# Theological and Educational Outline: Cursed to Bless

## Introduction

This document describes the theological foundation and educational goals of Cursed to Bless. It aims to inform the producer, translator, and director. It can also help other church leaders understand the goals of the resource.

The ‘big story’ of the Bible:

God, with amazing grace, sent the Lord Jesus into our world to take the curse of death due to our rebellion, and by his resurrection restore the blessings of life with him forever. We receive this by faith in Jesus, proclaiming him and living a life of love as we wait for him to return to bring an end to this evil world and usher in the new world, the Kingdom of God.

**Themes addressed throughout the series**

The place of suffering in our lives

Becoming like Jesus who suffered and Jesus becoming like us to understand suffering!

Maturing as a Christian (Romans 8)

Discipline of a Father (Hebrews 12)

The refining of our faith (1 Peter 1; James 1)

The witness to the supremacy of Christ in our lives above anything else. Satan and his accusations

a.against Christians are shown to be lies eg. Job

Physical blessings are not promissed now but are assured for the new heaven and the new earth

The physical blessings given to Abraham and Israel were significant in pointing forward to the (physical) new heaven and the new earth which would come as a result of the curse being dealt with.

Israel showed it could not love God or be obedient to him, so it suffered the curses promised.

The New Testament does not promise physical blessings for us now in any ultimate sense (need to address Mark 10:29-30 / Matthew 19:28-30 / Luke 18:29-31).

In this life we are promised sufferings and persecutions which are called “blessings”!

If God does give us physical blessings in this life it is for the purpose of being generous to others and supporting God’s gospel purposes in the world.

Most of us are wonderfully blessed physically in lots of ways eg. enough food and drink, friends, family, shelter.

We are often tempted to be discontent with what God has blessed us with physically because we are greedy or self-centred, like little children.

We are spiritually immature if we ignore God’s massive spiritual blessings now, and impatiently want the physical blessings now rather than waiting for them in the new creation.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The beatitudes!

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.

The greatest blessing we can receive is a Person not a thing.

**Key phrases or sentence (to perhaps use throughout the series)**

“Satan wants to destroy your joy.”

God loves it, and Satan hates it, when you rejoice in trials and suffering” (cf. James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:12-16)

“The greatest blessing we can receive is a Person not a thing.”

“In this cursed world life is hard and then we die.”

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Jesus in John 16:33

### Episode summaries

Each episode summary below has the following elements:

* **Reading**: the passage that the characters read and discuss at their Bible study. The audience is encouraged to read this for themselves for each episode.
* **Memory verse**: a brief verse that the characters and audience are encouraged to memorise as a summary of the application of what they’ve learnt.
* **Main idea**: a one sentence summary of the episode. This is noted by the host at the start and end of the episode, and should be translated in the same way.
* **Pointing to the Lord Jesus**: a one sentence summary of how the passage is fulfilled in and helps us understand Jesus.
* **Learning Outcomes**: a more detailed description of what we want the audience to learn. Together with the application goals, we want the audience to *know*, *understand*, and *apply*. The dialogue and assessment questions were written to cover these. They should all align with the main idea.
* **Application**: specific and practical ways in which we hope the audience will apply the episode’s lesson in their lives. These are echoed by the characters during the Bible study.

## Summary table

|  | **Title** | **Reading** | **Main Idea** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0** | Series Introduction |  | Introduces the characters, tells how they come to join a Bible study, raises series’ overall question and theme, and explains the format. |
| **1** | God Blesses People | Genesis 1-2 (in two sections 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-25) | God is our supremely powerful and good Creator and Ruler who has blessed us abundantly. |
| **2** | People Sin and God Curses | Genesis 3 | Our disobedience against God was a terrible act of rebellion and unbelief which brought God’s curse upon us. God removed us from his place (the Garden) so we are no longer his people enjoying his rule. Life is now hard and then we die. |
| **3** | God Promises to Bless People Again | Genesis 12:1-3 and Genesis 15:1-7 | God promises Abraham that he will again bless the world through him. Abraham trusts God and God considers him righteous. |
| **4** | God Blesses His People Israel | Exodus 19:1-6, 20:1-3 | God creates his own new people, Israel, rescues them from their enemies and gives them the Law so that they can live lives of love in his presence. |
| **5** | God Blesses Israel and the World! | 1 Kings 10:1-13 | God establishes his people in his promised land, gives them his King to rule over them and abundantly blesses them and the world. |
| **6** | People Sin Again and God Curses Again | 1 Kings 11:1-13 and Deuteronomy 28:58-63 | Solomon’s (and the people of Israel’s) disobedience against God shows just how stubbornly sinful people are and how deserving of God’s curse we are. |
| **7** | God Promises to Bless People Yet Again! | Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:24-28 | God speaks through the prophets a message of hope that he will fulfil his promises, remove the curse, soften hard hearts by his Spirit and bring eternal blessing to his people. |
| **8** | God Curses Jesus to Remove the Curse from People | Matthew 27:27-54 | God himself, in Jesus, came to pay the death penalty of the curse on us so that it could be removed from us. |
| **9** | God Blesses Jesus to Bless the World | Acts 2:22-39 | The resurrection of Jesus exalts Jesus above all powers and proves that God has removed the curse and has brought blessing to his people. We join God’s people and receive the Holy Spirit by repenting of our sins and putting our faith in the Lord Jesus. |
| **10** | God’s People Declare the Gospel of Jesus to the World | Luke 24:36-53 | The risen Lord Jesus confirms God’s purpose revealed in the Scriptures that through Him salvation has been achieved and this Gospel news must be declared to the world in the power of God the Holy Spirit. |
| **11** | God’s People Live for the Glory of God | 1 Peter 2:9-25 | Just as Jesus lived a perfectly good life yet suffered for us, we too must live good lives and be prepared to suffer to show others just how glorious God is. |
| **12** | God Blesses His People Forever | Revelation 21:1-5, 21:22-22:5 | Through Jesus the curse has been removed and the blessings that God originally intended for his people will be restored and increased! God will live with his people, in his place and ruling and blessing them forever. Now, while we wait, we bless each other by generously sharing our lives and our possessions to meet each other’s needs. |

## 1. God Blesses People

Reading: **Genesis 1-2** (in two sections 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-25)

Memory verse: **Revelation 4:11**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

### Main idea

God is our supremely powerful and good Creator and Ruler who has blessed us abundantly.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

Everything we learn about God in these chapters is also seen in Jesus who is God in the flesh.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God is the supremely powerful and good Creator and Ruler of all people.
* Know that God abundantly blessed us.
* Understand that we were originally made as God’s people, living in God’s place and enjoying the blessings of God’s rule.
* Understand that the NT teaches us that Jesus is this good and all-powerful Creator God in the flesh who came to bless us with abundant life. Jesus demonstrated his power to do good and rule the world through his miracles and his gracious and compassionate life.

### Application

* We must give thanks, honour, praise and obedience to God.
* We must give thanks, honour, praise and obedience to Jesus.

## 2. People Sin and God Curses People

Reading: **Genesis 3**

Memory Verse: **Romans 6:23**

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Main idea

Our disobedience against God was a terrible act of rebellion and unbelief which brought God’s curse upon us. God removed us from his place (the Garden) so we are no longer his people enjoying his rule. Life is now hard and then we die.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

God, with amazing grace, sent Jesus into our world to remove the curse and restore his blessings to us.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that Adam and Eve’s disobedience, and our subsequent personal disobedience was, and is, a terrible act of rebellion and unbelief against God. Know that because of our rebellion our world is under God’s curse which means that life is hard and then we die.
* Know that because of our rebellion we were removed from the garden and so are no longer God’s people, in God’s place enjoying the blessings of God’s rule.
* Know that God, with amazing grace, would remove the curse through a man (Genesis 3:15).
* Understand that Jesus is the man who removes the curse and restore his blessings to us.

### Application

* Grieve over our sin which has messed up God’s good world.
* Acknowledge that we are cursed forever unless we trust Jesus, who is God’s way of removing the curse.
* Thank God for Jesus!

## 3. God Promises to Bless People Again

Reading: **Genesis 12:1-3 and Genesis 15:1-7**

Memory Verse: **John 10:10b**

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

### Main idea

God promises Abraham that he will again bless the world through him. Abraham trusts God and God considers him righteous.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

God’s promises to Abraham come true fully and finally in Jesus.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God was committed to removing the curse He had placed on his creation.
* Know that God promised to create a people through Abraham, give them a land and bless them.
* Know that God promised he would bless all peoples of the world through Abraham.
* Understand that Abraham doesn’t work for or earn God’s promise of blessing.
* Understand that God’s promises to Abraham come true fully and finally in Jesus.

### Application

* Thank God for his grace that he promises to bless the world despite our sinfulness.
* Stop trying to earn God’s blessing through our own efforts.

## 4. God Blesses His People Israel

Reading: **Exodus 19:1-6, 20:1-3**

Memory Verse: **1 Peter 2:9-10**

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

### Main idea

God creates his own new people, Israel, rescues them from their enemies and gives them the Law so that they can live lives of love in his presence.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

The story of Israel is in the Bible to lead us to understand how through Jesus we are saved from our enemies and become God’s people to live a life of love.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God’s first promise to Abraham of a people has been fulfilled (Genesis 12-50).
* Know that the Exodus is the beginning of the fulfilment of God’s promise of a land that continues into Joshua.
* Know that the Law was given after the people were saved from their enemies and not before. Obeying the Law was not the way the people were saved.
* Know that the Law showed the people the goodness of God and his desire to live with them.
* Know that the Law showed the people how to live a life of love for God and people.
* Understand that the story of Israel is in the Bible to lead us to see how through Jesus we are saved from our enemies of sin and death and become God’s people, obeying the Law of Christ, to live a life of love.

### Application

* Praise God that he is a promise-keeping, rescuing and loving God.
* Thank and trust Jesus who saved us from our greatest enemies of sin and death.
* Commit to living a life of love which fulfils the law of Christ.

## 5. God Blesses Israel and the World!

Reading: **1 Kings 10:1-13**

Memory Verse: **John 14:6**

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

### Main idea

God establishes his people in his promised land, gives them his King to rule over them and abundantly blesses them and the world.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

The story of Israel is in the Bible to lead us to understand how through King Jesus God rules over and abundantly blesses his people and will establish them in the ultimate Promised Land, the New Creation.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God’s second promise to Abraham of a land has been fulfilled (Exodus- Joshua).
* Know that God’s third promise to Abraham of blessing has been fulfilled through his King who rules wisely over God’s people.
* Know that not only has God blessed his people Israel, but through them other nations are blessed eg. Sheba.
* Know that God is glorified in all this.
* Understand that the story of Israel is in the Bible to lead us to understand how through King Jesus God rules over and abundantly blesses his people and will establish them in the ultimate Promised Land, the New Creation.

### Application

* Praise God that all peoples, Jews and Gentiles, are included in the fulfilment of God’s promises.
* Praise God that through King Jesus God rules and abundantly blesses his people and will establish them in the ultimate Promised Land, the New Creation.
* Submit ourselves and our lives to the wise rule of King Jesus.

## 6. People Sin Again and God Curses Again

Readings: **1 Kings 11:1-13** and **Deuteronomy 28:58-63**

Memory Verse: **Romans 3:10-12**

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

### Main idea

Solomon’s (and the people of Israel’s) disobedience against God shows just how stubbornly sinful people are and how deserving of God’s curse we are.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

We see more clearly than ever just how desperately we need a Saviour. That Saviour is King Jesus.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that the people of Israel, even when God had blessed them with everything good, were still stubbornly sinful.
* Know that God’s rightful curse on them meant they (like Adam and Eve) would be exiled from the good land he’d given them.
* Know that life in exile was hard and there they died.
* Know that God still shows grace.
* Understand how stubbornly sinful we are and how gracious God is through King Jesus.

### Application

* Grieve over how stubbornly sinful we are and appreciate how deserving of God’s curse we are.
* Marvel at God’s amazing grace that comes to us through King Jesus.

## 7. God Promises to Bless People Yet Again!

Readings: **Jeremiah 31:31-34** and **Ezekiel 36:24-28**

Memory Verse: **Matthew 5:17**

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

### Main idea

God speaks through the prophets a message of hope that he will fulfil his promises, remove the curse, soften hard hearts by his Spirit and bring eternal blessing to his people.

### Pointing to the Lord Jesus

The coming of Jesus shows that God himself has come to fulfil the prophets’ message of hope.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God speaks through his prophets his message of hope to us stubbornly sinful people.
* Know that God will forgive our sins.
* Know that God promises to change our stubborn hearts through the power of his Holy Spirit.
* Know that God will bring eternal blessing to his people in his place, heaven.
* Understand that Jesus is the complete fulfilment of God’s promises to Abraham and the prophetic message of hope.

### Application

* Praise God for his patience in continuing to speak to us sinful people.
* Appreciate that Jesus is the complete fulfilment of all God’s plans in the Bible to remove the curse and bring blessing to the peoples of the world.

## 8. God Curses Jesus to Remove the Curse from People

Reading: **Matthew 27:27-54**

Memory Verse: **Galatians 3:13**

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”

### Main idea

God himself, in Jesus, came to pay the death penalty of the curse on us so that it could be removed from us.

### Learning Outcomes

* Realise just how evil people are that they could do this to the perfectly good God that created them.
* Realise the loving commitment Jesus had towards all people.
* Know that Jesus removed the curse from us by taking the curse on himself when he died on the cross.
* Know that we cannot remove the curse by our obedience or good works. It is all of him.

### Application

* Feel the enormity, suffering and injustice of Jesus’ death.
* Be utterly humbled by his amazing grace towards us.
* Examine ourselves to see if we are relying on our obedience or putting our faith in Jesus.
* Repent of our sin and trust in Jesus as the only way that God will remove the curse on us.

## 9. God Blesses Jesus to Bless the World

Reading: **Acts 2:22-39**

Memory Verse: **1 Peter 1:3**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

### Main idea

The resurrection of Jesus exalts Jesus above all powers and proves that God has removed the curse and has brought blessing to his people. We join God’s people and receive the Holy Spirit by repenting of our sins and putting our faith in the Lord Jesus.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God raised Jesus to life and that He is seated in power and joy at God’s right hand.
* That Jesus is King over all.
* Know that the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit comes to those who repent and believe in Jesus.
* Know that the gift of the Holy Spirit means God himself is living in us and that we are his people.
* Know that this is the most brilliant blessing imaginable and means we have the inheritance of eternal life (see Ephesians 1:13-14).
* Know that all this is what the OT Scriptures were pointing to.

### Application

* Is this what we believe?
* Have we turned from our rebellion against God and put our trust in King Jesus?
* Be assured that that our sins are forgiven and that we have received the Holy Spirit.

## 10. God’s People Declare the Gospel of Jesus to the World

Reading: **Luke 24:36-53**

Memory Verse: **Matthew 28:18-20**

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

### Main idea

The risen Lord Jesus confirms God’s purpose (revealed in the Scriptures) that through him salvation has been achieved and this Gospel news must be declared to the world in the power of God the Holy Spirit.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that Jesus really rose from the dead and ascended into heaven in his body.
* Know that the Old Testament taught the death and resurrection of King (Messiah) Jesus and that the gospel will be declared to all nations.
* Know that Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to empower Christians in the worldwide declaration of the gospel.

### Application

* Be convinced that because Jesus is God’s risen King he should be proclaimed and worshipped throughout the world.
* Be convinced that people remain under God’s curse unless they repent and put their faith in Jesus.
* Involve ourselves in the worldwide declaration of the gospel of Jesus and the making of his disciples of all peoples.

## 11. God’s People Live for the Glory of God

Reading: **1 Peter 2:9-25**

Memory Verse: **1 Peter 2:12**

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

### Main idea

Just as Jesus lived a perfectly good life yet suffered for us, we too must live good lives and be prepared to suffer to show others just how glorious God is.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that God chose us and showed us mercy in order to declare his praises and live good lives for him.
* Know that our good lives and our sufferings show the world just how glorious our God is.
* Know that suffering in this world is normal for the Christian and to be expected because the Lord Jesus has not yet returned.
* Know that through suffering we are blessed because God is refining our faith and making us more like Jesus, our suffering Saviour.
* Know that the Christian life is a daily battle against our sinful natures, and that this is real suffering too.

### Application

* Be patient and joyful in suffering as we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus.
* Keep fighting against our sinful natures and resisting temptation.
* Pray that others see our good lives and sufferings for our Lord and be moved to find out about Jesus and turn to him.

## 12. God Blesses His People Forever

Readings: **Revelation 21:1-5, 21:22-22:5**

Memory Verse: **James 1:12**

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

### Main idea

Through Jesus the curse has been removed and the blessings that God originally intended for his people will be restored and increased! God will live with his people, in his place and ruling and blessing them forever. Now, while we wait, we bless each other by generously sharing our lives and our possessions to meet each other’s needs.

### Learning Outcomes

* Know that because of our Lord Jesus we are God’s people and will live in God’s place (heaven) enjoying the blessings of his rule over us forever.
* Know that now we are greatly blessed by being part of a worldwide church family of brother and sister believers.
* Know that God gives us all we need to live for him through the sufferings and difficulties of this life.

### Application

* Determine to persevere through this hard life with joy, loving and encouraging each other, as together we wait to be with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever in heaven.
* “Rejoice in the Lord always!” (Philippians 4:4)
* “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20)