# Cursed to Bless

# People Sin Again and God Curses Again

Episode: 6

Passage: 1 Kings 11:1-13, Deuteronomy 28:58-63

Characters: - Host - Sam - Pastor - Ben - Pete - Ruth - Kate

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Language: en-AU

### Intro

**ATMOS**: Theme music 5 sec, Host background music below host’s volume

**HOST**: Hello, this is Mary, your host. Welcome to Cursed to Bless, the show that asks a big question: Why is life so hard, when God is so good? We hear God blesses us, but how? Money, health, happiness? The answers are found in *Jesus*, in who he is and what he’s done. We see this when we read the Bible as *one big story*, with Jesus as the hero from start to finish.

**HOST**: In this episode, we learn that Israel’s disobedience shows just how stubbornly sinful people are and how deserving of God’s curse we are.

**HOST**: Remember to pause, read the passage, and answer the questions when you hear the sound. Our first question is: Can you think of a time when someone made a costly mistake because they were stubborn? Pause and discuss now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Thank you.

### Bible Study

**FX**: Flasback Outro

**ATMOS**: Host background

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s listen to the friends’ Bible study. They were all sitting at Pastor’s house…

**FX**: Flashback Intro.

**ATMOS**: House living room

**PASTOR**: Welcome everyone. Let’s pray first: “Dear Father, please help us listen carefully to your Word now, and learn together. In Jesus name…”

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Let’s review our memory verse from last time: John chapter 14, verse 6. I will read it out loud. When I pause, say the word that comes next, without looking at your Bible:

**FX**: In each ‘…’ gap below, Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**PASTOR**: (Leave a 2 second pause where you see ‘…’ and say the answer word with emphasis.)
“Jesus answered, ‘I am the … *way* and the … *truth* and the … *life*. No one comes to the … *Father* except through me’.”

**TRANSLATOR**: Replace this with text from the local Bible translation. Pick the same significant words for the gaps, as much as possible.

**PASTOR**: Thank you! Today, we’re reading 1 Kings chapter 11, verses 1 to 13. Let’s read it together now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Kate, what are the main ideas in this passage.

**KATE**: King Solomon gets many wives, and they were from other nations. He started building altars to other gods. So God became angry at Solomon, and told him that he would take away Solomon’s kingdom.

**PETE**: Wow, I would *love* to have so many girlfriends. He must have looked so powerful and rich!

**RUTH**: I think this was bad for Solomon - and his wives. I think God made us to marry *one* person, and be faithful. I remember Adam was so happy when he met Eve. Pete, I hope one day you find the *one girl* that you want to love for life.

**PETE**: (Awkward)
Oh… uhm… yes, me too.

**BEN**: Solomon marries the daughter of Egypt’s Pharaoh, after God rescued them from slavery! That seems so foolish.

**PASTOR**: Yes. Sadly, as Solomon grew old, his heart turned away from God. He disobeyed God by marrying women from other nations, and he worshiped idols from their nations.

**RUTH**: This was *God’s king*. Solomon must have seen the harm that his father David’s sin had caused when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. If Israel doesn’t obey God, it would end up just like the other nations.

**BEN**: Yes! Remember Exodus chapter 19, God wanted them to be a nation of priests, to show others what God was like.

**PETE**: But Solomon is just one person.

**PASTOR**: Well, God’s king had to teach God’s word to his people, and to be a good example. God warned that marrying women from other nations, who served other gods, would turn the hearts of Israel’s men away from God. It really matters what kind of king you follow!

**SAM**: How did the people act, pastor?

**PASTOR**: Sadly, they sinned by following Solomon into sin, and also worshiped idols.

**BEN**: They were so *stubborn* - they kept sinning and disobeying God, even after he had blessed them so much.

**PASTOR**: The other gods were fake - and *detestable*, like the passage says. Their commandments were bad for people - they were a *curse*, not a *blessing*. Israel even sacrified their own children to these gods.

**RUTH**: That’s horrible!

**BEN**: They had so much blessing, and they threw it all away! They had their own land, they were a big nation, and they were blessing others.

