

Part 2 A Description of God's Curse on Wicked Houses by Thomas Risley (1630–1716)

Gen. 2:18

I. The Text Opened

A. Gen. 2:18

1. "...it is not good that man should be alone. I will make a help meet for him."

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: Wicked houses are to be excommunicated, banished, and rejected from God's love and saving grace here on earth, and hereafter to be shut out of heaven.

1. The greatness of this curse is manifest, in three respects:
2. (1.) In regard to persons, governors, and those they govern.
3. (2.) In regard to things both temporal and spiritual.
4. (3.) In regard to its duration which extends to both time here and eternity hereafter.
5. This curse extends to people: governors, parents, masters, guardians, trustees and tutors.
 - a) If any of these are profane, careless, ignorant and wicked, they are liable to God's curse upon themselves and those under their care.
 - (1) *Everyone shall reap as his work shall be, (Rev. 22:12).*
 - (a) *And everyone shall bear his own burden, (Gal. 6:5).*
 - (2) *You that do no good, do harm in your places of trust and government over others.*
 - (3) *What then shall be said of such parents and heads of families that are still doing evil?*
 - (a) *"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire," (Matt. 3:10).*
 - (b) *What then shall be done with those trees that bring forth evil fruit?*
 - (c) *Parents stand bound by their baptism to promote the spiritual, as well as the temporal good of their offspring.*
 - (d) *Likewise, it is righteous of God to curse those who have disallowed Christianity in their home.*
 - (e) *If you do nothing to cause God's blessing upon your family, God's curse is likely to fall on you.*
 - (f) *You have denied your children a godly education and excommunicated your servants from God's public ordinances.*
 - (4) *O! parents, is it your name and reputation that is dear to you?*
 - (a) *Is it health? Long life? Friends? Endowments? Is it your vocation or employment? Or is it your posterity?*
 - (b) *Is it your name? "A wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame: but by humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, honor and life," (Prov. 13:5, 22:4).*
 - (c) *If parents will only fear God and remain faithful as Christians toward their children, their names will be honorable.*
 - (i) *A clear conscience toward God and man is the true foundation of honor.*

(ii) *Where the life is holy and righteous, the name is sweet and comfortable.*

(d) A man who lives wickedly at home, though he stands by his honesty for his reputation, gains no better reputation than that of a pagan or heathen.

b) Secular honors among men, whether by blood, riches, friendship, or preferments, do not weigh in God's balance.

(1) That man who is a real Christian in his family, however, bears the image of his maker and is therefore raised to the highest pitch of honor in this world.

(2) "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor," (Prov. 12:26).

(3) There can be no greater reproach to heads of families than to be profane and irreligious in their dwellings.

(4) What a cursed shame it is that your house should fuel a sinful generation, that wickedness should survive in your offspring once you are returned to dust, and that it should be alive in your house as well as in hell.

(5) How great is the stain and stench you leave behind?

(a) What? A parent, a Christian parent, and yet ungodly, careless of heaven, covetous of the earth, and a wicked hindrance to your children's salvation?

(b) So what if you take care of your children's physical needs, but remain a destroyer of their souls?

(c) Let the world honor its own with monuments and golden letters; you should know, however, "that the name of the wicked shall rot," (Prov. 10: 7).

(6) What more can be sought to honor your name than to serve God in your family?

(a) Vice and ungodliness are the blot of true honor and reverse the honor of every dignified person in our church and kingdom.

(7) If it were possible to be wicked alone, without infecting others, it would not be so infamous to make others sin, as do all wicked families.

(a) Jeroboam made Israel sin, and that was the standing monument of his infamy.

(b) God threatened to make Baasha's house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that is, a ruined and vile house, (1 Kings 16:3).

(c) And should not all wicked heads of families fear, lest the Lord punish them and their posterity after them for their sins, and make them as vile in ages to come as they have been wicked in times past?

c) Is your health dear to you, you wicked, prayerless families? Is it better than your goods?

(1) Then look to your house, for you are subject to God's curse.

(2) Your body, O wicked man, is a fair house, but the plague is in it, even the plague of your own heart, (1 Kings 8:38).

(3) Can you say from your heart, "You are in good health," who never was sick of sin and never knew the physician of souls? (Matt. 9:12).

(4) Ah! It would be better for you if your bodily health were turned into a lingering consumption, palsy, gout, or other painful disease, as long as you have health in your soul, than to live without it in swearing, cursing, lying, stealing, sabbath-breaking, pride, covetousness, idleness, uncleanness, and oppression.

(5) Without question, there is a secret curse running in the veins of a healthy body which is spent in the pursuit of sensual contentment.

(a) Health, which is the next best thing to grace, apart from the blessing of Almighty God, is the worst thing in the world next to a life in hell.

