



The Curse That Doesn't Alight

By Daniel Kenaston

In this feature, Crossing Cultures, we usually look at what it is like when missionaries go from our culture into a different culture overseas. In the past two issues we looked at worldview and compared some differences in belief systems and behavior of the Konkombas to Western ways. As missionaries we observe many of these differences and make adjustments in our behavior so as to not offend our hosts. And we try to find appropriate ways to communicate the gospel within their context. But sometimes there can be no compromise when a belief is contrary to the Bible. This is true not only for the missionary but for the national Christian.

Again, we look into the Konkomba belief system and see what one church leader faced in his village, the step of faith he took, and what happened when he refused to go along with the normal village practice. Remember, we also face ungodly practices around us. Let us take courage as we read this testimony and see that God honors those who honor Him. This article is an excerpt from a message that Daniel Kenaston preached at the 2004 Youth Bible School (tape #3444, available from the tape ministry).

The blessing of God was on His people. Balak, an enemy of God's people, had called on Balaam, a soothsayer, to come and curse the people of God. We know the story. He could not do it. Why? Because God forbade him. God's blessing was on His people, and He protected them from the curse. You will find the story in Numbers chapters 22 – 24. (The Editor)

Balaam was called to curse Israel. The thought of the money loomed in his eyes and lured him. But it dulled his spiritual senses. Still, he desired to curse them. But he could not. Why? Balaam was an honest man. When he looked into the spirit world he spoke consistently about what he saw. And as he looked over the children of Israel, he could not find anything to curse. He could not find the

powers to truly curse these people. Why? Because God had blessed them.

If God's blessing is on your life, Satan is fighting against you. But also, if God's blessing is on your life, Satan cannot do *anything* to you. I love the verse which says, "Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel..." (Numbers 23:23).

You have to understand that in Africa, because witchcraft is so real, one of the great spiritual battlegrounds for our churches and our people there is fear: the fear of witchcraft, the fear of someone cursing you, the fear that maybe this sickness is because someone threw a curse on you. They really fear those things. It's real to them.

There may be uncomfortableness in your heart when you realize that your new spiritual advance has put you out there as a sitting duck. Satan's gun, so to speak, is trained on your head. We don't like that thought. As much as we want to go off against Satan, it's a fearful thing because Satan has a lot of power.

I think of one of the church leaders in our area. A couple times a year the chief of the village will go around and tell the village people: "It's time to make a sacrifice for the village so that the spirits will bless our village, so that our crops will grow well, so that the animals won't die, so that our children will be healthy. Every head of household needs to contribute money so we can *corporately* buy an animal, and we *corporately* agree to the spirits that we are giving them this animal so that they will bless our entire village."

It is not a tax but it is somewhat like a tax, except for the fact that giving money towards that sacrifice is like putting your "hand" on the sacrifice. It shows that *you* are making the sacrifice. It shows that *you* are asking the spirit world to bless your life.

It happens often. This is not the first time in this particular brother's life. The chief called a meeting. They went around and banged those little bells called bong-bongs, calling everyone to a meeting at the chief's palace. They called our brother along with the other heads of households and said: "Everybody needs to pay up by three days from now. Each man needs to contribute a certain amount of money towards the sheep."

The brother went back home to his house, and the three days passed. He did not contribute the money.

The chief came to see him. The chief himself is not a super-feared authority, but the spirits are feared. The chief came to our dear church leader and said: "You haven't paid. We're ready to buy the sheep. You need to pay your contribution."

And this dear brother said: "Chief, if you want to drill a well for this village, I will do my part; I will even do twice. When you need someone to weed your farm, I will weed your farm. When you want somebody to come and make blocks so that we can build a better school for our village, I will be there. But to put my hand inside the sacrifice, I will not do it."

The chief said: "You will see. You do not threaten me, and you do not threaten the spirits. You will see."

The chief went back to his house and this brother just committed it to the Lord. But he was a little shaky because these things are fearful.

You and I say, "Well, what could a chief really do?" But he knows what a chief can really do; he knows what the spirits can actually do.

The next morning he went out to his farm. On the way to his farm he met a snake. Now, we have a lot of snakes in the African bush, and almost all of them are highly poisonous. But he met the snake and he killed it. That's not all that unusual. These farmers kill snakes often.

He continued to his farm and started weeding. And as he was weeding rows of corn, in a length of three corn rows that morning our brother killed six snakes. Happenstance? Never! One snake in a farm—possibly; maybe two, maybe even three. But he killed *seven snakes* that morning!

There was no doubt in his mind what was happening: Satan was trying to make him afraid by sending those seven snakes. As he took his hoe and just beat the brains out, he called the name of Jesus and called on God for protection.

And as he killed them, his confidence started growing. The first one—wow! His heart was beating as he killed that snake. Then as he started farming and killed another one, he realized that there were a lot of snakes, and yet none of them was biting him. God was showing him those snakes beforehand, and as he was killing every one of them, he started rejoicing!

"There is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." You are Jacob and you are Israel. If you are walking with God, there is no enchantment against you. Though the chief, though the evil spirits, though Satan himself, though the king of Moab go and mobilize all kinds of curses against you—there is no enchantment; there is no divination; there is nothing that can happen to you because of Satan's plan, without it going through the hand of God.

I understand that God does allow bad things to happen in our lives. The book of Job is in the Bible. But that does *not* mean that you need to be afraid of Satan and his devices. If you could see from your new camp that you staked out for God in your life, if you could see from your camp up there on the mountainside the king of Moab himself and Balaam standing beside him trying to curse your life, don't be afraid! If you should meet seven snakes in one morning, don't be afraid! If Satan sets himself against you because you have set yourself to follow God, know in your heart that there is security in God's blessing on your life. There is no enchantment that can do anything against you. There is no divination of juju (magic) powers, no witchcraft that can have any power over you, because God has blessed you.

Balaam came back to Balak and said: "How do I curse a people that the God of heaven has blessed? I look out over their encampment and all I see is blessing! How can I curse those people?" What Balak did not understand is that though the people that Balaam blessed were blessed and the people that he cursed were cursed, he could only curse those that God curses. Those whom God blesses, he could not do *anything* against. Although he really wanted some of that gold and silver, he could not curse the people that God had blessed.

If your heart is clear and pure, God's blessing is on your life, and there's *nothing* that Satan can do about it.

