“God is a Child-Killer!”

This is about your mentioning that the bible says abortion is a sin. Then I would say that God should also not abort the unborn. But when he drowned the world, he aborted thousands of sinless unborn children.

So!!!!! don’t talk about abortion. (That is if you believe in the ark nonsense!)

We have over 5 billion people in this world, and when there will be more, there will be famine, and those people that listened to you will come after you, and demand an explanation. And then your home made GOD will not be there to help you. He never was there anyway. He is a figment of your imagination. Those people have been black mailed by your teachers and the teachers before them, but the time of reckoning is not that far off. You have leached enough monetarily of them. Your Churches are becoming emptier.

PS. In 2 Kings 2:23,24– he kills 42 Children by sending 2 she-bears to rip them apart, because they called an old man a baldhead. This has not a thing to do with abortion: But it shows that if there was a God like the Bible describes, He does not like children at all. I could give you many more text to this effect, but I had my say.

I can tell you are very angry. I don’t know what caused your anger, but whatever it was, I’m sorry.

Since you have arrived at the point of decided that there is no God, then it seems to be inappropriate and pointless to be angry at people who believe in Him. Because if there truly is no God, then the Bible is a man-made book of myths, and all the stories in it are meaningless. And if there is no God, then you have no basis for outrage at anything that anyone says about anything at all because there is no ultimate meaning or purpose in life. And if there is no meaning or

purpose in life, why waste your time getting angry at other people's false beliefs? You may as well rage at the fact that the sky is blue or that there are 24 hours in the day. None of it matters in the end anyway.

But I think underneath your insistence that there is no God, you probably know better, and He may have allowed something painful to happen for which you are angry at Him. I'm sorry for that.

And if nothing happened, you've lived a great and charmed life but you're angry anyway, then I'm sorry for that too, because it's sad to be angry for no reason. Uses lots of energy that could be used for other things.

Concerning the 2 Kings passage you mention, "children" is an unfortunate translation. It should really be translated "young men" like the majority of the other times this word appears in scripture. Their disrespectful taunt of God's prophet incurred the discipline of God because He is holy and His prophet is holy, and treating God and His prophet with contempt is a very serious sin. God loves children, but He is also holier than we can really imagine with our puny little minds. I don't know the answers to all the questions that bother you about God's actions in the Bible, but I do know that He is bigger than our questions, and we don't have all the facts that would allow us to fully understand why an immense and powerful and holy God would do things that make us shake our heads and wonder about.

But I do know He loves us. Even when doing hurtful things, like drowning the world. Just like a cancer surgeon can be loving even when he's cutting into people's bodies to take out cancerous growths.

Thank you for writing.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Does Calvinism Make People into Choiceless Puppets?”

When I look at the doctrine of predestination from the Calvinistic perspective I seem to come to the same final conclusion. It appears to me that in the Calvinistic approach, man is only an observer. Which would mean that my actions, thoughts, hopes, dreams, relationships, etc., are all meaningless. I call man an observer because, according to Calvin, ALL is predetermined.

There is no “choice.” There is double predestination. Life would end up being deterministic and fatalistic. I am merely a linear program executing my own destruction. What’s the use in doing anything? To me love then becomes meaningless. More importantly, how do I know for sure that I am really one of the “chosen”? Since every part of my being is totally deprived, how do I know if I really believe what I need to believe since my intellect is deprived also? I have talked to some Calvinists about this. They seem to ignore the philosophical problems I pose and move on without ever answering my questions. I get the old “That’s the way it is,” answer. It appears to me that if you follow Calvin’s view to its logical extreme, man becomes only an observer who can affect nothing. My problem arises when I conclude that if this is the case, then God sends a person to Hell for sins that God determined and orchestrated for the observer to “commit.” Why would God hold me responsible for a sin that He “programmed” me to commit? Perhaps I am misunderstanding Calvinism but this is the way I see it. Please correct me if I am mistaken. Thank you for you time. Sorry about the length of my question. I am in search of knowledge. I have changed my mind many times on this issue. HELP!

You ask a very important question. Unfortunately, it cannot be adequately answered in an e-mail (not by me, at any rate). I will attempt to sketch out a few lines of thought for your consideration, but let me also recommend a couple books that might help you think through some of these issues in a little more detail. On the side of what might be called "theistic determinism" you may want to look at Jonathan Edwards' *Freedom of the Will*. On the other hand, Norman Geisler's *Chosen but Free* presents a position which some might call "moderate Calvinism," insofar as he does not embrace all five points of Dortian Calvinism and argues for genuine, self-determining, human freedom and responsibility. There are also some good articles in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* on "Calvinism," "Predestination," and "Freedom, Free Will, and Determinism". In my response, I will simply try to set forth a few passages from the Bible which seem to shed some light on this difficult and controversial issue.

In the first place, there are certainly verses which teach that God "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11). Without doubt, then, God is sovereign and is providentially guiding history to its predetermined end. But as W.S. Reid (himself a Calvinist) correctly observes in his article on "Predestination" in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, "At this point the question arises of the possibility of individual freedom and responsibility if God is absolutely sovereign. How can these things be? Yet the Scriptures repeatedly assert both. Joseph's remarks to his brothers and Peter's statement concerning Christ's crucifixion highlight this fact (Gen. 45:4ff.; Acts 2:23). Man, in carrying out God's plan, even unintentionally, does so responsibly and freely" (871). This statement makes it plain that at least some Calvinists do indeed make room for a degree of genuine human freedom and responsibility, while at the same time affirming the full and unmitigated sovereignty of God. Although it may certainly be a mystery (at least from man's perspective) how both of these things can be simultaneously

true, I agree with Reid that the Bible does indeed “repeatedly assert both.”

But doesn’t the Fall of man affect human freedom? Indeed it does! Before the Fall, man’s will was perfectly free both to obey and disobey God. However, after the Fall the freedom to obey was lost (whether partially or completely need not concern us here). Nevertheless, through His gift of salvation (including both regeneration and sanctification), God is restoring this original freedom in His people (2 Cor. 3:16-18). In addition, however, it must also be kept in mind that even unregenerate men are acting freely when they sin. They freely CHOOSE to sin because their nature is now depraved, fallen and sinful. But when someone becomes a new creature in Christ, the freedom to do good and obey God is, to some degree, restored. And through the process of sanctification, God is progressively restoring this freedom in His children more and more.

Again, as Norman Geisler points out in his article on “Freedom, Free Will, and Determinism” in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, even fallen man retains a degree of genuine human freedom. This is taught in many passages of Scripture (e.g. Matt. 23:37; John 7:17; 1 Cor. 9:17; 1 Pet. 5:2; Philem. 14). Thus, even if it is not fully explicable (for man at any rate), the Bible clearly teaches both Divine Sovereignty and a degree of genuine human freedom and responsibility. Indeed, in some passages, both ideas appear virtually side by side. For instance, in Prov. 16:9 we read, “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” Passages such as this may teach that man has a measure of self-determination, while at the same time indicating that what man freely chooses is also (on some level) directed by God.

Finally, the Scriptures clearly indicate that God is graciously working in His people “both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). I don’t think that this work

of God should be viewed as a coercion of our wills. Rather, it seems to me that it would be more properly understood as a persuading and empowering of our wills so that we freely choose to do what God wants us to do. We may not have chosen to do such things apart from this work of God in our lives, but it is nonetheless WE OURSELVES who choose them in response to this gracious work. In a similar way, Satan is described as "working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) with the result that fallen, unregenerate men "want to do the desires" of the devil (John 8:44). But of course even here such men freely choose to follow Satan in his disobedience and rebellion against God (even if unconsciously). In addition, one must also keep in mind that even Satan's sin and rebellion against God is part of the plan and purposes of God (though freely chosen on Satan's part). And while Satan can only carry out his malicious intentions to the extent that God permits (see Job 1-2 and 2 Cor. 12:7-9), they are nonetheless Satan's (NOT God's) malicious intentions.

Thus, the biblical position (as I see it) affirms BOTH Divine Sovereignty AND some degree of genuine human freedom and responsibility. There is, I will certainly grant, a mystery here, but (at least in my opinion) no contradiction. Man is finite in his understanding and limited in his actions by time and space, but God is infinite in His understanding and not limited in His actions by time and space. It is therefore not unreasonable to think that what man may be incapable of comprehending (e.g. Divine Sovereignty and human freedom operating simultaneously and harmoniously) might nonetheless still be true. I therefore think that we are safest to stick closely to the express affirmations of Scripture, even if we cannot formulate a mathematically precise explanation of the relationship between Divine Sovereignty and human freedom. The Scriptures seem to affirm both and we must be content with this. This, at any rate, is my opinion on the matter.