- (6) How many give the first fruits of their youth to vanity and wildness?
- (a) How many at a ripe age (for lack of God's grace) run out of extravagance into covetousness, thinking to make amends by exchanging a thrifty sin for an unthrifty life?
 - (b) What comfort is there in that health which is the undoing of the soul to all eternity?
 - (c) What comfort is there in that health that cannot spare time, nor a little of its strength and vitality, for holiness and heaven?
 - (d) What comfort is there in that health which is subject to the irrationality of sense, and thereby denies the soul its reasonable and religious liberties for God's worship, either in his house or in their own houses?
 - (e) What comfort is there in that healthy body which is made a sink of sin and slave to every lust?
 - (f) Certainly, this corporal health and strength is worse than brutish, for the beast feeds, works, rests, and plays for the benefit of man; but a wicked healthy man is not only an enemy, but a curse to himself and to all that partake with him in his sin.
- (7) What greater curse is there than this – to abuse physical health for the sake of which (in time of sickness) so many friends and relations stand weeping and sighing, and so many doctors are employed?

d) What a curse is it to sacrifice one's physical life to the devil and the world, which in holy baptism you solemnly dedicated and devoted to God's worship?

- (1) What a bitter curse is it to work out your damnation with that self-same health by which God commanded you to work out your salvation?
- (2) The wicked man's prolonged life is a curse to him.
 - (a) The sinner being a hundred years old shall be cursed, (Isa. 65:20).
- (3) As he fills his days and years, so he fills up the measure of his sins.
 - (a) His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall go down with him into the dust, (Job 20:11).
 - (b) Solomon said, "a wicked man prolongs his life in his wickedness," (Eccl. 7:15).
 - (c) A life that has made light of sinning will prove heavy of curses.

e) What a woeful thing is it to find governors of families in their gray hairs taking pleasure in discussing the sins of their youth!

- (1) Do they not, by doing this, recommend those sins be committed by their children, which they, because of their impotency, cannot commit?
- (2) And is not this a sign of God's curse over their families, in terms of long life?
- (3) O! what a judgment is it, that long life is still growing riper and riper for destruction to all eternity.
 - (a) The Amorites were not cut off, "because their iniquity was not yet full," (Gen. 15:16).
 - (b) O! what a curse is it, to be an old gray-headed sinner, a swearer, drunkard, sabbath-breaker, scorner of religion!
 - (c) O! what a sad thing is it to see strong sins in feeble age, sins in the meridian when life is setting?

(d) What a deplorable thing is it that time spent with the Gospel, (the most precious time in the world), should have ever suffered such a great loss by your wicked choices, and that you will suffer such great punishment when, “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” (2 Thess. 1:9).

(4) What a misery is it, to see so many years with rain and sunshine, partaking in the labor of God’s Kingdom, and yet when you should have come into the barn as a healthy shock of corn in his season, you now prove to be nothing more than a bundle of tares?

(5) What a curse is it to have lived this long!

(6) Is it not a sad spectacle to see gray-haired heads of families without the evidence of outward religious duties in their houses? (Matt. 21:19).

(a) It may be said of such that they have unhappily improved the stock of sin, as long and as far as they could, and that an eternity of punishment is their just reward (Matt. 25:41).

(b) The sweetness of friends shall be taken from the wicked, and they will only retain their carnal friends who are willing to participate with them in their sins.

(c) This behavior is described as hatred to friends and neighbors in Lev. 19:17, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not allow sin upon him.”

(d) O! what a curse is it to make choices of such friends that are harmful to our souls!

(e) O! what a curse is it to have no better friends than those who are friends to our sins and enemies to our souls!

(f) Consider the misery of all such people and families who, for the lack of faithful Christian friendships and trust, their children are in danger of following in the steps of their parents and friends, and so perpetuate God’s curse on the house still.

f) How should families, in matters of trust for posterity, be careful in choosing their friends! Christianity should not die in a family of children when their parents die.

(1) If Seneca, the renowned Roman philosopher, esteemed civil or moral friendships, it teaches us that Christian friendships should be even more highly esteemed.

(2) As one of our late senators stated, “a friend is far more than a man’s self.”

(a) Men live their lives and die while still desiring some things like the finishing of a work.

(b) But if a man has a true friend, he may rest assured that the care of these things shall continue after him.

6. Objection: But Solomon in one place said that the rich have many friends (Prov. 14:20), and in another, wealth makes many friends (Prov. 19:4).

a) Answer: Solomon, in both places, discovers the covetousness and partiality of men in the world who want to use these sorts of friendships to their own advantage.

(1) Of all sorts of friends, money-friends are the worst.

(2) A true, substantial friend is the conscientious man (Neh. 7:2; Dan. 6:4-5).

(3) It is a true saying that friendship cannot be where goodness is not.

(a) “He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend,” (Prov. 22:11).

b) What a sore evil parents and heads of families bring upon themselves and those under their charge when, because of their atheistic principles, dangerous opinions, and damnable practices, bring on themselves and their children the curse of God.

