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**THE CONCEPT OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES
IN DEUT. 11:26-28 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
CHRISTIANITY IN YAMBALAND**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

**THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES IN CANDIDACY
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BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is titled "The Concept of Blessings and Curses in Deut. 11:26-28 and Its Implications for Christianity in Yambaland." The choice of this topic was informed by the poor state of Christianity in Yambaland and the gross misunderstanding that some Christians have about the concept of blessings and curses. The purpose was to come up with a balanced biblical view of the concept of blessings and curses, in a bid to correct the wrong beliefs that; 1) Every child of God must experience the blessings of long life, financial prosperity, prosperity in child bearing, material prosperity, etc. as a life manifestation of true blessings; and 2) The absence of these material blessings in the life of a child of God is an indication that such a child of God is operating under a curse.

The writer was particularly concerned with the meaning of blessing and curse in Deut.11:26-28 and related passages, and the understanding of Yamba Christians about the concept of blessings and curses. It was discovered that the meaning of blessing and curse in Deuteronomy is based on a covenant relationship with God. Whoever is in covenant relationship with God is blessed and whoever is not in covenant relationship with him is cursed. On the other hand, the Christian view of blessing and curse in Yambaland is influenced by their cultural background. This makes Christians believe that any setback in their lives is an indication of a curse and that to be blessed primarily means to be wealthy.

This thesis, therefore, offers pastors, theologians, and missionaries a good basis for a balanced biblical teaching on the concept of blessings and

curses which is the bedrock of the religious life of most cultures both past and present. Those saddled with the responsibility of handling the word of God are hereby called upon to underscore the fact that the most important blessing that a Christian has is being in fellowship with God with material blessings as secondary. Secondly, that the presence of hardship in the life of a Christian is not an indication of the presence of a curse because a Christian cannot be cursed. It should also be noted that when a Christian sins God chastises him or her to bring about repentance and restoration.

A. CONCLUSION

This writer wishes to conclude that the concept of blessings and curses in Deuteronomy in particular, and in the Old Testament and the New Testament as a whole is covenantal. That is, being in covenant relationship with Yahweh is the highest form of blessing a person can experience, and being out of covenant relationship is the worst kind of curse to dread. A Christian who is in covenant relationship with Yahweh is encouraged to seek for the material benefits of the covenant. However, if misfortune befalls a Christian, it does not automatically connote that the Christian is operating under a curse.

Furthermore, Yamba Christians should know that when one is in Christ, he cannot be cursed. This is because God cannot curse His child, talkless of the devil and his agents. This does not mean that if a Christian disobeys God, He (God) will not chastise him or her. Therefore, the spiritual, social, and economic backwardness of the Yamba Christians could be traced to the very fact that they have not taken this covenant relationship seriously, and not because they are operating under a curse.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following points are highly recommended for the church in Yambaland:

- 1) Christians in Yambaland are encouraged to be committed to the terms of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. It is not possible to serve two masters at the same time and expect to be blessed.

- 2) Christians in Yambaland must have a change of orientation viz-a-viz the concept of blessings and curses. They must know that the most important blessing is being in covenant relationship with Yahweh. However, they are also encouraged to pray the God of this covenant to endow them with material blessings.
- 3) Pastors and church leaders are encouraged to have a powerful prayer ministry in their church in addition to effective teaching on holy living. This will bring down the power of God and dethrone the cult of "Nwatap."

Suggestions for further studies:

- 1) The psychological role of blessings and curses in enforcing morality and social peace in a non-literate African community.
- 2) The psychological effects of blessings and curses on Christian commitment to God's service.
- 3) The need to do an in-depth study on the cult of "Nwatap," in a bid to better understand the Yamba people and ways to reach them afresh with the gospel.