

“Could My Children’s Autism be the Result of a Generational Curse?”

I understand that it says in the Bible that the children may be cursed for generations because of their fathers’ sins. I have two children with autism and a cousin that has a child with autism as well. Could this be a curse since both of our parents are sisters? There has been talk that in our family that relatives from two and three generations back married cousins. Isn’t that a sin?

I believe the concept of generational curses is best understood as the natural consequence of ingrained behavioral patterns that are passed down from one generation to the next. I yelled at my kids when they were small because my mom yelled at us. My brother is a (recovered) alcoholic because he saw our dad drink a lot every night he was home, and he internalized that behavior for himself. The guy down the street mistreats his wife because he saw his father continually do it to his mother. (And societally speaking, there can be generational “curses” when those in one generation make decisions which have effects for generations to come, such as the abortion decision. Our society continues to pay for that errant decision in more ways than the 30 million+ abortions since Roe v. Wade. The value of young innocent life continues to decline.)

We can’t change what we don’t acknowledge, so these behavior patterns (or curses) continue to play themselves out in the lives of those who don’t confront them and decide to stop them. But we CAN change what we DO acknowledge, particularly when we invite the Lord to release His power into an area we want to change.

But what you're asking about is something different. Marrying cousins isn't a sin biblically. The laws in place against marrying close relatives such as siblings are there to protect children from experiencing the fallout of recessive genes being expressed; however, the Journal of Genetic Counseling recently released a report that the risk of serious genetic disorders among children of first cousins is much smaller than originally thought

(<http://depts.washington.edu/mednews/vol6/no15/cousins.html>).

Since there is talk in your family of cousins marrying several generations ago, and non-family genes were subsequently introduced through marriage to non-cousins which would strengthen the genetic mixture, I would think that while there is a chance that the autism in your family is connected to the cousin marriage, there's probably more of a chance that it isn't. More to the point, I don't think this is a generational curse since the marrying cousins didn't break any of God's laws.

I am so sorry that you are having to deal with autism. That is a difficult burden to bear. Please don't carry an unnecessary burden of thinking you are dealing with the consequences of someone else's sin, when you're probably not.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Posted 2003

“Who Was Lillith?”

I hope you can give me direction on the issue of Lillith from a biblical perspective. A female student brought up this question: Who was Lillith? I was ashamed that I could not tell her my position on the issue because, quite frankly, I didn't know who Lillith was. I am a married Christian man so I may not be as tuned in to what our youth are concerned with as I once was. At 34 years, I don't feel quite ancient either. I don't want to turn an unsaved girl loose on a quest for knowledge on a decidedly pagan subject. Any help you can offer would be appreciated. BTW, our pastor simply told her she had been reading too much feminist propaganda, an answer that left her with doubts about him. Thanks for your help.

Well, it's easy not to know who Lillith was because she's not in the Bible. There is a “Lillith myth” which is no more than a story about Adam's first wife. Here's a link that will give you a full story:

<http://www.webcom.com/~gnosis/lillith.html>

The pastor's dismissive comment about reading too much feminist propaganda may have been easy for him, but certainly wasn't going to help HER any! Feminists have, indeed, adopted Lillith as a symbol of their philosophy, and when you read the stories you'll see why, but that doesn't tell a young unbelieving girl the truth: that Lillith belongs in the same category as Venus, Medusa and Aphrodite—make-believe for grownups!

Hope this helps. . .

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Were Things Like Polygamy OK in the Old Testament But Not Now?”

What about the issues in the Old Testament with families like masters sleeping with their servants and men having many wives or even the issue of “inter-family” relationships and the like? Was it a population issue? When did the law change? Why was it okay then and not now?

Great question! The problem is, the Bible rarely makes commentary on historical events. If it did, we would see notations like “[and this was not only sinful but STUPID because God’s plan for marriage is one man, one woman for life, and bad things happen when we disobey His commandment].”

The fact that sinful, unwise behaviors are recorded (without commentary) in the Bible doesn’t mean it was OK any more than newspapers reporting on crime means they condone it. They’re both just telling you what happened.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Did God Reject Cain’s Offering?”

I was reading to my grandchild about Cain and Abel. The book we read said Cain was jealous of Abel because God rejected the sacrifice Cain made and accepted Abel’s. She asked me why, can you tell me?

The difference in the sacrifices was really about the difference in their hearts. If you read the actual story in Genesis 4, you will read that Abel, who was a rancher, made his offering of the first of his flock and of the “fat portions” of his flock. In other words, he gave God the first and the best of what he had. Cain, a farmer, only gave God “some” of his crops. He was greedy and self-centered and apparently wanted to keep the best for himself. God rejected Cain’s sacrifice because Cain rejected God’s right to his heart.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Which Version of the Bible is Most Accurate?”

