes for two very different reasons. The Lord sends the heat to the man trusting in his flesh for the very purpose of burning and drying him up.

Mark 4: 16: And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17: And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended—they withered away.

But God sends the heat to the blessed man to make him more fruitful, to make his roots run deeper into Christ the River of Life, to make his branches cling more firmly to Christ the Tree of Righteousness.

John 15: 2: Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Believer, why is it good for us to be a green tree? Why would God have our leaves to be green? Green leaves give a lot of shade from the heat—they are helpful—**for the healing of the nations.** But brown autumn leaves, fall from the tree and cause a lot of mess and work to clean up.

We only remain a green leaf by continually drinking deep of Christ the River of Life. Whatever makes us to slumber or turns us from him is good to let go of. Many a professing believer has thought the way to personal happiness, the way to benefit the church or his own family was to sink his roots deeper into the dry dessert earth. But listen to the Lord concerning the seed among thorns.

Mark 4: 18: And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19: And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

But it will never be so for the blessed man.

III. THE CONTRAST IN FRUIT BEARING--Verse 6 says of the cursed man: **but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited...**Verse 8 says of the blessed man...**and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**

Verse 6 says of the cursed man: but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited

There is no fruitfulness in the man who is trusting in his will, his works, or his worth. He inhabits “parched places.” He inhabits “the wilderness.” He lives in “a salt land and not inhabited.” The man trusting in his own righteousnesses, in his own works, produces no fruit whatsoever.

Verse 8 says of the blessed man...and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Illustration: We had a huge draught in this country this year. It destroyed corn crops. In natural draughts, men have to be very careful so as not to run out of water.

When physical, natural draught comes whether health, financial difficulties, so on—the believer planted and rooted in Christ—shall not be careful—he has plenty of spiritual water still. Our life is not merely in the rain of temporal blessings, but our life is from the deep, ever-flowing, spiritual River of Life—from Christ.

V8:...Neither shall cease from yielding fruit. Those leaning on the arm of the flesh are continually in a state of change based on the state of the world around them. The same is true of those leaning on the arm of the flesh in religion.

But with the believer, let the world change like the seasons, let the natural waters be dry, the believer never ceases bearing fruit. Our fruit bearing is due to the goodness of Christ and our being grafted into him. Our continual fruit bearing is due to the continual provision of God our Husbandman who planted us as the trees of his planted that he might be glorified. Our continual fruit bearing is from the blessedness of the River that waters our roots.

Let man change, let man curse and be cursed, let men deny our hope all they will—“thus saith the LORD—those blessed of him shall never cease bearing fruit.” His church is described as:

Isaiah 27: 2:...A vineyard of red wine. 3: I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

Psalm 92:14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

Conclusion: What a striking contrast between the confidence founded in the LORD JESUS's blood and righteousness; and that trust which is in an arm of flesh. One is most blessed. The other most cursed. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unceasing source of eternal life, strength, and confidence. Christ is all blessedness to those who trust in him. Trust him! Cast all your care on him! Abide in him!

Amen!