Wishing you God's richest blessings!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“What If God Doesn’t Exist?”

I have been a Christian for a very long time. I enjoy arguing for the truth of my faith. However, I run into a lot of trouble when it comes to doubt. I have read many of the articles on your site talking about things like, “Why Isn’t the Evidence Clearer?” The problem that I have is that it is difficult to fully devote myself to the Lord in the presence of the plausibility of His non-existence. I believe there is very good evidence for the historical reliability of the scriptures and so forth but there is such a huge possibility still open for this not to be true. Just because there is a reliable historical record about something doesn’t make that thing true. It just seems that the every day experience that I have as a Christian can be interpreted in any number of ways. In fact many other people of other antithetical religions to Christianity and schools of thought explain answered prayer and things like that in seemingly acceptable ways. It seems that to simply say that our evidence is the “best” isn’t good enough. I know I have made mistakes about things that I believe in the past because I wasn’t careful enough about examining the arguments against it. Therefore I think that it is possible that there are other ways to interpret my beliefs.

Lots of people struggle with doubt, so you are in good company.

You’re right, it is POSSIBLE that other religions and other worldviews may explain what happens in life. It’s possible

there is no God and we are all one giant cosmic accident (except that we wouldn't be a giant accident, we would be a small, insignificant, meaningless accident, right?). It's possible there is no heaven, that we all go into another life form in reincarnation. These things are, indeed, possible.

My challenge to you is, what evidence can you find that these explanations are better than the revelation from God in the Bible? Don't just look at it in your own head, thinking, "Oh yeah, that could be true." Actively pursue the evidence for the truth of alternate worldviews.

If your biggest problem is that it's possible God doesn't exist, then you might want to explore other expressions of Christianity. Is it possible that you have only been in churches where people live in their heads, like many Baptist or Bible churches? Do you have any experience with supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit? Do you have any experience with churches that truly understand the depth of reverence and holiness in worship?

I have a hunch that your problem may well be that your God is too small. That you have only had a peek at the true God, the God who is a consuming fire as well as a passionate Lover as well as one who speaks in a still, small voice.

I suggest you start seeing what else you can learn of God's heart and personality and experience by trying different types of Christian churches. Go to a charismatic or Pentecostal church if you've never done that. Go find a Catholic or Episcopalian church where the leadership knows Christ and seeks to make Him known. If you've never known a church with excellent Bible teaching, try that. Especially look for a church with deeply meaningful worship where people are intentionally and effectively drawn into greater intimacy with Jesus Christ. Get outside the box of your experience up to this point. And at the same time, ask God to reveal Himself to you in ways you've never seen or heard or experienced.

Is it possible there's no one there to answer? Sure. But if that is the case, why is there such a deep longing to know Him? We have stomachs because of food, and we have eyes because there is so much to see. . . and we have longing hearts because God made us for Himself.

I hope this helps. I send this with a prayer that the God Who is there will touch you in such a deeply intimate part of your heart that you will KNOW He is there.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"How Can I Respond to the Argument that Christ as the Only Way is Too Intolerant?"

An issue that often comes up in talks about Christianity is tolerance. Can you help me respond to the argument, "Christ as the only way to Heaven is too intolerant"? Is Islam tolerant? Do Muslims believe Christians will go to heaven?

Concerning the claim that it is intolerant to assert that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, I think we must first point out that this is what Jesus Himself actually claimed in John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." In other words, Christians are merely telling people what Jesus claimed; we are not asserting this simply on our own authority.

Second, we must try to help people to view Jesus' claim as something which is either true or false. By focusing on the

issue of truth, we help to dispel some of the negative emotional baggage which such a claim has for many people in our pluralistic society.

Third, we may want to use an analogy. For instance, is it intolerant to claim that 2+2=4? Is it narrow-minded, or naive, not to believe that (at least for some people) 2+2 may equal 3? Or 5? Or is it rather the case that 2+2=4 regardless of whether anyone believes this or not? See my point? Jesus' claim to be the only way is either true or false. If it's true, it is no more intolerant to assert its truthfulness than it is to assert that 2+2=4. Sometimes there really is only ONE correct answer, after all.