Do you know which version of the Bible is most accurate? The main ones I’m considering for thorough Bible study are the King James Version, New International Version, and the New American Standard Version. Are the NIV and NASB inferior to the KJV? Also, what study bible do you feel is most helpful?

Life Application, Scofield, Ryrrie?

I would never recommend the KJV for Bible study because language has changed so much since 1611, and better manuscripts are now available as the basis for translation than what they used for the KJV. (I suggest you read [our article on the King James debate.](#))

The NIV is a dynamic translation, where the translators sought to communicate the general idea and thoughts behind the original languages, rather than an actual word-for-word translation, which can tend to be more wooden. I no longer use the NIV exclusively (although I did for 20 years) because I am frustrated by the fact that they translate the word "flesh" as "sin nature," which leads to a misunderstanding of the Christian life, I believe. I have joined the ranks of a growing number who have returned to the NASB for serious Bible study. However, I am very much enjoying the NET Bible (New English Translation), which can be downloaded for free (www.netbible.org) although the beta version is now out in print. Each page has more translator notes and study notes than actual text, which gives the reader a VERY full understanding of what's going on in the original languages. I am using the NET Bible to augment my NASB reading; it's like listening to color commentary during a sports telecast.

In terms of the study Bibles, that is really a personal preference issue depending on one's theology. The Life Application, Scofield and Ryrrie Bibles are dispensational, and the Reformation Study Bible is reform in its theology. The Student Bible is especially good, as is Kay Arthur's Inductive Study Bible. All the study Bibles you mentioned are good and have their fans. The best way to judge, I think, is to compare the notes on the same passage between the various versions.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“How Could a Compassionate God Order the Genocide of the Canaanites?”

My eldest daughter and I have been discussing portions of the Bible with which she is struggling. One of the problem passages she asked about is “Why does God order the genocide of the Canaanites?” Now of course I can give her the answer in the Bible, i.e., that God gave them 400 years to repent and that their sins were horrible, etc.; but her real question is ethical. How can God who has such compassion for the innocents in Ninevah order the wholesale killing of innocent children in Palestine? Is the God of the OT and the God of the NT the same Person? How can I reconcile these, in modern terms, “unthinkable” crimes against humanity with the God of compassion revealed by Jesus?

We’re also looking for good articles regarding “why I can trust the Bible” and the “relevance of the Bible” for today.

Thanks for your help.

Great questions!

We need to revisit the assessment of the Canaanites as “innocent.” From God’s perspective, there is no such thing as an innocent human being (apart from Jesus Christ). Every human heart is evil and bent on sin and rebellion. I see a strong parallel between God’s actions against the Canaanites and the actions of an oncology surgeon. He has to cut out what may appear to be healthy tissue but which is actually infected with cancer cells. The Canaanites were infected with sin. I don’t understand about the children, but I do know that a

compassionate God ordered it. Something to consider, then, is the question of “Do children go to hell?” Probe’s founder, Jimmy Williams, addresses this issue [here](#).

Yes, the God of the New Testament is the same as the God of the Old Testament, a God of love and grace. Evidence of His love and grace are rampant throughout both testaments. I think we need to cultivate a spirit of humility before an infinite God we cannot fully understand because “all the available facts are not all the facts.” God never committed any crimes against humanity, much less unthinkable ones, because we cannot see ourselves, or Him, accurately. We have to depend on God’s revelation of human nature—which is that, apart from God, we are wicked and rebellious and evil, even at the same time that we are His image-bearers. And on His revelation of His own nature—which is that He is holy and just, and He would have been completely within His rights to allow every single human being to go to hell because that is what we deserve. But He didn’t.

I’m afraid there is no “silver bullet” answer to these questions, _____, because we don’t have all the facts and just have to trust that God is good all the time, and He knows things we don’t. Along these lines, may I also suggest you read the article [“I Can’t Forgive God for Taking All Those People in the WTC!”](#).

My colleague Rick Wade goes into great detail on this question in these two articles:

[God and the Canaanites](#)

[Yahweh War and the Conquest of Canaan](#)

Probe’s founder, Jimmy Williams, explores the question here:

[“How Can a Just God Order the Slaughter of Men, Women and Children?”](#)

Concerning your question about apologetics articles, we have:

[Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?](#)

[Authority of the Bible](#)

[The Christian Canon](#)

[Archaeology and the Old Testament](#)

[Archaeology and the New Testament](#)

[The Relevance of Christianity: An Apologetic](#)

You might also find it helpful to browse our [Theology/Apologetics](#) Topics pages.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Why Were Women Unclean During Their Period in the Old Testament?”

Why were women unclean during their period in the Old Testament? Also, why were the number of unclean days different for the birth of a male child vs. a female child? Why doesn't this apply today?

Why were women unclean during their period in the Old Testament?

We need to remember that being in a state of “uncleanness” was not the same as sin. It's more like being put on the bench during a game. I believe the Old Testament's emphasis on cleanness and uncleanness was to weave the importance of holiness and “separation unto the Lord” into the everyday

understanding of what it meant to serve the true and living God. The distinction between cleanness and uncleanness functioned as a continual reminder of the difference between God (holy) and God's people (sinful and fallen).

Actually, I believe the ritual uncleanness of a woman's menstrual period had two purposes. First, it kept the messiness more contained by restraining her activities, especially sexually. Secondly, when sexual relations were forbidden for seven days each month, it was a built-in anticipation builder for both husband and wife for when they could come back together again. Many married couples know the joy of "reunion sex." God's "off-limits for seven days" rule insured "reunion sex" without somebody having to go away!
<smile>

Also, why were the number of unclean days different for the birth of a male child vs. a female child?

I couldn't find a single commentator who could come up with a reason apart from God's right to make the rules. However, since the New Testament teaching is equal value of the sexes (Gal. 3:28, "In Christ there is no male or female"), it may be that the purpose of the gender INequity in the Old Testament was to set up the contrast for the glory of grace in the New Testament.

Why doesn't this apply today?

It doesn't apply today because the purpose of the Old Testament civil law has been fulfilled. The laws were designed to protect and provide for the purity of the Jews until the Messiah came. Now, Christ has torn down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and the Old Testament law was a huge part of that barrier—which is no longer necessary. (It should be noted that moral laws, such as what we find in the Ten Commandments, will never pass away because they are rooted in the very character of God.)

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Who Are the Angels Mentioned in the Bible?”

You mentioned that there are only a few Angels mentioned in the Bible, and I was wondering if you could help me in relation to them. Would you give me a list of the Angels' names mentioned in the bible, and books or web sites where I can learn about them.

Just two holy angels, Michael and Gabriel, are mentioned in the Bible. Here are the references:

Michael—Daniel 10:13, 10:21, 11:1, 12:1; Jude 1:9, Rev. 12:7.

Gabriel—Daniel 8:16-18; Luke 1:19, 1:26, 1:28.

Two unholy angels are named: Apollyon, the angel of the abyss in Revelation 9:11 (the Hebrew term is Abaddon), and Satan, who is an evil, fallen angel.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What Makes the Bible a Reliable Text on Angels?”

You cite the bible as a source of insight into angels. What makes the bible a better source than any other fiction book that has been written by anyone at anytime? Say I wrote a book about angels because I wanted to get people to believe in something they have never seen or felt or touched or smelled or tasted. If I aged it 2 or 3 thousand years and there were people like you around, would they believe it? What if I gave it a prolific name like The Word, or Holy Text, or The Greatest Truest Book Ever Written, does it then become more plausible? What are your thoughts?

Hi _____,

My thoughts are that the Bible gives more than “insight” about angels; it gives actual revelation—information from “outside the box,” so to speak.

You can choose to call the Bible a book of fiction, but that would only be because you haven’t considered the evidence that shows it’s not. For instance, fulfilled prophecy alone is a staggering evidence that it was divinely inspired, for who else could write history in advance other than the God who is outside of time?

I invite you to try and debunk the truth and validity of the Bible. Many others have, and they have become its most convinced defenders. If it truly can be debunked, then it’s not worth believing in. But if it’s true, and I completely believe it is because of the evidence, then it’s worth paying attention to.

I have a suspicion you have an opinion of the Bible that is not based on anything more than a contempt for God and possibly for the people who believe in the Bible. (And allow

me to concede, regretfully, that a lot of religious people say and do things that make God wince because they misrepresent Him so egregiously, and it has a negative impact on others who are watching—people like you? I think God grieves over this.)

You might consider shoring up your reasons. Our website is full of resources that provide good evidence that Christianity, and the Bible, are both true. If you don't care to check anything out, then at least I would hope you would be honest enough to admit that your unbelief is based on a refusal to investigate and not because there are good reasons for it.

Respectfully,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Does Lucky Mean Lucifer Has Smiled on Me?”

I would like to know the meaning to the word LUCKY. I have been told that it means Lucifer has smiled on me and blessed me. If this is true where do I find this information?

If you go to dictionary.com, this is what you'll find:

lucky

adj. luckier, luckiest

1. Having or attended by good luck. See Synonyms at happy.
2. Occurring by chance; fortuitous.
3. Believed to bring good luck: *hoped to draw a lucky number.*

There's nothing there about Lucifer. What you heard is something someone made up, and there's nothing to it.

From a Christian worldview, there IS no such thing as luck, because God is in control of everything. There's such a thing as blessing, but not luck. God is in control; Satan is not. In fact, at the cross he was stripped of all real power (see Col. 2:15). All he has is wiles and lies, and if we arm ourselves with the truth we can fight him all the time.

Hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries