

## Part 3 The Wicked are Cursed by God 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: Parents are not to be wicked examples to their children.

1. Having shown that it is consistent with the justice of God to punish posterity for predecessors sins with temporal punishments; let all parents take heed of being evil examples to their children, of swearing, cursing, sabbath-breaking, cheating, stealing, oppressing, coveting, lest they, by following in their footsteps suffer eternal judgments.

- a) Let all parents beware of breaking their baptismal covenant, thereby causing their children to break it, and undoing themselves and their children to God's blessings for all eternity unless mercy intervene.

2. The curse of God on wicked houses affects material things as well as individuals. These things are either temporal or spiritual.

- a) Regarding things temporal, God is highly displeased when he punishes sinners with prosperity, as the rich man's full table, served up with his music and songs.

(1) As Luke 12:19-20 warns, "And [when] I say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?'"

(a) Let it not seem strange that wicked families prosper in the world, and increase in riches, for they are cursed in their houses, lands, cattle, in city and country.

(b) "A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses," (Luke 12:15).

(c) Do not focus so much on the gift, but rather the good will of the giver.

**(i) Don't look at the bulk but at the blessing.**

(d) "In the revenues of the wicked is trouble," (Prov. 15:6).

- b) What profit or pleasure is there in that abundance which will not allow the rich to sleep?

(1) "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked," (Psa. 37:16).

(2) Even if it were possible for all the delights of men to run into the wicked man's cistern, a frown from God's offended countenance would make all bitter to him.

(3) The handwriting set before carousing Belshazzar astonished him, and his heart sunk in the height of his mirth.

(4) What made Cain's countenance fall?

(a) He was the firstborn son of Adam and Eve and heir apparent to the world.

(b) Was it not because God had no respect for him and his offering? (Gen. 4:5).

(c) If we come nearer and view the wicked man's life in his wealth and prosperity, we shall find him cursed by God in temporal things by his desire, his use, and his value of riches.

3. The wicked's inordinate desire is without measure, and so it is without content with his condition.
- a) They that desire riches above all else fall into temptation and a snare (1 Tim. 6:9).  
    - (1) "He that hurries to be rich hath an evil eye, and considers not that poverty shall come upon him," (Prov. 28:22).
  - b) What a curse is it to make the riches of this world a Christian's god?
  - c) What a curse is it, to be a friend of the world and the enemy of God (James 4:4)?
  - d) What a curse is it to prefer the creature before the Creator, things seen before unseen, temporal before eternal, the body before the soul, and earth before heaven?
  - e) Is it not just of God to disinherit all these wicked souls of true happiness who place such an emphasis on things here below?
4. Wicked men provoke God, not only in desiring, but in using and having riches.
- a) The truth is that wicked men do not use riches; their riches use them in their luxury, pride, oppression, pleasures and showiness.
  - b) That which God designed to support and maintain virtue and piety among men and Christians is wasted on entertaining vice and ungodliness, to elevate themselves to high places and make opportunities for them to commit greater sins.
  - c) Whereas riches are the servants of good men, they are the masters of wicked men.
  - d) The good man makes his riches subordinate to the glory of God; but the wicked man is in slavery to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
  - e) In the sight of God, wicked men have no sanctified right to these temporal things, while they are outside of Christ.
  - f) And though they have an indulgent amount of the common bounty of divine providence, they feel entitled to them.  
    - (1) *And what good is the comfort of having or using these temporal goods without the grace and blessing of God?*
    - (2) *Is it not a sign of God's wrath and curse on men's houses and families when they allow the world to rule their consciences, time, education, office, reason, souls, and bodies?*
    - (3) *When the world has stolen away God's worship, sabbaths, ordinances and ministry, is there not a curse on such abused riches?*
    - (4) *Every good man makes use of his riches, as Joshua did of the Gibeonites, making them hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God, (Josh. 9:23).*
5. What a sad account every wicked man will be required to make?
- a) How will his abused riches rise up in judgment against him?
  - b) Many were the costly sins which he maintained, many needless visits, many expensive curiosities and fancies, many extravagant fashions in apparel, furnishings, meats, and drinks.
  - c) But what little good has this wicked rich man done to church or state, to strangers or relations, or to his own family, where charity should begin?
  - d) Have not many wicked families adopted their sins of oppression, pride, covetousness, and sinfulness to inherit their estates, and disinherit their posterity?
  - e) Where there is more wealth without more grace to manage this increase, it will prove to be a curse instead of a blessing.
6. Therefore, desire an increase of grace that you may use riches to the honor of God, not to maintain indulgence and ungodliness.

a) For the day is coming when God will summon all such persons and families to give an account of their large portion of worldly things and how they abused it all (Luke 16:11, Hos. 2:8-9).

7. Riches are abused one of two ways: they are either overvalued or undervalued; the covetous are guilty of the one, and the prodigal of the other, which brings me to the next point.

a) Wicked men provoke God to curse them for the value they make of riches.

b) God placed man over those earthly things, and it is astonishing how low sinful, contemptible man will stoop for them.

c) Who would think that a reasonable creature could place his happiness on that which is so soon gone? (Hab. 2:6, Eccl. 5:16, Prov. 23:5).

*(1) And yet this is true, (Luke 12:19).*

d) To place God and the creature in the same rank and order, and to worship the creature jointly with the Creator, is no less sin than idolatry; but to set the creature above the Creator is atheism.

*(1) Can that man or family have the blessing of God upon them and theirs, who bow down to the gods of silver and gold?*

*(2) Ah, what is man without divine grace?*

*(3) How sensual, how base, how brutish he is in choice and affection?*

*(4) This value that carnal men set on temporal things opens a wide door to all manner of sin, bribery, oppression, lying, perjury, flattery, oppressive tyrannical lawsuits and unhappy disposing of children, to services, trades, preferments and marriages.*

## B. The Wicked are Cursed in Temporal and Spiritual Things

1. But is this all? No, for wicked men and their families are subject to God's curse not only in temporal things, but also in spiritual things such as when they perform outward duties of religion such as prayer, hearing the word, coming to the sacrament, reading God's word, reading good books, and conversing with others about matters of religion.

2. When wicked men pray, their prayers are an abomination.

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

b) "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight," (Prov. 15:8).

*(1) The actions of wicked men, whether natural, civil, or religious, are a stench in the nostrils of God as has been mentioned before.*

c) But to the matter in hand, concerning outward religious works of unregenerate men, whether performed publicly on the Lord's Day, or privately in the family; take notice of the following points:

*(1) 1. It is better that those persons who do not pray at all in their houses, continue to pray in public.*

*(a) It is better to do that which is materially good, than that which is both materially and formally evil.*

*(b) It is better to have a form of worship and religion, than atheistic profaneness.*

*(c) It is better to have leaves of profession, than nothing but the cursed fruits of a corrupt tree.*

*(d) It is more preferred to exercise common gifts and operations of the spirit and some feeling in the conscience, than to be barren of all gifts and dead to all outward duties of religion, (Isa. 43:23, Amos 5:25).*

(2) 2. God is pleased to reward, with temporal blessings, those who pray and humble themselves before him for their sins, even though they are not true believers and sincere in it.

(3) 3. God encourages all sorts of sinners to observe and set up outward duties of religion, for in doing so they shall fare better.

(a) It is not without reward to perform some formalities of worship, even when done in hypocrisy.

(b) As 1 Kings 21:29 says, "See thou how Ahab humbles himself before me? Because he humbles himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house." Here is an example of a great temporal mercy given to Ahab during his life.

(4) 4. Consider that none be hardened in their omission of religious practices.

(a) Rather, make it clear that sin is in the person, not in the religious practice.

(b) Sin is in the subject which then corrupts the action of that subject.

(c) Therefore, let any necessary blame be laid where it ought, not on religion, nor the duties of it, but upon the performer of those duties.

