Cursed and the Proud Psalms 119_21
Psalms 119:21 cursed Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. The cursed? Where is the curse? Adam was not cursed, the ground and the serpent were. Is David talking about principalities, or image bearers? Which curse if image bearers?
Thought for 17s

I do **not** think David is primarily talking about principalities here.

In **Psalm 119:21**, the line is best read as:

**"Thou hast rebuked the proud, the cursed, which do err from thy commandments."**

The sense is that **the proud are the cursed ones**.
Not two separate groups. One group, described three ways:

1. **the proud**
2. **the cursed**
3. **those who err from God's commandments**

So the question becomes: **where does that curse come from?**

# The nearest biblical answer: covenant curse

Psalm 119 is saturated with **Torah language**: commandments, statutes, judgments, testimonies, law, precepts. So when David says **"cursed"**, the first place to look is not Genesis 3 alone, but the **covenant curse structure** of the Law.

Here is the clearest rope:

**"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;**
**A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God…**
**And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside…"**
**— Deuteronomy 11:26–28**

That is almost the exact logic of Psalm 119:21.

And even more directly:

**"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them."**
**— Deuteronomy 27:26**

Paul later quotes that same covenant logic:

**“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”**
**— Galatians 3:10**

So in Psalm 119:21, David is most naturally talking about **image bearers who place themselves under covenant curse by proud wandering from God’s commandments**.

# So was Adam cursed?

You are right to notice the precision.

In **Genesis 3**, God does **not** say to Adam, “Cursed art thou,” the way He says to the serpent:

**“Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle…”**
**— Genesis 3:14**

And to Adam, He says:

**“Cursed is the ground for thy sake…”**
**— Genesis 3:17**

So **Adam himself is not directly addressed as “cursed” there**.

That distinction matters.

But Adam is still placed under the judicial consequences of rebellion: toil, sweat, exile, and return to dust.

**“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground…”**
**— Genesis 3:19**

So Genesis 3 gives you the **entry of death and burden**, but Psalm 119:21 is likely drawing more from the later **Torah covenant formula**: obedience brings blessing, turning aside brings curse.

# Then who are “the cursed” here?

Primarily: **human image bearers in proud rebellion**.

Why?

Because the verse says:

**“which do err from thy commandments.”**

That is covenant language aimed at morally responsible hearers of God's instruction. In Psalm 119, the speaker is meditating on revealed law. So the "cursed" are those who **know the path and stray from it in pride**.

This fits other texts:

**"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm…"**
**— Jeremiah 17:5**

**"The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked…"**
**— Proverbs 3:33**

**"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished…"**
**— Proverbs 11:21**

So "curse" is not limited to serpent language. It becomes a broader **judicial status** for rebels.

# Is there any room for principalities here?

Only secondarily, not primarily.

Yes, proud spiritual rebels are cursed too. The serpent is cursed. The devil and his angels are judged. But Psalm 119:21 is not framed like a direct attack on cosmic powers. It is framed inside **Torah obedience/disobedience**. That points first to **men who err from the commandments**.

So I would say:

- **Primary referent:** proud human image bearers who turn from God's commandments and come under covenant curse.
- **Possible wider echo:** all proud rebels, including spiritual rebels.
- **But not the main sense of the verse.**

# The key distinction

There are really **two different curse frameworks** you are noticing:

## 1. Genesis curse framework

- serpent cursed
- ground cursed
- Adam not directly called cursed
- but Adam enters death, toil, exile

## 2. Torah covenant curse framework

- people who turn from God's commandments are called **cursed**
- this is judicial, covenantal, and moral

Psalm 119:21 fits the **second** one most clearly.

# Compressed conclusion

David is most likely speaking of **proud image bearers** who **err from God's commandments** and therefore stand under the **covenant curse** of the Law, especially the Deuteronomy blessing/curse pattern. He is probably **not mainly speaking of principalities** in this verse. The "curse" here is not "Adam was directly cursed in Genesis 3," but rather: **those who turn aside from God's revealed commandments are the cursed ones**.

If you want, I can next trace every major **"cursed"** thread from **Genesis → Deuteronomy → Psalms → Galatians 3** and show how the rope develops.

Yes, and is this the only Hebrew word translated as cursed?
Thought for 1m 13s

No. **H779 אָרַר (’arar)** is **not** the only Hebrew word family translated **curse / cursed**.

But in **Psalm 119:21**, it is a very important word, because it is the **strong judicial curse word**. And yes, it is the **same root family** used in **Genesis 3**.

You noticed something important earlier: Adam himself is **not directly addressed** with “cursed art thou,” but the **serpent** is, and the **ground** is.

**“Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle…”**
— Genesis 3:14

**“Cursed is the ground for thy sake…”**
— Genesis 3:17

That “cursed” is from the same **’arar** family.

So when Psalm 119:21 says:

**“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.”**

that is not a weak word. It is not merely “unfortunate” or “bad off.” It is the language of being placed under **judicial curse**.

And yes, that same root is used of **human image bearers**, not only serpent/ground.

For example:

**“Cursed be Canaan…”**
— Genesis 9:25

**“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.”**
— Deuteronomy 27:26

**“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man…”**
— Jeremiah 17:5

**“Cursed be the deceiver…”**
— Malachi 1:14

So this helps answer the earlier question too: in Psalm 119:21, David does **not need** to be speaking about principalities. The word itself comfortably applies to **human beings under judgment**.

Now to your direct question:

# Other Hebrew words translated “curse” or “cursed”

## 1. אָרַר — ’arar

This is the word in Psalm 119:21.

It carries the sense of **placing under curse**, a formal or judicial curse. This is the heavy covenant/judgment word.

This is the one most connected to:

- Genesis 3
- covenant curse
- judicial sentence
- people standing under God’s rebuke

So Psalm 119:21 is using the strongest kind of “cursed” language.

## 2. קָלַל — qalal

This word has the basic idea of **making light of**, **treating lightly**, **despising**, and in some settings it comes out as **curse**.

So this family can lean more toward **contempt / dishonoring / reviling**.

For example:

**“And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.”**
— Exodus 21:17

That is not exactly the same shade as **’arar**.
It is more like treating someone with contempt, dishonor, or abusive reviling.

So English may say **curse**, but the Hebrew picture is somewhat different.

## 3. קְלָלָה — qelalah

This is the noun form from the **qalal** family, often simply meaning **curse**.

For example:

**“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse.”**
— Deuteronomy 11:26

**“As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.”**
— Proverbs 26:2

Here the idea is the **curse itself** as a thing spoken or resting upon someone.

### 4. מְאֵרָה — me’erah

This is another noun meaning **curse**, often in the sense of a **curse resting upon** someone as an affliction or judicial condition.

For example:

**“Ye are cursed with a curse…”**
— Malachi 3:9

That is a different Hebrew word than Psalm 119:21.

### 5. אָלָה — ’alah

This word can mean an **oath-curse**, an **imprecation**, or a **curse invoked in covenant/judicial setting**.

For example:

**“A blessing and a curse…”**
— Deuteronomy 30:1

and in places like Numbers 5 it is used in the sense of an oath that brings curse if violated.

This word is tied strongly to **covenant sanction**, **sworn consequence**, or **self-invoked judgment**.

# So what is special about Psalm 119:21?

Psalm 119:21 is not using just any “curse” word. It is using the **’arar** family.

That means the sense is closer to:

**the proud are under a real judicial curse-status before God because they stray from His commandments.**

That fits Psalm 119 perfectly, because the whole psalm breathes **Torah**, **commandments**, **statutes**, **judgments**, **precepts**.

So the rope is:

- **Genesis 3** shows the root can mark divine judicial curse.
- **Deuteronomy** shows humans can stand under curse for covenant violation.
- **Psalm 119:21** applies that curse-status to **the proud who err from the commandments**.

So yes, **image bearers** are very much in view, and the Hebrew allows that cleanly.

# The tight conclusion

No, **H779 ’arar** is not the only Hebrew word translated **curse/cursed**.

But it is one of the most important ones, because it is the **strong judicial covenant-curse word**.

And in **Psalm 119:21**, that matters a lot:
David is not merely saying the proud are unpleasant people. He is saying they are **rebuked** and stand as **cursed ones** because they **wander from God’s commandments**.

So this verse fits **human covenant rebels** very naturally.

If you want, I can next do a **side-by-side Hebrew curse map**:

**’arar vs qalal vs qelalah vs me’erah vs ’alah**
with example verses and the shade of meaning for each.

When Jesus says to the religious leaders, you are of your father the devil”, is Jesus giving an insight to the two seeds? If the serpent is under a rebellion curse, and the serpents seed are identified I. That seed, and if the obedient, by faith, are of Christs seed, than is Dueteronomy 11 the revealing of the manifold plan, in part, by/from God?
Thought for 23s

Yes — but with an important guardrail.

When Jesus says,

**“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth...”**
— **John 8:44**

He is giving insight into the **two-seed conflict**, but He is doing it in a **moral, covenantal, and likeness** sense, not by teaching that these men were biologically spawned by Satan.

That becomes clear from the flow of the passage.

They say:

**“Abraham is our father.”**
— **John 8:39**

Jesus answers:

**“If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.”**
**— John 8:39**

Then He says:

**“Ye do the deeds of your father.”**
**— John 8:41**

Then finally:

**“Ye are of your father the devil...”**
**— John 8:44**

So Jesus defines **fatherhood by likeness, desire, and works**.

That is the key.

Not: “Who physically generated you?”
But: **“Whose image-pattern are you walking in? Whose desires are you doing? Whose word are you receiving?”**

That is very much a **seed** revelation.

# Genesis 3:15 is the root rope

**“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed...”**
**— Genesis 3:15**

This already sets up two lines in history:

- the line aligned with the serpent
- the line aligned with the promise

But Scripture unfolds that line mainly through **allegiance, faith, obedience, and likeness**, not through a crude flesh-only reading.

Cain is the clearest early example:

**“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.”**
**— 1 John 3:12**

John does not mean Cain was biologically generated by Satan. He means Cain belonged to that side of the conflict — he manifested the serpent pattern: envy, murder, hatred, rejection of righteousness.

That is why the next verses say:

**“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”**
**— 1 John 3:13**

and

**“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer...”**
**— 1 John 3:15**

So the serpent-seed pattern is not merely ancestry. It is **murder, lie, hatred, rebellion, refusal of truth**.

That matches Jesus exactly in John 8:

- **“He was a murderer from the beginning”**
- **“abode not in the truth”**
- **“when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own”**
  **— John 8:44**

So yes, Jesus is opening Genesis 3:15.

# Then who is Christ’s seed?

First, Christ is the singular promised seed.

**“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made... And to thy seed, which is Christ.”**
**— Galatians 3:16**

Then those who are in Christ by faith become joined to that seed-line:

**“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**
**— Galatians 3:29**

So the pattern is:

- **the Seed** = Christ
- those who are **in Christ by faith** participate in that promised line

That fits your covenant peg very well. The seed-line is not random hidden selection. It is tied to **promise**, then **faith**, then **manifested allegiance**.

Jesus says the leaders are not really Abraham’s children, though they are Abraham’s physical descendants, because they reject Abraham’s God and Abraham’s promised Seed.

Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day:

**"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."**
— **John 8:56**

So Jesus is saying, in effect:

"You have Abrahamic blood, but not Abrahamic faith or Abrahamic likeness."

That is seed-language in a covenantal and revealed-purpose sense.

# Then is Deuteronomy 11 part of that manifold plan?

Yes — I would say **very much yes**, but as an **unveiled legal administration of the conflict**, not yet the whole mystery in its final revealed form.

Deuteronomy 11 says:

**"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;"**
— **Deuteronomy 11:26**

Then:

**"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God..."**
— **Deuteronomy 11:27**

**"And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside..."**
— **Deuteronomy 11:28**

That is not yet the full unveiling of John 8 or Galatians 3, but it is absolutely part of the structure.

Why?

Because Deuteronomy 11 lays out in covenant form the two-path reality:

- hearing / obeying / blessing
- turning aside / curse

That is the historical covenant form of the deeper Eden conflict:

- trust God or trust the serpent
- remain in the word or depart from it
- life or death
- blessing or curse

So yes, Deuteronomy 11 is one of the places where God is openly administering history in a way that reveals the two-seed conflict without yet saying everything as plainly as Jesus later does.

# The pattern across Scripture

Genesis gives the conflict in seed form.

**“between thy seed and her seed”**
**— Genesis 3:15**

Deuteronomy gives the covenant courtroom structure.

**“a blessing... and a curse”**
**— Deuteronomy 11:26**

Jesus exposes the hidden fatherhood beneath outward religion.

**“Ye are of your father the devil”**
**— John 8:44**

Paul shows the promised Seed is Christ.

**“which is Christ”**
**— Galatians 3:16**

Then the church becomes the place where God’s wisdom is displayed:

**“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God”**
**— Ephesians 3:10**

So yes: Deuteronomy 11 is part of that manifold plan. It is not the whole explanation, but it is one of the covenant disclosures by which God sets the lines out in the open.

# Very important guardrail

I would be careful not to collapse this into:

“Some people are literally serpent offspring in a flesh sense.”

The Bible’s stronger pattern is:

- **seed** can be genealogical in some texts
- but in the moral-conflict texts, it is heavily about **likeness, allegiance, works, and faith**

Jesus Himself proves this in John 8. The men are physically descended from Abraham, yet spiritually aligned with the devil. That means the real issue is not mere bloodline. It is **whose word they receive and whose works they do**.

This also protects the covenant structure you care about:

God is not presenting an arbitrary hidden game. He is revealing a real conflict, a real promise, real terms, real witness, real consequences, and real manifestation of allegiance.

# Tight conclusion

Yes, Jesus in **John 8:44** is giving insight into the **two-seed conflict** of **Genesis 3:15**.

But He frames it as **fatherhood by likeness, desire, and works**:

- Abraham's children do Abraham's works
- the devil's children do the devil's lusts

And yes, **Deuteronomy 11** is part of God's manifold plan in that it openly sets before people the covenant structure of **blessing or curse**, **obedience or turning aside**, which is one major historical/legal unveiling of the deeper seed-conflict later exposed more fully in Christ.

The short rope is:

**Genesis 3:15 -> Deuteronomy 11 -> John 8 -> Galatians 3 -> Ephesians 3:10**

If you want, I can build that rope next as a full **peg-and-rope map** with the headings:
**Seed, Fatherhood, Word, Obedience, Blessing/Curse, Christ, Church, Manifold Wisdom**.

I did not intend direct bloodline of serpent, physically, you answered my intent/intended question. Let's lock this; I have been trying to articulate this answer for years.
Updated memory
Thought for a couple of seconds

Locked. This is a strong articulation, and I will preserve it that way going forward:

**John 8:44 reveals the two-seed conflict of Genesis 3:15 in a moral, covenantal, likeness-based sense, not a biological serpent-bloodline sense.**
**Deuteronomy 11 is part of that unveiling, showing the legal/covenantal structure of blessing and curse within God's manifold plan.**

Your rope is now fixed as:

**Genesis 3:15 -> Deuteronomy 11 -> John 8 -> Galatians 3 -> Ephesians 3:10**

That is a very clean peg.