

extent of the distribution of the topics throughout the curriculum. The planning charts track not only the number of times a topic is considered, but where the topic has a primary or secondary focus. Instrumental in the development of the present overall curricular plan, the planning charts continue to guide instructional decision making and to produce a unified, balanced, and standardized curriculum, marked by stability and expansiveness.

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## CURSINGS

Cursings are the opposite of BLESSINGS and may be expressed as (1) the use of vulgar or profane language by people; (2) words or actions by God or his representatives expressing divine displeasure with or warning against wickedness; or (3) God's chastisement of mankind.

Cursing in the form of profane language employing names of deity literally "in vain" has been present in most societies. Since thought is expressed in language, vulgar and blasphemous language corrupts its user by establishing vulgar or profane thought patterns. The statement "Among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die" (D&C 45:32) illustrates both a cause and a consequence regarding profane language, with its effect on and relationship to spiritual life. Cursing that invokes the name of deity is a form of BLASPHEMY and, in biblical times, was punishable by stoning (Lev. 24:16). Cursing of parents was also cause for offenders to be put to death in ancient Israel (Ex. 21:17; Matt. 15:4).

Cursing may be the expression of divine displeasure, warning, or exclusion from God's blessing. Just as blessings are obtained by RIGHTEOUSNESS, cursings result from breaking God's law and failing to keep his commandments (Deut. 11:26–28; D&C 104:1–8; 124:48). Intelligent human beings are largely responsible for their own circumstances, and President Brigham YOUNG

said the most severe cursings come upon "those who know their Master's will, and do it not" (JD 1:248). Sinning against light and knowledge has more serious consequences than sinning in ignorance (see Mosiah 2:36–37; cf. Alma 32:19–20; 39:6). ALMA<sub>2</sub> gives an example wherein the same land was simultaneously blessed for those who acted righteously and cursed for those who did not (Alma 45:16).

Curses may be pronounced by God, or they may be invoked by his authorized servants, as was the case with Moses (Deut. 27–30); Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:1; 21:20–24); Peter (Acts 5:1–10); Paul (Acts 13:9–12); and Joseph Smith (D&C 103:25; cf. 124:93). However, the Lord's earthly agents are sent forth primarily to bless and not to curse (Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14).

Not all curses have totally negative consequences. As God only does good, his cursings are for "the sake" of improving the person cursed (Gen. 3:17; Deut. 23:5), even though the immediate consequence may be extremely unpleasant. When there is need for correction, the Lord has instructed his servants to reprove "with sharpness," but afterward to show forth an "increase of love" (D&C 121:43).

Some cursings are given first as warnings rather than a more severe immediate chastisement (2 Ne. 1:21, 22); and, like blessings, they sometimes require a long time for their full consequences to be realized. After being invoked, cursings may often be lessened or lifted entirely by subsequent righteousness. Mormon describes an experience of the LAMANITES: "And they began to be a very industrious people; yea, and they were friendly with the Nephites; therefore, they did open a correspondence with them, and the curse of God did no more follow them" (Alma 23:18).

Cursings may affect all temporal and spiritual aspects of our lives because all things are governed by law. Lands, crops, handiwork, employment, children, missionary endeavor, interpersonal relationships, and relationships with God are all subject to both cursing and blessing—depending upon individual and collective righteousness or lack of it.

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