(5) 5. Seeing that the condition of unregenerate and wicked men is so contagious, that it pollutes all their outward religious actions, let them make haste to move toward conversion by prayer, hearing the Word, reading the Word, reading good books, and by good company.

(a) For although the prayers of the wicked and unregenerate are displeasing to God, yet it is their duty to pray, that they may be turned from their wicked ways.

(b) In this way, their person and performances may seek acceptance through Christ.

(c) So, let all sorts of prayerless families pray, that they may pray in faith, and that they may become sincere and true Christians.

**(i)** *If you have any bowels of compassion for your own souls and the souls of your children, use the means God has provided to remove yourself from the cursed condition of wicked men.*

(d) Who would desire to lead a wicked life, if he were sensible of his misery and the curse of God upon the house of the wicked?

3. Wicked men are subject to God's curse in hearing the word.

a) They are the bad ground Christ spoke of in the parable of the sower, which receives seed among thorns and briers.

b) "But that which bears thorns and briers is rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned," (Heb. 6:8).

c) As they come unprepared to hear, so they depart without profit.

d) The fault is not in the seed but in the ground which receives it.

e) The life of the wicked is compared to untilled, rough, thorny, fallow ground, (Jer. 4:3).

f) What fruit can be expected from it?

(1) How can the seed of the word and a wicked heart agree?

(2) Who does not tremble under God's ordinances without a blessing?

(3) What heart desires to be subjected to God's curse?

(4) Who would not be afraid to hear the blessing pronounced, and have no share in it?

(5) Come then to the word for grace, to allow God to make you a new man and to reform your wicked course of life.

(a) Come to Bethesda, where there is hope of conversion.

(b) If you are willing to be made whole, if you are willing to become a new creature, the work will be done (John 5:6).

*(c) Let nothing hinder or discourage you because of your wickedness, but let it rather persuade you to a constant and conscientious attendance upon the word.*

g) There is hope of grace in the use of the means of grace, but by refusing the means, you are sure to perish.

*(1) Take up a similar resolution to the lepers before Samaria in 2 Kings 7:3-4, "And there were four leprous men at the entering in at the gate, and they said one to another, why sit we here until we die?"*

*(2) "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts," (Isa. 55:7).*

4. Wicked and unconverted men are liable to God's curse in reading the holy Scripture and good books.

a) For they are in the dark and without faith, which is the eye of the soul.

b) They have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear.

c) More particularly, wicked men deprive themselves of God's blessing in reading his word and good books because they do not ask God for it.

*(1) Psa. 119:18 says, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderous things out of thy law."*

*(2) It may be that some wicked men have good intentions, but what is that without grace in the heart to bring life to spiritual understanding?*

*(3) What is a golden head and a stony heart?*

*(4) Further, by reason of ignorance, "the natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God," (1 Cor. 2:14).*

*(5) When wicked men read God's word, it is as men who read maps of foreign countries without knowledge of the globe.*

d) In addition, wicked men expose themselves to God's curse in reading Scripture and good books by converting their knowledge into empty discourse or unprofitable disputes.

*(1) And what could be more vain and carnal in these opinionated times?*

*(2) Never did any age abound more in religion while being barren of piety.*

*(3) Mere interest is the religion of many professors and, as a result, what confusions have opinions brought us in our own country.*

*(4) It is no wonder, seeing they lodge in that wild and restless faculty of the soul, namely imagination, from where all unrests of church and state proceed.*

5. Finally, neighborly reproof and advice, though it is the best of Christian charity, is made of the worst use by wicked men because they either make a mockery of it, consider it disrespectful, or use it to turn friends into enemies.

a) This is the cursed condition of wicked men in regard to spiritual things, (Prov. 9:7).

c. The third thing in opening the former description of God's curse on wicked men is the extent of it, in terms of the duration of it, which is to time here and to eternity hereafter.

1. In regard to time here, there is not a day nor an hour that those outside of Christ are free from the justly deserved curse of God.

a) "God is angry with the wicked every day," (Psa. 7:11).

b) "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup," (Psa. 11:6).

c) Who could sleep quietly in his bed with a drawn sword hanging over his head by a twine thread? But ah, poor creatures, hell fire is kindling for them, all, “while they are treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and while they say, peace and safety, sudden destruction is coming upon them,” (1 Thess. 5:3).

d) But is this the worst of their misery?

e) Can it end with time, can death and the grave put an end to it?

*(1) No, absolutely not.*

f) Evil pursues sinners; the curse is extended to eternity.

*(1) O! woeful state of wicked families!*

*(2) O! that they would consider this before they move out of the low ebb of time into the vast ocean of eternity!*

*(3) Yes, this curse is extended to the longest line of eternity.*

*(a) “Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” (Matt. 25:41).*

*(4) Will this not awaken the most presuming sinner out of the dead sea of security?*

*(a) O! the dreadful thoughts of eternity, eternity in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone!*

*(b) Eternity is not made up of millions of years.*

*(c) You may as soon gird the expanded heavens, or drink up the ocean, as measure eternity.*

*(d) Men would not live in their houses as they do if they truly believed that unless they repent, God’s curse will abide with them forever, even after this wicked life is ended.*

*(e) Rom. 6:23 states that, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

2. Question: But sinful man’s time upon earth, is but for a little while that he sins, compared to eternity.

a) Why should he suffer infinite and eternal punishment, for finite and temporary sins?

b) Answer: Sin and punishment may be considered in three ways: in respect to itself, to its duration, and to its object, or the entity against whom the sin was committed.

c) First of all, sin considered in itself is finite, because that holiness and righteousness in which Adam was at first created finite as suitable to the creature.

*(1) And punishment considered in itself is finite.*

*(2) Were the life of sinful men prolonged forever on earth, they would sin forever.*

*(3) And since the guilt and filth of sin descends into hell with the impenitent, and the damned are ever living and ever sinning, therefore, it is just that their punishment run parallel with their sinning.*

*(4) In regard to duration, sin and punishment both are infinite.*

*(a) That is to say that the malignancy, enmity, and contrariety of sin to God’s purity and goodness remain forever, and so the punishment is inflicted forever.*

*(b) God’s word has placed rewards and punishments one against another, as Matt. 25:46 states, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”*

*(c) “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Rom. 6:23).*

*(d) As rewards are eternal, so punishments are eternal; as life is eternal, so death is eternal.*

**(i)** *By the rule of contraries these illustrate one another.*

3. Lastly, sin and punishment are considered in respect to their object, or against whom sin is committed.

a) Sin is committed against the Majesty of heaven and earth, the supreme Lawgiver of infinite justice and holiness.

b) Sin in this respect may be said to be infinite, the transgression of the law of an infinite Majesty.

c) Although man's time of sinning is short compared to an eternity of suffering, this does not relate to the nature of sin.

d) In like manner, the sin of our first parents deserved eternal punishment the very first day, as well as in future time.

e) Question: Some die in infancy, some in childhood, others in youth, ripe age and old age. And since some have greater and others lesser sins against the light of nature and against the gospel, how can it be said that they suffer justly, if all suffer eternally?

*(1) Answer: Punishment hereafter is proportionate to wicked men's sins committed in this life, and all sorts shall have their just deserts.*

*(a) Christ Jesus, the judge of all the world, will reward everyone according to his work, (Matt. 16:27).*

*(b) The greater and lesser sins shall have greater and lesser punishment, but all shall have eternal punishment.*

*(c) There are degrees of punishment in hell, as of sinning on earth, but eternity of suffering is the portion of all, for the least sin deserves eternal death.*

**(i)** *O! let every wicked man be on his knees and pray for true faith in Christ and repentance of his sins.*

*(d) Let him give no sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids until he partakes of the mercy of God and infinite merits of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who alone delivers from this dreadful wrath to come, (1 Thess. 1:10).*