**SAM**: So what happened to Israel?

**PASTOR**: It’s a long and sad story. Solomon’s kingdom was torn in two by civil war. The kingdom was divided into two – the northern kingdom continued to be called *Israel* and the southern kingdom was called *Judah*. For two hundred years there was often trouble and war between them. Eventually, other nations came and defeated both kingdoms. First, Israel gets taken away to Assyria and then Judah gets taken away to Babylon.

**BEN**: So last lesson we saw other nations come to Israel and praise God. Now, other nations are breaking up Israel, and might think God isn’t kind or powerful. That’s not good for them! The other nations are missing out too - what a mess!

**KATE**: Wait. If God is taking away their land, then he’s not keeping his promise - right?

**PASTOR**: Good question. I want us to look at another passage now: Deuteronomy chapter 28, verses 58 to 63. Let’s read it together now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Ruth, can you summarise this passage please?

**RUTH**: God warns Israel very clearly of what will happen if they disobey God.

**BEN**: So… God is actually *keeping* his Word by exiling them from the good land he had given Israel. That reminds me of Adam and Eve after they disobey God in the garden. Their disobedience brings a curse, after God’s wonderful blessing.

**PASTOR**: God warned he would uproot Israel from the land he was giving them.

**RUTH**: And now he’s keeping his promise.

**PASTOR**: We must always take God’s warnings seriously. The destruction of Jerusalem was awful. A whole book of the Bible, Lamentations, was written about how sad it was.

**SAM**: It feels like God’s promises to Abraham are lost now.

**BEN**: Yes. Instead of having their own land, they are taken away as prisoners.

**RUTH**: Instead of being a great people, they’re just a few.

**SAM**: They wouldn’t feel very blessed either - they’re poor prisoners.

**BEN**: Yes, and they’re not blessing the other nations either - like God wanted.

**SAM**: This lesson feels so sad. It feels like God is really done with his people this time.

**PASTOR**: Yes, but God has not given up on his people. And next week we’ll see that God will fulfil his promises to bless his people and the whole world.

**KATE:** Did the Israelites in Babylon give up on trusting God?

**PASTOR**: Many of them did. But some didn’t, like Daniel and his friends. They kept trusting and obeying God. And God worked through them in mighty ways. Even the king of the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar, came to understand that God’s Kingdom would last forever, and declared God’s awesome power.

**RUTH**: So even in his judgement, God was still gracious to his people - and other nations!

**BEN**: Grace mixed in with judgement. I think we’ve seen this before.

**PASTOR**: Yes. God made clothes for Adam and Eve and promised a ‘serpent crusher’. He gave Noah an ark to escape the flood. We see this again and again in the Bible.

**SAM**: Well, this story about Israel is very sad. It feels like kings are always letting their people down.

**PASTOR**: Ah, I can think of one king that lived in Jerusalem many years later. He was one of David’s descendants, and he always obeyed God. God actually promised David that this king would come - in 1 Samuel chapter 7. Can you think of his name?

**KATE**: No, but I can’t see how Israel gets out of this mess.

**PASTOR**: Sinful people can’t stop the promises of a gracious God. I hope you come next week, because we will see God give his people hope.

**RUTH**: Oh, that’s so good to hear. I’m just glad to see how God is so full of grace. When I think of my own stubborn sin, it makes me feel so sad.

### Questions to Pastor and Application

**PASTOR**: OK, what questions would *you* like to ask?

**FX**: 3 second silence, maybe some Bible page shuffling

**RUTH**: I don’t have any questions, but it just seems as though the people are in the same situation as they always have been.

**BEN**: Like we’re all the way back in Genesis with Adam and Eve getting kicked out of the Garden.

**KATE**: God’s got a big problem with people!

**PASTOR:** Yes! And we’re going to find out how God fixes the problem. But you are right – people are so stubbornly sinful, including *us*. We can’t fix ourselves. God can give us children, homes and blessings – like he did for Abraham and the people of Israel – he can give us health, money, cars -

**PETE**: (Interrupting)
- and girlfriends too?

**PASTOR**: Yes, girlfriends too. But despite all these gifts, we still disobey him. We don’t love him as he deserves. We really do deserve God’s punishment. But God is gracious and will fix us! Next week, we’ll start to see how God does that.

**SAM:** I have a question. Why does God keep putting up with people for so long?

**PASTOR:** Because that’s what our God is like. He is loving and gracious and compassionate. That is perhaps the biggest thing we can learn about God - never forget it!

**SAM**: Thank you pastor, I’ll try.

**BEN**: Pastor, you mentioned a king that lived many years later. You said he always obeyed God. Who is he?

**PASTOR**: Jesus, of course. Jesus is the descendant that God promised David, the one who would reign forever.

**BEN**: Thank you!

**PASTOR**: OK, let’s talk about our own lives now. What sin upsets you most?

**BEN**: I get very angry at people that betray me.

**KATE**: I wish I was better at helping friends that are suffering. I like the idea of helping, but when the opportunity comes I hold on to my time and money. I guess I’m still selfish.

**SAM**: I wish I could live in a way that lines up with what I say I believe. It makes me wonder if I really believe God’s word.

**RUTH**: I hate how stubborn my sin is. I’m glad it can’t stop God’s goodness.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Let’s read our memory verse on the whiteboard: Romans chapter 3, verses 10 to 12. Let’s read it together now.

**ALL**: “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.”

**PASTOR**: Let’s memorise that for our next lesson. Ruth, would you pray for us to finish up?

**RUTH**: Me? I’m not sure I can do it as well as you do, dad.

**PASTOR**: It’s OK, we don’t pray to impress God. Our Father is glad to hear from his children. Just think about what we’ve learn.

**RUTH**: OK, I’ll try… Good Father, we’re sad to see Solomon’s disobedience, especially after you blessed him so much. But we know we’re also stubbornly sinful, and we deserve your curse. We praise you for Jesus, our saviour - we would be lost without him. Thank you. In Jesus’ name…

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Thank you Ruth, that was very helpful. Thank you for coming everyone, see you next time. Goodbye!

**ALL**: Goodbye pastor.

### Interactive Questions

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s answer some questions now. Say your answer aloud. **HOST**: What kind of king was Solomon? Was he *completely obedient*, *wise but later disobedient*, or *always disobedient*?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Wise but later disobedient. Solomon started as a wise king, but later in his life, his many wives from other nations turned his heart after other gods, and he disobeyed.

**HOST**: I will say some sentences. For each sentence, say ‘True’ if you agree, or ‘False’ if you disagree.

**HOST**: True or false: The people of Israel obeyed God despite Solomon’s disobedience.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. Israel were stubbornly sinful, even when God had blessed them with everything good.

**HOST**: True or false: Life in exile was hard and there they died.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: True. Israel was away from God’s promise land, without a king, scattered, and living as prisoners.

**HOST**: True or false: God stopped blessing Israel once Solomon disobeyed.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. God still shows grace to his people and the other nations, even in the midst of judgement.

**HOST**: Discuss this question: what are some ways that people are stubbornly sinful and yet God is gracious?

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence.

### Outro

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, now we’ve heard about Sam’s day, listen to what he prayed before going to sleep…

**ATMOS**: Soft prayer background effect (e.g. chimes) fade in

**SAM**: Dear God, I feel sad after today’s study. When I think about how I’ve ignored you, how stubborn I’ve been, how I’ve ignored your good word to me despite all the ways you’ve blessed me… I have to admit I deserve to be under your curse. I would have been too scared to admit this before I really understood your amazing grace. Jesus, I really need you as my saviour. Amen. ::: {custom-style=“Instruction”} **ATMOS**: Prayer background fade out :::

**HOST**: Thank you for completing this lesson. We learnt that Israel’s disobedience shows just how stubbornly sinful people are and how deserving of God’s curse we are. Will you join me for our next lesson? We will learn that God speaks through the prophets a message of hope that he will change our hard hearts by his Spirit. Please read Jeremiah chapter 31 verses 31-34 and Ezekiel chapter 36, verses 24-28 before then. Now you can discuss how this lesson matters in your life: When do you grieve most at your sin? Goodbye.

**FX**: Theme music fade out.