(1) *Let no wicked person conclude and presume God's love to him from material gifts.*

(2) *It is not merely the distribution of, nor the receiving of 30 talents that is an evidence of God's love, but rather the grace to employ them well, (Matt. 25:30).*

(a) *What great pity is it to see men of breeding and quality in the world strip themselves of their honor through wicked indulgences in luxury and abundance?*

(b) *And how sad is it afterwards when they prostitute their gifts to defend these indulgences?*

(c) *Is this not treason against heaven, to guild their own sins, namely, to call carousing good fellowship, loyalty, or civility; to call swearing and dueling, gallantry or manhood; to call covetousness, good husbandry; and extravagance, generosity?*

(3) *Ah, what a curse is it for knowing persons to hide, mitigate, and plead for sin?*

(a) *Is not this seeking to justify that which Christ came to condemn?*

(b) *Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isa. 5:20).*

(c) *"They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge," (Jer. 4:22).*

(d) *"The light of the body is the eye, therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body is full of darkness. Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness," (Luke 11:34-35).*

7. The very works of wicked men's callings are liable to God's curse.

a) Even his natural actions of eating and drinking feeds his body of sin and makes provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts.

(1) *Every creature of God is good, etc., that is sanctified by the word and prayer, (1 Tim. 4:4-5).*

b) His civil actions, "the ploughing of the wicked," is sin (Prov. 21:4).

c) He is cursed in the city and in the field (Deut. 28:16).

d) His buying and selling are cursed, as well as his building and planting, (Deut. 28:30).

e) To be sure, his religious actions are no better.

(1) *"The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to God," (Prov. 15:8).*

(2) *"He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination," (Prov. 28:9).*

(a) *Further, God's curse is extended to the children of wicked parents.*

f) The second commandment given in Exod. 20:5 says, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me..."

(1) *And God justly punishes wicked parents, as well as wicked children of wicked parents.*

(2) *There are many instances of this in Scripture, both regarding individuals and families, and in whole kingdoms and churches: Ahab and his house, Jeroboam and his posterity (2 Kings 9:7-9, compared with 1 Kings 14:10-11), and Gehazi and his seed (2 Kings 5).*

(3) *The Egyptians were plagued in their firstborn, (Exod. 11:5-6).*

(4) *The Jews and their children are under the wrath of God to this day (Matt. 27:25, 1 Thess. 2:16).*

(5) *Achan's sin brought punishment on himself and his family (Josh. 7).*

(a) *Yes, all Israel fares the worse for his sin.*

(b) *And there were three years of famine during the end of David's time because of Saul and his bloody house (2 Sam. 21:1-2).*

g) This is consistent with the justice of God because:

(1) *The punishments which God brings on the children for the father's sins are only temporal and outward punishments.*

(a) *Sometimes they are smitten with infectious diseases, as Gehazi's offspring.*

(b) *Some come to untimely ends, as Amnon and Absalom, and the little children of Dathan and Abiram.*

(c) *Posterity may fare better or worse outwardly and temporally for the virtues or vices of their ancestors, but spiritually and eternally they do not.*

(d) *For never did any man go to heaven for his father's goodness, or to hell for his father's wickedness.*

(2) *Most of the time children follow in their father's ways and continue in their sins, and so draw on themselves their punishments.*

(a) *It is certain, that most times sins pass from the father to the son, and so downward, by a kind of lineal descent from parents to children.*

(b) *In this way, whole families are tainted with the special vices of the generations above them by nature, example, or education.*

(c) *Therefore, parents ought to beware of sins that come more natural to them, following the predominant weaknesses in themselves, and of giving their children bad examples for lack of a good education.*

(d) *If we should observe some families for several generations descending, we can observe whole generations of riotous drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, persecutors, oppressors, and otherwise wicked individuals, superstitious and idolatrous families, and such like.*

(e) *And in this way, the curse of God descends on posterity.*

(3) *It is to be noted how justly God punishes children for the sins of wicked parents that between head and members, governors and those governed, (whether in kingdoms, churches, or families), there is such a union, that they appear as one body.*

(a) *And where there is union, there is communion suited to the relative state of things and people in regard to rewards and punishments, just as the whole person is punished for one part – whether from a sin of the tongue or hand.*

(i) For they act as a whole.

(b) *And so it is with magistrates and rulers in regard to those under government.*

(c) *For, as the natural body's movements are guided and commanded by superior principles of sense and reason, to go forth and bring home those things which are suitable to it, so it is in every political body.*

(d) *Inferior instruments are guided by superior powers, which, by participating in evil, whether in themselves or their representatives, become guilty and so liable to punishment.*

(4) *Observe that Achan's sin was publicly and solemnly prohibited, and the punishment threatened fully known to all of his family.*

(a) *Even if there were infants or children that were too young to understand, they still cannot be said to suffer unjustly because of that natural contagion of sin drawn from the loins of their parents and because of some actual sins committed.*

(5) This punishment involving the posterity of Achan should not be considered to be the punishment of children, as the punishment of parents, because the suffering of children, being so near and dear to them, rendered this dispensation more notable and exemplary to all Israel, and more painful to Achan, which was the intent of it.

(6) Innocent children sometimes suffer for guilty ancestors, but such visitations may have kindness in them.

(7) We must beware of questioning God's judicial proceedings, or examining them by our own measures, of man's reason, laws or tribunals.