Concerning the Islamic position on Christians in the afterlife, I doubt whether one can be completely dogmatic here. Suffice it to say that the general Islamic view regarding one's final judgment before God can NEVER be known with certainty before it takes place. Even the most devout Muslims will acknowledge that they cannot be sure of their own entrance into Paradise (dying in a *Jihad*, a holy war, notwithstanding). And if they are not sure about themselves, I imagine they are even less sure about Christians. In fact, the Qur'an offers no forgiveness for one who commits the sin of *shirk*, which is to associate any partner with God. Thus, many Muslims would equate the Christian view of Jesus with shirk, in which case they would hold that Christians could never be admitted into Paradise. Having said that, however, there are probably some Muslims who would acknowledge the possibility of Christians being admitted into Paradise. But they would likely be quick to add that Christians would greatly improve their chances by converting to Islam!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

“There Is No Compelling Reason to Accept the Books of the Bible as Special”

I have some comments and questions regarding your article on the church canon—in particular, the last paragraph. You state that:

> **“We show that it is true to unbelievers by demonstrating that it is systematically consistent.”**

However, there are numerous inconsistencies throughout the bible—in both the old and new testaments—and in particular throughout the gospels and the accounts of the life and death of Jesus—as most non-believers can readily point out. While the inconsistencies as a whole do not negate the viability of the scripture, it does indicate that the canon as it stands is NOT systematically consistent.

You also state that:

> **“We make belief possible by using both historical evidence and philosophical tools.”**

Philosophical, yes—but historical, no. Archeological and historical research has done as much to prove as disprove the scripture—at best a 50-50 balance.

And you also state:

> **“Once individuals refuse to accept the claim of inspiration that the Bible makes for itself, they are left with a set of ethics without a foundation.”**

True—however, it is not sufficient to take the word of one source in regards to origin or inspiration. In other words, just because one book of the bible (a collection of documents written at very different times and by very different authors) says so isn't sufficient to make it so for the whole. At the time that portion of the bible was written, the whole did not yet exist and the reference to inspiration could only be referring to the work in which it appears.

If that is the argument—then there is no need for philosophical or historical tools to aid in believe. You cannot "have your cake and eat it too" in this case—either use science (history, etc.) to prove the reliability and uniqueness of the canon or base it on faith—one or the other, not both.

It seems to me——that despite an otherwise well researched and argued explanation of the canonization of the current bible—there still is no compelling reason for the current books of the bible to be held in any higher esteem than those of the apocrypha or the writings of early church fathers.

Thank you for the thoughtful response to my essay on the canonization of the Bible. Let me briefly respond to some of your points.

> *However, there are numerous inconsistencies throughout the bible in both the old and new testaments—and in particular throughout the gospels and the accounts of the life and death of Jesus as most non-believers can readily point out. While the inconsistencies as a whole do not negate the viability of the scripture, it does indicate that the canon as it stands is NOT systematically consistent.*

The question of consistency regarding the Gospels has been hotly contested. Perhaps the problem partly lies in defining what we mean by consistency. No one denies that the writers were attempting to give different perspectives regarding the

events and ministry of Jesus. My view and the view of conservative theologians is that the teachings of the four Gospels are consistent even though individual details might differ. Where some see inconsistency and conflict, others see different perspectives of a single or similar event. The Gospels were not written as a history text or as a biographical work in the modern sense, to hold these texts to this kind of standard would be placing unwarranted restrictions on the writings.

> *Archeological and historical research has done as much to prove as disprove the scripture at best a 50-50 balance.*

The role of archaeology and historical evidence in affirming the NT writings is also a complex one. You seem to be arguing that if one places their faith in the teachings of the NT they cannot use historical and archaeological evidence to defend the texts in any manner. While I would agree that neither archaeological nor historical evidence can prove that the teachings of the Bible are theologically true, they can affirm a number of things about the nature of the texts. First, they give us expanding knowledge of the geographical setting of the events that are described. Second, they help us to understand the religious milieu of the time (ex. Nag Hammadi findings). Third, they constrain the attempts of some to mythologize the NT. The discoveries of the Well of Jacob, the Pool of Siloam, the probable location of the Pool of Bethesda, and the name of Pilate himself on a stone in the Roman theater at Caesarea lend historical credibility to the NT text. Certainly the reliability of the NT writings can benefit from positive archaeological and historical evidence.

> *At the time that portion of the bible was written, the whole did not yet exist and the reference to inspiration could only be referring to the work in which it appears.*

The high regard that the church Fathers had for the OT writings did not transfer to the NT texts until the church was

forced to respond to threatening issues. Since some had been disciples of Apostles, the urgency to define the canon was not intense. Once given the need to do so in the second and third centuries, believers held to those writings that affirmed the tradition that had been handed down from the beginning. The place given to the Apocrypha by the early church is another issue which I address in my essay on those writings.

Thanks again for your comments.

Sincerely,

Don Closson

"Aren't You Embarrassed That the Most Important Part of Your Life is Your Domestication?"

Sue–

Does it not bother you that your various and vast achievements in both the academic and spiritual realms are completely overshadowed by your domestication and motherhood?

Your website reports:

> *"Sue Bohlin is an associate speaker with Probe Ministries. She attended the University of Illinois, and has been a Bible teacher and conference speaker for over 25 years. She serves as a Mentoring Mom for MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers), and on the board of Living Hope Ministries, a Christ-centered*

> *outreach to those wanting to leave homosexuality. She is also a professional calligrapher and the webservant for Probe Ministries; but most importantly, she is the wife of Dr. Ray Bohlin and the mother of their two grown sons."*

Does it not hurt to define your life through your involvement with others? Does this proliferation of the values dictated by our patriarchal society not cause you distress?

Hi ____,

Wow, what great questions! I'm so glad you asked!

First of all, what does "domestication" mean? I'm thinking that to you, it may mean something negative and contemptuous. The root word comes from the Latin "domus," home, which is exactly what is most important to me because home is about family (and not the structure in which we live). But it has taken on a negative connotation as if a woman's true fulfillment is found outside the home, so anything that connects her to home and family is sadly restrictive. (Thank you Betty Friedan *et al*.. . .)

I have been blessed to be able to live a rich and varied life, but all of my "achievements" pale markedly compared to the sweetness of my most important relationships with my husband and sons. For example, my work as a speaker and writer and webservant for Probe Ministries, as wonderful as that is, can't begin to hold a candle to the joy of loving and influencing the men God has given me to love and influence. I believe that God means for women to be most deeply fulfilled by our relationships, because He made us so relational. My "mark" on the world, I assure you, is far greater in my various relationships compared to the lectures I've given or the website I built. You might not ever be able to see the difference I make as Ray's wife or Curt and Kevin's mom, but believe me, as they all make their marks on the world, I can see it.

Doesn’t it hurt, you ask, to define my life through my involvement with others? In other words, to define my life through my relationships? I wish you could see the huge smile on my heart as I think about your question. . . because ultimately, I think we were created to define our lives exactly that way. What makes my life worth living is my strong and healthy relationship first of all with my Creator, from whom I find out what I was made for, what I was made to do, and thus find my fulfillment in walking out the sense of “I was made for this!!” My “achievements in the academic and spiritual realms” are only a small part of what God made me for, as His beloved daughter and friend. Since that is how I define myself—as a cherished child of God—then no matter what happens in any other dimension of my life, I do not fear being rocked by the loss of what defines me. Should I lose my family, God forbid, that will not change my identity. Should I lose my vision or my voice or my mobility or my mind, that will not change my identity, since my identity and my definition is not found in those things.

You also ask, “Does this proliferation of the values dictated by our patriarchal society not cause you distress?” Not at all, because I don’t see patriarchy as evil; I see it as a God-ordained chain of authority. Of course, it is complicated by the fact that every single human being on the planet is broken and sinful and infected by a rebellious spirit, but that doesn’t make patriarchy inherently wrong. I’m smiling again because I know that patriarchy is another one of those contempt-filled words in the academy (especially at the University of Texas! How many women’s studies profs have you studied under?). Yet from my understanding of scripture and of feminism, an authority structure that points to God as loving Father makes me feel secure, not subjugated, and beloved, not bitter.

I’m also aware that I may well come off to you as naïve and uneducated in The Ways Of The World, needing to be shown how

truly sad and imprisoned by my misbeliefs I am. But that's one of the joys of being over 50 and seeing how incredibly loving and kind and generous God has been to me, personally, in 30+ years of walking with Him and deriving my identity and direction from Him: I know too much about how good life is lived according to His values to be bothered by what feminist thought thinks of my life.

