

# Joshua 8:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

## Analysis

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**He read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings**—Joshua fulfilled Moses' command (Deuteronomy 27:11-26, 31:9-13) to publicly proclaim the entire Torah at Shechem. The Hebrew word for 'blessings' (בְּרָכוֹת, berachot) and 'cursings' (קְלָלוֹת, qelalot) emphasized covenant conditionality: obedience brings life, disobedience brings death (Deuteronomy 28).

This comprehensive reading occurred before 'all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers' (v. 35), democratizing God's word across all social boundaries. Unlike pagan religions with esoteric priest-only knowledge, Israel's covenant was publicly accessible. The pattern anticipates Ezra's law-reading (Nehemiah 8) and finds ultimate fulfillment in Christ, who embodies both blessing (becoming a curse for us, Galatians 3:13) and the complete Word made flesh (John 1:14).

## Historical Context

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The public reading of the law was required every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). Joshua's immediate implementation upon entering the land established covenant faithfulness as the foundation for conquest. The ceremony at Shechem occurred between two mountains, creating a natural amphitheater where the entire assembly could hear—a remarkable feat before modern sound amplification.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. Why did God require public reading of both blessings and curses rather than emphasizing only the positive?
2. How does the inclusion of 'women, little ones, and strangers' in the assembly challenge cultural hierarchies in God's kingdom?
3. What does Joshua's immediate obedience to covenant renewal teach about prioritizing spiritual foundations before pursuing further victories?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאַחֲרָיִ	כִּי	קָרָא	אֶת	כָּל	דִּבְרֵי	הַתּוֹרָה:	הַבְּרָכָה
And afterward	H3651	he read	H853	H3605	all the words	of the law	the blessings
H310		H7121			H1697	H8451	H1293
וְהַקְלָלָהּ	כָּל	הַכֶּתֶב	וּבְ	בֵּסֶפֶר	הַתּוֹרָה:		
and cursings	H3605	according to all that is written		in the book	of the law		
H7045		H3789		H5612	H8451		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Nehemiah 13:1** (Parallel theme): On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever;