

Question: Can a Christian be cursed with generational sin?

Answer: No!

It's not uncommon for people who genuinely think they are being informative or helpful, to suggest that a curse could be the cause of your problems. As the misinformation goes, it's said that you are under a curse (Judgment) for the sins of a previous generation in your family. The implication is obvious; that God is judging you for ancestry sins.

Where does this idea come from?

Well, it's extracted from the Old Testament Law; then, wrongly applied to believer's in Jesus Christ. When the Lord administered the Law to Moses, He detailed severe warnings for Israel's idolaters (Idol worshipers). The Lord said to Moses; *"You shall not bow down to them (Idols) or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me"* (Exodus 20:5. c.f. Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9).

As we all know, children often replicate the sinful behaviour of their parents. In this sense, Exodus implies that the sin of idolatry was being repeated, therefore passed down from one generation to the next. For God, idolatry was the evidence of someone who hated Him. So, in giving the Law to Moses, Jehovah administered the appropriate consequences for those families guilty of idol worship.

A few observations

First, this generational judgement was not for incidental sins which all parents, as sinners, find themselves guilty of. No, this was specifically for those Israelite families guilty of bowing down to idols in violation of the first two commandments (Exodus 20:3-5). Specifically, God is warning families that the guilt of idolatry shall be applied to future generations as part of the Old Testament Law. A generational curse was the consequence for the specific nation of Israel, for the specific sin of idolatry.

It should also be noted, that the Lord immediately followed the generational judgment for idolatrous families with the matching blessing for generational obedience of the first two commandments. God's mercy was multiplied thousands of times more than His judgment when He committed to *"showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments"* (Exodus 20:6).

Second, although we read in the New Testament of Jesus reiterating much of the Old Testament Law, Jesus never reiterated generational judgement for idolatry. In fact, the apostles didn't repeat this Old Testament generational judgment teaching either. It was unique to Israel for a short period of time during the Old Testament era.

Third, the Old Testament records no less than four times where the Lord specifically reverses judgment of sin on a generation for the sins of the previous generation.

✓ Deuteronomy 24:16

Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.

✓ 2 Kings 14:6

But he did not put to death the children of the murderers, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, "Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. But each one shall die for his own sin."

✓ Jeremiah 31:30

But everyone shall die for his own iniquity...

✓ Ezekiel 18:19-20

Yet you say, 'Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?' When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Fourth, God's remedy for Israel's generational curse was repentance. When Israel turned from worshipping idols to worshipping Yahweh, the curse was broken and God saved them (Jud 3:9, 15; 1Sa 12:10-11). In giving this warning to Israel, Jehovah never intended for it to become a permanent or irreversible consequence for those guilty of idolatry.

When discussing consequences for sin, justice, and forgiveness, it's important to keep the character of Yahweh in the front of your mind. Isaiah, who also lived in turbulent times, describes the Lord's nature perfectly; *"The Lord is ready to show you mercy; he sits on his throne, ready to have compassion on you. Indeed, the Lord is a just God; all who wait for him in faith will be blessed"* (Isaiah 30:18 NET). Yahweh is merciful, as the prophet Micah explains; *"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love"* (Micah 7:18).

A Christ Centered, Biblical Consideration

The larger issue being challenged in this matter of generational judgment upon New Testament believers, is the sufficiency of Jesus death and resurrection. If, following repentance of sin and belief in Christ, it turns out that you are still condemned for someone else's past sin, then Christ's death was obviously not up to standard. If a Christian can inherit sin from someone else following salvation, the atoning work of Christ on the Cross has failed miserably. This would make salvation extremely limited, with virtually no real change in relationship with God being accomplished. This would also make the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit redundant, if the guilt of another person's sin can be placed upon a believer.

However, the Word of God is extremely clear on the absolute sufficiency of the atonement Jesus accomplished on the Cross of Calvary. Faith in Jesus substitutional death brings absolute and total forgiveness. Because of this certainty, Paul could boldly state; *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death"* (Romans 8:1-2). In Christ, there is no position of partial freedom and partial condemnation.

If you are concerned about a generational curse, the answer is simply salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. The only answer God ever provided for the curse of generational idolatry, was repentance of that sin. Today, repentant faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, and living a life sanctified to Christ, remains the only solution. The apostle Paul explained this to the Church at Rome; *"...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."* (Romans 12:1-2). Stop thinking and behaving like you did before you came to Christ. Stop thinking as other people tell you to think. Think as God's Word thinks. Behave as God's Word instructs you to behave. Then you will experience the liberating transformed life of Christ.

Salvation is not some half-hearted act on God's part. The New Testament language is definitive and clear; *"if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved"* (Romans 10:9-10). God does not partially save you while partially leaving you under condemnation for sins committed by your ancestors. Repentance of sin, confession of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, and belief in Christ as your substitute on the Cross brings full and absolute

justification before the Lord. God the Father now sees Christ's righteousness in you, He does not see someone else's failings.

The imputed righteousness of Christ is gifted to the repentant sinner without any assistance from obedience to God's Law. *"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it - ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith"* (Romans 3:21-25).

When a sinner turns in believing surrender to Christ's success of appeasing (satisfying, calming) the wrath of Holy God for their sin, justification takes place. Justification happens as the sinner recognises the blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God (the death of Jesus), as being their only hope of satisfying the justice of God. This faith is recognised by God, who then responds by transferring the righteousness of Christ to the sinner. God is appeased, the sinner is made righteous, Christ is glorified, and the Holy Spirit seals the validity of the spiritual transaction. *"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory"* (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Salvation is thorough because it is totally worked by God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Mankind has no part to play in the regeneration of a sinful soul. The sinners only involvement, which is enabled by God (Eph 2:8-9), is to believe. The implication is this; if the sins of your forefathers can be carried down to you as a believer in Christ, then Christ has failed. If this is true, God's wrath still requires appeasement, and the Holy Spirit has failed to bring about rebirth through regeneration. *"...But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Peter adamantly proclaimed; *"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God..."* (1 Peter 3:18). Christ brings sinners to the Father, without the baggage of any other person's sins. The writer of Hebrews details this well by saying; *"Therefore he (Christ) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant"* (Hebrews 9:15).

Christ's death fully satisfies all the requirements by God for any and all offenses made to those people living under the controls of the Old Testament covenant. Therefore, when a sinner comes to faith in Christ, they are redeemed by the mediation of Christ which enters them into the new covenant. This new covenant was purchased and sealed as a full and completed transaction by the death of Christ (Lk 22:20). Nothing can be taken away from this new covenant, nor can anything be added to it. The transaction is done! It can never be opened for renegotiation, nor can the terms of agreement between the Father and Son be altered or even considered for an amendment.

Titus was equally fixed in His belief on the matter. He writes; *"he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life"* (Titus 3:5-7). The regenerating work of God the Spirit at salvation was unaided by the sinner. The Holy Spirit responds to the Father's satisfaction (Propitiation) of Christ's sacrifice by recreating the sinner to be a saint, a whole new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17). This transition, from death to life in Christ, is totally over and above any possible influence by any sins committed by family ancestors. Justification is absolute, complete, and permanent in Christ.

Paul proclaims the sufficiency of Christ's justification with these words; *"For our sake he (God) made him (Christ) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). If the sins of your

ancestors could be imputed to you as a believer, then everything Scripture declares to be true of Christ is in error. Because Christ has victory, we have victory in Christ by faith.

Can a believer be demon possessed?

Scripture would answer a resounding NO!

Actually; there are no biblical examples of believers being demon possessed. That being the case, the New Testament only speaks of unregenerate people being possessed by unclean Spirits.

A little clarity at the outset may help. To be demon possessed, means they have direct and complete control over the thoughts and actions of a person (Examples: Mat 17:14-18; Luk 4:33-35; 8:27-33). Whereas, to be oppressed by a demon means they attack or use any means at their disposal to influence and direct that person into sin.

Those who teach the curse of generational sin often associate demon possession in the same package of error. Therefore, it's not uncommon for such people to claim you need deliverance once they have labelled you as being under the curse of generational sin. Such people have an unhealthy focus on pursuing demons, even for things which have no demonic involvement.

Doctor Luke gives a refreshing 'truth byte' when addressing this issue; *"Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven"* (Luke 10:20). Authentic faith focuses on Christ and the things He has accomplished more than on your enemies. Faith looks to your heavenly home more than your earthly dwelling which is temporary. Faith rejoices in Christ's victorious strength more than wallowing in human weakness. Faith stands secure in the unchangeable certainties of Christ and His eternal supremacy.

Of importance, is that every born-again child of God is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9-11; 1Co 3:16; 6:19). *"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them"* (:3 'the spirit of the antichrist'), *for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4). The apostle John asserts that *"we know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God (Jesus) protects him, and the evil one does not touch him"* (1 John 5:18). The child of God is under the protection of their Lord and Saviour. Just as Satan cannot touch Christ, so in Christ he cannot touch the believer.

This does not mean that Christians cannot be tempted or come under attack, but that they are secure in Christ throughout attacks. The enemy of God makes it his business to interfere with believers' lives; however, he is unable to touch or alter the eternal life which indwells the believer via the Holy Spirit. Even in extreme cases where God permits the evil one to cause physical harm, the Lord maintains spiritual security in Christ.

While it's true that God allows the devil to bring trials, the Holy Spirit never moves over, nor does He move out of the believer in order to make room for demon possession. God the Spirit never moves to one side, as it were, to accommodate mutual possession of the child of God. What a contradiction that would be. The very heart of the gospel is that *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"* (1 John 1:5). Therefore, God the Holy Spirit, who is light, does not share accommodation with the darkness of demons.

Therefore, the New Testament passages which speak of spiritual warfare, do not give instructions to cast demons out of a believer (Eph 6:10-18). Rather, believers are instructed to resist the devil (Jas 4:7; 1Pe 5:8-9), not to cast him out. The reason is both simple and clear; a believer can never be possessed by a demon; therefore, you cannot cast out what is not there in the first place.

The only biblical foundation we have, is that the Holy Spirit seals the repentant sinner the moment of belief (Eph 1:13). He seals their eternal destiny and is Himself God's guarantee of fulfilment. Therefore, Holy Spirit security is certain and unchangeable. Christ's presence (Heaven), is your predetermine destination for which the Holy Spirit seals you. Christians, therefore, have their eyes set on eternity and the fulfilment of their election in Christ, which is heaven. This hope compels believers not to *"...grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"* (Ephesians 4:30). Paul was unwavering in this certainty; *"I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6).

For God's part; *"those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified"* (Romans 8:30). It's a done deal. Salvation has the immutable purpose of delivering God's children to heavenly glory. Their heavenly destination is as certain as the sovereignty of God was in predestination and justification. At no point does the Holy Spirit move out of the believer, leaving them unsaved and abandoned to darkness.

Conclusion

In Christ, and solely because of Christ, Christians are secure in their salvation! This means, neither the believer nor any power of darkness, can undo the work of God done in their lives through Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Once born again, the powers of darkness can never take up residence within that regenerated child of God. Following salvation, the perpetual sufficiency of Christ's justification makes it impossible for the sins of anyone else, including ancestors, to every be laid against you.

In Jesus declaration to the Pharisees that *"the kingdom of God has come upon you"* (Matthew 12:28); He explained that *"no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house"* (Mark 3:27). Christ is stronger than 'the strong man' (Satan). Christ enters the strong man's domain and restrains him for the purpose of freeing the plunder, which are people under Satan's control. Only Jesus Christ had and still has such power over the devil. It is *"through death he (Jesus) might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery"* (Hebrews 2:14-15). No power of the devil, past, present, or future, shall be able to bring the child of God under His dominion again. *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:37-39).