Here's the thing, _____: when I am an old woman, at the end of my life, it really won't matter what I have accomplished in the world's eyes. What will matter is how much I loved and was loved, how much and how deeply I influenced and impacted people's lives. That's ultimately about relationships. My sister is a hospice nurse and she sees people dying every day. They never want to be surrounded by their diplomas or their trophies or their certificates of achievements, but by their family and friends. I think that says something profound about what ultimately matters.

Thank you so much for asking so I could share my heart with you.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

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"What About Those Who Have Not Heard?"

What happens to those who have not heard about Jesus and therefore cannot choose or reject Him?

The Bible does not give a complete answer to the question. But

there are certain principles that are contained in the Bible; so, although we may not be totally dogmatic on this subject, neither can we say that we must be agnostic toward it. There is sufficient information given so that we can gain a good perspective on it.

First, God never intended anyone to be out of fellowship with Him. Heaven was intended to be man's destination. God is holy and loving and wants everyone to repent (Exod. 34:6-7; Jonah 4:10-11; 2 Peter 3:9). Though He is a just and righteous God, He's also a loving God.

Second, God's nature prevents Him from being unfair. The Bible teaches that God judges fairly (Gen. 18:25; Psalm 7:11, 9:18; 1 Peter 1:17). In His infinite justice, He will be much fairer than we, with our limited understanding of justice, could possibly be.

Third, man is not in total ignorance or spiritual darkness. The Bible clearly teaches that man has an awareness both of God and of eternity (Psalm 19:1-4; Eccl. 3:11; John 1:9; Acts 14:15-17; Rom. 1:18-21, 2:15). It was the Roman sage Seneca who said, "God is near you, is with you. A sacred Spirit dwells within us, the Observer and Guardian of all our evil and all our good. There is no good man without God." [Quoted in J. Oswald Sanders, *How Lost Are the Heathen?* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 53.]

However, this God-consciousness is not enough. Man must have more information than this in order to be saved. The Christian message is in jeopardy at either extreme. If God-consciousness is sufficient for salvation, then the Bible's revelation is unnecessary. This is wrong because the Bible places such an importance in bringing the message of Jesus Christ to those who have not heard (Rom. 10:14). But if the Bible is the only way a person can be saved, then we are back to our initial question about those who haven't heard.

In these cases, we have a fourth principle: God will provide the necessary information to those who seek Him. God rewards those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6). He will give anyone who earnestly seeks Him enough information to make a decision (1 Chron. 15:2; Psalm 9:10; Prov. 8:17; Jer. 29:13; Acts 8:30-31). God sent Peter to a Roman official named Cornelius to tell him about Jesus (Acts 10). It is also possible that God may work faith in a person's heart so that, like Job, he may say, "I know that my Redeemer lives," without knowing the identity of the Redeemer.

Fifth, the responsibility for a decision concerning this information belongs to each one of us. We are ultimately responsible for the course we choose. No one can make the decision for us. As C.W. Hale Amos wrote, "From what we know, respecting the terms of salvation, we are led irresistibly to the conclusion that no man can perish except by his own fault and deliberate choice." [Ibid., 54.]

We do not have a complete answer to this question. The above principles indicate that God wants all of us to repent, that He is a fair judge, that He will give all of us enough information, and that we are responsible for the decision we make based on that information.

But there is not a totally clear picture about what happens to those who have not heard. This should give us all the more reason to make sure, if we are Christians, that we do what we can to share the Good News with all people or, if we are not Christians, we make a decision for Jesus Christ today. If we are not completely sure that we are believers, we should make sure by a conscious decision. As C.S. Lewis said in Mere Christianity, "If you are worried about the people outside [of Christianity], the most unreasonable thing you can do is to remain outside yourself." [C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (NY: Macmillan, 1972), 50.]

Kerby Anderson

Probe Ministries

See answers by
Sue Bohlin
and **GotQuestions.org**

"Is Oral Sex a Sin?"

Is oral sex a sin? Does it constitute having sex? Can you have and give oral sex and still remain a virgin? Is it okay to have oral sex if you're in a committed marriage? And if it's wrong can you tell me where in the Bible it says this?

I'm sorry about the many questions but these questions have been nagging me for quite a while.

Is oral sex a sin?

It's permitted within marriage (by mutual consent), but a sin outside of marriage. In condemning fornication (some translations call it "sexual immorality"), the Bible says that all sexual activity outside of marriage is sin. It's not that God is a cosmic killjoy—it's that He knows the best way to protect us is to keep the extraordinarily powerful nature of sex contained within the safe confines of a committed marriage relationship.

Does it constitute having sex?

Yes. We need to define "sex" more broadly than many people do (such as a former president . . .). There are a great many sexual activities and behaviors that fall in the category of

"sex" besides intercourse. Here's a helpful question to help think clearly about any particular activity, such as open-mouth kissing or oral sex: would you do it with your parent or your pastor? If you shrink back in disgust at the thought, that means it's sexual. (But holding hands, however, is something you can do with anyone without it being sexual. People often hold hands while praying, for instance. See the difference?)

Can you have and give oral sex and still remain a virgin?

The definition of a virgin is a person who has not experienced sexual intercourse. It's really more of a biological term than anything else, because the real heart issue is about purity. You can't participate in oral sex outside of marriage and still be pure. So people can be technically virgins and still engage in very sexual behaviors. For example, there is an epidemic of gonorrhea of the throat among American junior-high age kids who are still genital virgins but have infected oral sex. The good news is, someone who has had oral sex outside of marriage can confess it as sin, be cleansed and have his or her purity restored.

Is it okay to have oral sex if you're in a committed marriage?

Yes, as long as both spouses are okay with it. If either one doesn't want it, it would be selfish and unloving for the other one to insist. Also, please see our article, "What's God's Plan for Sex in Marriage?"

And if it's wrong can you tell me where in the Bible it says this?

If you read the Song of Solomon, you can see that God encourages married people to enjoy His gift of sex in all its glory. Jody and Linda Dillow (authors of *Solomon on Sex* and *Intimate Issues*) believe that there are two veiled references to oral sex in the Song of Solomon. Keep in mind that in this

biblical book, “garden” usually refers to the wife’s genitals, and “fruit” to the husband’s:

> (Bride) Awake, O north wind
> And come, wind of the south
> Make my garden breathe out fragrance
> Let its spices be wafted abroad
> May my beloved come into his garden
> And eat its choice fruits! (4:16)
>
> Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest
> So is my beloved among the young men
> In his shade I took great delight and sat down
> And his fruit was sweet to my taste. (2:3)
>
> *I’m sorry about the many questions but these questions have been nagging me for quite a while.*

I’m glad we could help!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help Me Understand the Genetics of Skin Color”

Ray,

I’ve got a genetics question for you. A pastor friend posed the following for me, which he says is the argument of some creationists he knows. He sums up their argument this way:

1. Adam and Eve were the first parents of all the races.

2. Adam and Eve contained all the genetic information from

which eventually all the races came.

3. From Adam to Noah, all descendants of Adam and Eve were probably all a mid-brown color since Adam and Eve were also mid-brown.

4. After the global flood and the tower of Babel incident, descendants of Noah separated into people groups according to their own languages and traveled to different parts of the world.

5. As different "people groups" were exposed to different environments, natural selection occurred resulting in certain genetic traits to be enhanced for adaptability (for example: darker skin pigmentation for environments with more intense sunlight due to the genetic "potential" to increase more melanin).

6. As the "people groups" were isolated and intermarried with each other with a certain group, they eventually lost certain genes that were not needed for adaptability. (That would explain, from this point of view, why African Negroes who move to different northern environments or European Whites who move down to Africa, do not change back to another color because over time they previously lost the genetic potential to do so.)

Ray, from your knowledge of genetics, does this hold water? Or is it speculation? Thanks.

Your pastor friend is essentially correct. This scenario as regards to skin color is emminently workable genetically. There are at least three and perhaps four genes involved in skin color and several alleles at each gene producing differing amounts of melanin. It would not take long for these to segregate out into different inbred populations creating true-breeding lines for particular skin color shades. I even discussed this back in the late 70s with my genetics professor and he saw no genetic problem with this scenario.

The only change I would make in the scenario would be to emphasize the critical role of the wives of Noah's three sons. They are actually more important than Adam and Eve. Noah's sons would most likely be very similar genetically so the major variation would need to originate with their wives since the world is repopulated from these three pairs. The full genetic range could easily be incorporated into these individuals. Adam and Eve would not necessarily need to possess the entire range of skin gene possibilities since there is some time for accumulation of mutations between them and Noah's sons. With that said, since Adam and Eve would both possess two copies of each gene, that means a possible total of at least 4 different alleles at each gene and if there are 3 different genes, that means 12 different alleles which could be combined 144 different ways. This would seem more than adequate to accomodate the full range of human skin color.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin

Probe Ministries

"My Friend is HIV+"

A person I love very much was diagnosed as being HIV positive. He was infected at the age of 16. If he had been diagnosed with cancer or some other disease the first thing people would say or think is "How terrible, I will pray for this person." or "I'm sorry. " They would also wonder about the injustice of it. Unfortunately, that is not the reaction a person gets from the church when they let people know they have AIDS. The first thing they want to know is "How did you get it. "

Because of this reaction my friend has been totally turned off to Christianity. No one at are chuch knew about him because he was afraid of what people would say. Only his family knew. One day at church the subject of AIDS came up and quickly his fears were realized. Comments such as it being God's judgment and people getting what they deserve for making immoral choices. You should have seen his face. He was shattered. So was I.

I know that not all churches are like this but so far I havn't found one that wasn't. I try and tell myself that this is not our savior talking. If he were here he would forgive and love the person afflicted with this disease. I try to talk to him about Jesus loving and healing the leper. But faced with what is said in our church its hard for him to remember that.

There are so many people struggling with this terrible disease. People who make the same bad choices lots of teenagers in the church are making, but fortunately they only got pregnant or got someone pregnant. They were lucky enough not to get AIDS. When someone repents, God casts that sin as far as the east is from the west. Too bad we can't do that. It doesn't matter how you got the disease. That person needs to be shown the love of Christ. Don't wait until it's your loved one. Learn the facts about this disease. CHURCH, I beg of you don't let ignorance stop you from being a witness. We are His hands and feet. Lets use them to show a group of people rejected by the church His love. God has not rececte those who have AIDS. He is loving them and He is expecting us to do the same. Please pray about this issue.

I am so very, very sorry to hear about this horrible experience. You are so right about the church's judgmental reaction and how it grieves not only the person who has it, and the people who love him, but the Father's heart.

The reason it's so easy for people to react so strongly is that, unlike cancer or stroke or other life-stealing disease,

HIV is usually contracted through an immoral lifestyle choice, either sex or drugs. But, of course, as the disease has spread, innocent people get it from those who weren't innocent, and the accompanying unfair judgment just adds to the pain.

You're right, too, all churches aren't like this, but it's hard to find a grace-based church that knows the truth about how God accepts us no matter what. Our church, for example, embraced a man who eventually died of AIDS, and he was greatly loved. But part of that process was educating them about their own risk to exposure to him, and assuring them that unless they came in contact with his body fluids they had nothing to worry about. Which is why some of us particularly delighted in hugging him and kissing him on the forehead to communicate that we cared.

Let me share something someone e-mailed me. I love this story and I bet you will too.

> ***Slandering The Blood of Jesus*** *One night in a church service a young woman felt the tug of God at her heart. She responded to God's call and accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. The young woman had a very rough past, involving alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. But, the change in her was evident. As time went on she became a faithful member of the church. She eventually became involved in the ministry, teaching young children. It was not very long until this faithful young woman had caught the eye and heart of the pastor's son. Their relationship grew and they began to make wedding plans. This is when the problems began. You see, about one half of the church did not think that a woman with a past such as hers was suitable for a pastor's son. The church members began to argue and fight about the matter. So they decided to have a meeting. As the people made their arguments and tensions increased, the meeting was getting completely out of hand. The young woman became very upset about all the things being brought up about her past. As she began to cry the pastor's*

son stood to speak. He could not bear the pain it was causing his wife to be. He began to speak and his statement was this: ” My fiance’s past is not what is on trial here. What you are questioning is the ability of the blood of Jesus to wash away sin. Today you have put the blood of Jesus on trial. So, does it wash away sin or not?” The whole church began to weep as they realized that they had been slandering the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Too often, even as Christians, we bring up the past and use it as a weapon against our brothers and sisters. Forgiveness is a very foundational part of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the blood of Jesus does not cleanse the other person completely then it cannot cleanse us completely. If that is the case, then we are all in a lot of trouble. What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus…. end of case!!! God Forgives.. So should we.

Bless you, _____.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries