

A Cursed Blessing & A Blessed Curse

In 1 Chronicles 1:17, we read about the nine sons of Shem.

Their names are: Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, Mesech

But there's two sons I'd like to focus on today.

Ashur and Arphaxad.

Ashur's Story

It was likely that Ashur's parents hoped he would be a helpful blessing to others...but in the end they likely became disappointed.

According to Blue Letter Bible, we learn some interesting background information on Ashur's life.

For one thing, his name comes from the Hebrew word 'ashar (אָשַׁר). It means "to be blessed."

So, I guess when baby Ashur was born into the family picture, there was a chance that Shem and his wife hoped their little son would grow up to become a blessing to those around him—just like the Hebrew word his name is based on.

But did that REALLY happen?

In the pages of sacred history, the answer is a huge NO.

Why?

Because Ashur grew up to be the eponymous ancestor of the Assyrians. So, basically Ashur originally founded the tribe that pretty much—throughout Old Testament Scripture—oppressed God's people.

So, in a sense, Ashur was just a blessing in name.

He was really a "cursed blessing," in a way.

Arphaxad's Story

On the other hand, Arphaxad may not have had a great childhood

Now, let's look into Arphaxad's background.

Unlike his brother, Ashur, Arphaxad doesn't seem to have much of a backstory from the Bible. A few scholars speculated that he found some Chaldean city—yet there's no such Biblical support for that idea.

However, his name in the original Hebrew hints at the raw possibility that his childhood was probably NOT the best.

Here's why: according to Blue Letter Bible, it defines Arphaxad's name this way:

"I shall fail as the breast: he cursed the breast-bottle"

-Arphaxad's name meaning-

So, it could be that when Arphaxad was born, his parents may not have had much affection toward him in comparison to Ashur. It could be that Arphaxad was rejected and unloved at an early, tender age.

Yet, in the Sacred Record, Arphaxad is stated to be one of Jesus' own ancestors!

You can read it for yourself in Luke 3:36, which speaks of Jesus' genealogy.

the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, (Luke 3:36)

Despite being seen as a curse to his family, Arphaxad had the great honor of being part of Christ's genealogy.

In contrast to Ashur, Arphaxad was a curse only in name.

He was a "cursed" blessing.

But, you may be wondering, dear reader, how does all this apply to us?

What God Chooses

From this story of Ashur, the "blessed curse," and Arphaxad, the "cursed blessing," is an illustration of what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church many decades later.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; (1 Corinthians 1:27)

From a worldly, human stand-point, picking a guy who was likely rejected in the family to be the King of kings' ancestor seems foolish! Ridiculous!

But God chose Arphaxad anyway, despite his brother appearing to be a "better" candidate as Christ's ancestor.

And still today, God chooses and uses people whom the world would think would NEVER be good enough.

But why does God do such things?

Well, I'd like to conclude this with Paul's own answer to that question!

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; (1 Corinthians 1:25)

Amen! Maranatha!