

God said to Adam, *“cursed is the ground because of you.”* The devastating consequences were: death, disease, pain and hardship for all creation is under the dominion of Satan.

There’s been a lot of misinformation, defamation and damnation regarding the “curse language” of the scripture. Take for example the statements of Noah over his three sons, who ultimately repopulated the world. He blessed Shem and Japheth, but regarding Ham, who disrespected him, he said, *“Cursed be Canaan! (son and descendants) of Ham) “The lowest of slaves will he be to his brother.” (GE 9:25)* This scripture has been errantly used throughout history to imply that certain people groups are cursed of God. *The sons of Ham were Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. (GE 10:6)* They were Africans-Cushites (Moses was married to a Cushite woman), Egyptians, Libyans and Canaanites (today known as Palestinians). These groups often received divine judgements because they were hostile to Israel as enemies. Note that God doesn’t curse people or people groups. This is a prophecy of the consequences of sin, when people choose to live in opposition to God.

This verse was used to justify, legitimize and even spiritualize slavery of Africans in the United States by southern slave owners. “They were Ham’s descendants, so this is their ordained, God-assigned lot in life. They’re under the curse of God.” No doubt there are people today who would leverage the same indictment upon the Palestinians. They are the enemies of Israel, therefore they are a cursed people. Once again let me re-state the Biblical explanation. **Curse is the consequence of sinning against God.** Again, there are no cursed people and no cursed people groups beyond God’s redemption. There is no indelible “curse” mark. There is no inerascible stain. No sin is unforgivable, except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is the sin of unbelief.

But didn’t God say to Abraham, the Father of Israel, *“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.”* ? (GE 12:3) The curse is the consequence of coming against the will, agenda and commandments of God. It is the repercussion of standing outside of the reverence, righteousness and favor of God. People are then out from under

His protection and vulnerable to the powers of darkness. There are no cursed people or people groups, only those at enmity with God. Hear the second commandment of the Ten. *“You shall not bow down to idols, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing righteousness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.” (EX 20:5-6)* There are no irreversibly cursed people or people groups. God’s desire is *“that not one would perish, but that all would come to repentance.” (2PT 3:9)* That is why He sent Jesus into the world, His only Son, to carry the curse of creation, to reverse the curse, the sentence of sin. The consequence creation and its contents are under, is the dominion of Satan that ultimately brings eternal death (separation from God).

God gave to Abraham the Covenant of Blessing based on faith. *“Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. ...All nations will be blessed through you. So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Gal. 3:6-9)*

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law (the soul that sins must die), having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Gal. 3:13-14)

So we celebrate the birth of the little Jewish baby, born of a virgin in Bethlehem. He is the Savior of all creation. He removes the curse! So we sing; **Joy to the World!** “No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make His blessings flow. Far as the curse is found. Far as the curse is found. Far as, far as the curse is found.” And this is why: Heaven and Nature sings!

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Gal 3:27-28

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

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December 2023



Touching Nations, Changing Lives!



In October, we held our GCI West Africa Ministry Conference 2023 in Accra, Ghana. GCI Missionaries Lori and Rob Mangus hosted the conference at our Ghana Ministry House, our property we purchased a couple years ago. Our point West African leaders from each of our nations (Liberia, Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana were in attendance. Our ministry leaders were provided lodging on the property. The conference was held at the facility (pictured right) where we worshiped together, fellowshiped, received teaching, prayer and ministry. Of course, as always, we concluded the conference with communion which has become a special time of heartfelt connection in the Presence of the Lord. There was amazing sharing around the Lord’s Table. We are modeling apostolic ministry family, rather than organizational membership. While it’s new for them, our West African leaders are

embracing the model and responding to ministry family relationship. It’s has been a great joy to see them engage as brothers rather than competitors and receive mutual encouragement. We laugh. We openly share burdens. We bear one another’s burdens. There is relational, life-giving belonging to our One Father and to each other as sons and daughters in the Spirit of Christ. It is what God intended His Family to be!

Following the conference, Ministry Director Dallas Elder with Missionaries Rob and Lori went to Pastor Paul’s church to minister on Sunday morning. The church is on a hillside overlooking a lake. It had rained. The road had large holes and gullies. We drove as far as we could by car then took motorcycle taxis to the church. Many came for prayer and ministry. See more on this church -next page.

Up From the Ashes



In April of 2022, while Rob and Lori were on furlough in the US, an arsonist threw an accelerant into Pastor Paul's church. It totally scorched the contents. The fire was so intense, it melted the roof tin and cracked the cement walls. It was an evil spiritual attack against the ministry of the church and the Kingdom of God. We made the situation known to our GCI ministry family. The Lord provided through generous, compassionate hearts. Here is the new church building. "It was a tremendous blessing, to have preached in the previous building in October 2021, and now to preach in this resurrected church building."
~Dallas Elder

"...On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." MT 16:18

This is Pastor Paul of Global Life Chapel-Ghana. He and his congregation, working with Rob and Lori, have done a good job with this project. The floors, doors and windows remain to be finished. Pastor Paul and the church leadership expressed their gratitude.



Meet Our New Missionary Kayla Lawmaster

Kayla ministers to the Deaf Community in Ensenada, Mexico. In November, she made application to GCI, was approved, and is now raising her support to be a fulltime missionary. Here is her story. Kayla is from San Jose, CA. She has a degree in film making from the University of California-Santa Cruz. She first moved to Mexico to offer her service, while supported by her remote job working for a company in the US two years ago.

When they downsized last July, it left her without a job and a decision to make. She was offered another job with another company, however the Lord called her to go fulltime into missions. She works with a team to make Bible animation videos to communicate the Gospel and the love of God to deaf people. The deaf are often a forgotten people group. Communication is difficult. Often they are not offered education opportunities, or invitations to know Jesus and His wonderful salvation. So Kayla is "Bringing the Word to Life!" by providing animated Bible Stories for the deaf in Mexico. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 430 million people worldwide have disabling hearing loss. 4.6 million of those individuals are in Mexico and only 2% are Christian. We have welcomed her to be part of our GCI ministry family. We are excited about this Kingdom venture. Contact our GCI Office to be part of her support team!



Check Out our VV Christmas Catalog 2023. Get your copy through your church or contact our office. You can give a Christmas Blessing!

Mighty Men of Honor!

Our Stronger Men's Conference had a strong showing. Men engaged and received from the Lord. Our conference speakers of Martin Rucker Sr., Marquis Harris, Kevin Clancey and Dallas Elder instructed and encouraged the men in the Word of the Lord. Our focus scripture was **II Timothy 2:21: "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."** It was a gathering of fathers, sons and brothers. Conversations were real and transparent. Hearts were open to receive from the Lord. Relationships were deepened. Men were built up to live lives of honor for the Lord, themselves, their families, the Church and honor their witness in the world. Special thanks to Junie Hawkins for leading us in worship, for the conference leadership team and for Holsey Chapel-St. Joseph, MO for hosting the event.



Our next MSI Ministry Training Course will be **"Equipped for Spiritual Battle" taught by Dallas Elder.** This three-session Zoom course will be 9am-12:30pm (Central Time) over three Saturdays: January 14, 21 & 28. Contact our office or register at www.MSlgc.com online. Cost is \$150 per person.

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Far as the Curse Is Found!

By Dallas Elder

What is a new truth or revelation from God's Word that you learned in this past year? I've been a believer for nearly 50 years and have been in fulltime ministry for nearly 40. I'm still discovering new truths. God's Word is a deep rich mine, from which we continue to unearth. with the Spirit's help, new treasure. It reminds me of the words of Jesus. **"Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."** (MT 13:52) What was one new treasure of this year for you? Mine was this: **Jesus bore the curse.**

After Adam and Eve acted on the lie of the serpent, disobeyed the commandment and sinned against God, the Lord said to Adam **"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you"** (GE 3:17-18) When Jesus was scourged and mocked before His crucifixion, the soldiers put a robe on Him and thrust a crown of thorns on His head. They mockingly knelt before Him and said "Hail, King of the Jews!" While the Crown of Thorns was mockery and torture, it truly signified powerful redemption. Jesus was King of the Jews. He was the Son of God, the Messiah and the Sacrificial Lamb. On the Cross, He bore our sin and carried the "curse." He shed His blood, paid our debt and removed the curse. I admit, I've never made the connection between the Curse of Thorns of Genesis and the **Crown of Thorns** of the Cross. It has caused me to take a deeper look at "the curse" and the Redeeming Son of God.

Do a wholistic study of the Word of God, and you find that God doesn't curse humankind. The elements of the curse are the consequences humankind brings upon itself through sinfulness. *Continued next page >>>*



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Mark Your Calendar!
GCI Ministry Conference 2024
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