

Andrew Asks Why

By Sally Dillon & Andrew Swanson



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Andrew and his Aunt Sally are real people who recently spent time together talking about the Harry Potter books. By studying this lesson you will find out what they learned. Please have a Bible ready to use.

? **Andrew:** Why are people all uptight and bothered about Harry Potter books? I like them. But, some of my friends at school won't have anything to do with them. They say they'll make you worship Satan! Hey, Satan isn't even *mentioned* in the Harry Potter books. What's going on?

Aunt Sally: No one needs to be afraid of the Harry Potter books. But, maybe your friends are staying away from them because, even though Harry Potter is fun to read, the books can be confusing since some of Satan's lies are mixed into the story.

Andrew: I thought kids were afraid because there are witches and wizards and magick in the books, with dragons and centaurs and unicorns, too. To me, it seems like harmless fun. I really like the stories.

? **Aunt Sally:** What do you like about them?

Andrew: Well, the animals are so cool. I'd love to have a pet like Harry Potter's owl Hedwig!

Aunt Sally: The very first job God gave Adam in the Garden of Eden was to name all the animals. (Genesis 2:19, 20). In Ellen White's book *Education*, on page 21, we read that Adam and Eve talked with every living creature and learned from each the secrets of its life. So, in the beginning the animals were even more cool. I'm sure that will be true in heaven also.

WHAT IS IT?

Andrew is talking about:

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Three more sequels are still to come. These are all books written by J. K. Rowling about an orphan boy who finds out his mother was a witch and his father a wizard. He goes to "Hogwarts" a school for young wizards and witches.



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Andrew: Wow! Do you think it will be like that in heaven?

Aunt Sally: I certainly do. God has promised that He will restore Eden—you know, make the Garden of Eden all over again. But, this time, there won't be any sin and sadness to make the world miserable.

Andrew: There is something else I like about the books. I'd like to fly. Harry Potter can fly and play "Quiddich" on his Nimbus 2000 broomstick.

WHAT IS IT?

Quiddich is a game something like soccer except the players all ride broomsticks and there are four balls to chase instead of one. The games can be very rough and last a long time.



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Andrew: But, will we play "Quiddich?"

Aunt Sally: Oh, I'm sure we'll have lots of games to play. And guess who will be right up there with us having a great time? The angels! Remember, Quiddich can be rough. Harry Potter broke his arm while playing it. But, when we swoop, dive, and spin in heaven, we'll be having even more fun and *never* get hurt!

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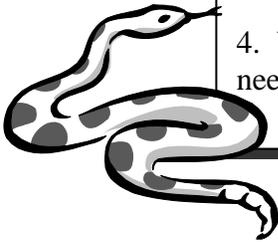
Andrew: So, what lies of Satan are in the books? I didn't see any.

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Aunt Sally: Remember the Bible story of Eve at the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? What lies did Satan tell her? Let's read Genesis 3:1-5.

SATAN'S LIES

1. You won't die.
2. God is keeping good things from you.
3. You don't have to obey God's rules and nothing will happen to you if you break them.
4. You are as smart as God so you don't need Him. Everything you need is within yourself.



Andrew: Yeah, sometimes I do feel like God keeps good things from me for no reason. Like Harry Potter books. We're not supposed to read them. That's not fair!

Aunt Sally: First of all, God didn't say you couldn't read Harry Potter books. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, "Hey Andrew. Thou shalt not read anything written by J. K. Rowling."

Andrew: Oh Aunt Sally, you're funny.

Aunt Sally: Since the actual words aren't in the Bible, we have to look at the principles—you know, what's really important for us to understand. And we can check out what the Bible says concerning some of the stuff that goes on in the Harry Potter books. Then, we have to decide which fits in with what God wants us to do and read about.

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Andrew: You mean, we should be able to tell the difference between truth and lies?

Aunt Sally: Exactly! Now, think for a minute about the Harry Potter stories. If you didn't know what the Bible says, and you didn't know the truth about Satan's lies, what things in the Harry Potter stories could be confusing?

Andrew: I know one! The dead parents in the mirror. In book one, Harry Potter discovers a mirror that can show people what they want most. Harry misses his parents very much and wants to know them, so he can hardly resist spending time with the mirror where he can see them moving around. In book 1, they smile at him and in book 4, they *talk* to him!

Another thing that could be confusing is all the ghosts in the books. There was one who hangs out in the girls' bathroom and cries all the time.

WHAT IS IT?

Harry's parents were murdered when he was a baby. He was raised by the Dursleys, a stuffy, uncaring aunt and uncle and their dimwitted son Dudley. All of them disliked Harry.

THE BIBLE SAYS

What does it say about the dead?

Ecclesiastes 9:4-6, 10

What did Jesus call being dead?

John 11:11-14



Another ghost, with an almost severed head—they call him Nearly Headless Nick—is still upset after 500 years about his not-very-neat execution.

Aunt Sally: Lets check out that idea with what the Bible says.

Andrew: I think the idea of sleeping until Jesus comes sounds a whole lot kinder than being a ghost and having to watch other people who are still alive. Our Grandma Tadman died last year. I'm so glad she is sound asleep until Jesus comes to wake her up instead of floating around the nursing home crying.

Aunt Sally: Let's look at a *real* ghost story in the Bible.

THE BIBLE SAYS

What instruction did God give Israel about witchcraft?
Deuteronomy 18:9-14

What had King Saul done about witches in Israel?
1 Samuel 28:3

Did going to the witch help Saul with his battle plans? Read the rest of the story.
1 Samuel 28:4-25 and 31:5, 6

Did King Saul really see the prophet Samuel?
Psalms 6:5 and 115:17





Andrew: There is something else I like about Harry Potter. He can *do* something about the frustrating problems he has, because he knows magick. He can cast spells and everything. I wish I could do that.

Aunt Sally: I know what you mean. It never feels good to be stuck without choices. Kinda makes you feel...

Andrew: Powerless.

Aunt Sally: Yes. Powerless. But, you can do something. You do have a choice. You can plug into the greatest power in the universe! In these books, Harry Potter is in control. In our lives, if we ask Him to, *God* is in control.

? **Andrew:** So, God will do something about all the people who frustrate and hurt me?

Aunt Sally: He has promised to do just that. No, He doesn't always do what we would do about a problem or situation. And sometimes He takes longer than we would like. But, He **WILL** take care of us and defend us against evil.

THE BIBLE SAYS

What does God say about revenge?
Deuteronomy 32:35

What does God say He will do?
Psalms 121:7, 8



? **Andrew:** There's something else about Harry Potter books that could be confusing. How about those unforgivable spells? Like Harry, I think some humans are too wicked

to be forgiven. And, sometimes, I think that God won't be able to forgive me when I keep doing something I know He doesn't like. I mean, how many times will He cast my sins into the sea when I keep doing the same one over and over again? It makes me feel discouraged and scared when I think about Jesus coming again.

Aunt Sally: Oh Andrew, don't ever, *ever* be afraid of Jesus' Second Coming. Not only will He

THE BIBLE SAYS

Read
1 John 1:9
Matthew 18:21, 22



forgive us for everything wrong we've ever done, He offers us wonderful power to change our habits and grow more like Him. The secret of being ready to go home with Jesus is to choose this very moment to be loyal to Him and stay His friend from now on.

Andrew: That makes me feel a *lot* better!



Aunt Sally: What else could be confusing to someone who didn't know what the Bible teaches?

Andrew: There's Voldemort. He's like Satan; very evil and the parts about him are really scary. And they get scarier and scarier in each book.

Aunt Sally: That doesn't sound fun.

In an interview with J. K. Rowling, she said, "I can tell you the books are getting darker. Harry is going to have a lot to deal with as he gets older."

Another time she said, "Death and bereavement, and what death means, I would say, are the central themes of all seven books."



Andrew: Hum. Oh, I know another one. Obedience isn't all that important to Harry Potter. He breaks rules all the time. And when he does, he doesn't get into very much trouble. Even Mr. Weasley, the father of Harry's best friend Ron, whose job is to enforce the rules, breaks them himself. If anyone knew about it, he'd be in big trouble!

Aunt Sally: One of the lies Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden was that she wouldn't have to face consequences if she disobeyed God. But, guess what? When she and Adam sinned, the consequences were awful! Not only did Eve eventually die, every person, animal, and plant in the whole world had to die, too. That's how terrible sin is.

THE BIBLE SAYS

Is obedience important to God?
Exodus 19:5

What about consequences?
Romans 6:23



Andrew: Something else that's different in Harry Potter's world is that lying and cheating are OK—unless you get caught. Even when Harry did get caught, it wasn't a big deal. So, he never felt sorry about lying and cheating. He just got upset when he got caught. Aunt Sally, when I tell a lie, it makes me feel kinda bad inside.

Aunt Sally: You'll be glad to know that the Bible talks about that, too!

THE BIBLE SAYS

Read
Proverbs 12:22

How does God feel about lying?

The Bible also says God never lies (Titus 1:2 and Hebrews 6:18) and He doesn't want us to either. He calls Satan "the father of lies." (John 8:44)



Andrew: Besides lots of lies, Harry Potter stories are filled with many kinds of magick—witchcraft, wizardry, numerology, and talking with dead people. The books make these sound like a lot of fun.

Aunt Sally: Let's review how God feels about what's taught at the Hogwarts School for wizards.

THE BIBLE SAYS

Read
Deuteronomy 18:10-12



Andrew: Actually, I didn't know there were real witches! I thought they were just make-believe, like in fairy tales. God must be really upset about that!

WHAT IS IT?

Some activities mentioned in the Harry Potter books are very real and practiced today.

Witchcraft: The religion of witches. Today, it's known as Wicca.

Numerology: The practice of telling the future by assigning magical meanings to numbers.

Astrology: Telling the future by the placement and movement of stars and planets.

Necromancy: Communicating with the spirits of dead people.

Magick: Casting spells. "Magic" (without the k) usually refers to the types of tricks anyone can learn. They are just tricks.



Aunt Sally: Any time the dark side of the supernatural world is presented as harmless or even imaginary, there's a danger that boys and girls like you will become curious and find out too late that witchcraft is neither harmless nor imaginary. Satan is working all the time to make what is bad seem good to us and to make what is good seem bad.

The Matching Game

Match the following statements with the proper Bible text.

Truth is important.	James 1:17
God doesn't keep anything good away from us.	Psalms 20:1
I don't need magic to help me when I'm sad or frightened.	John 8:32

Aunt Sally: Andrew, I'm so glad you are talking to me about Harry Potter books. I believe one of the worst things about reading them would be not having anyone to help you understand Satan's lies.

Andrew: You know, if God is going to give us all the good things—like flying and talking with animals—without the evil and scary parts, then I can hardly wait to get to heaven and meet Jesus.

Aunt Sally: For right now, I hope you understand why it would be better not to fill your mind with Harry Potter ideas.

THE BIBLE SAYS

Read
Philippians 4:8, 9

What does God want us to read and think about?



Now that YOU know about Satan's lies and what the Bible says, why don't you make a choice, not only about Harry Potter, but about the other things that go into your mind as well? God loves you. He sent His Son to die for you so that you could live forever with Him. He wants to be your very best friend. Choose to accept His love and friendship. He will help you decide what to put into your mind from now on. Then, when He returns, He will introduce you to all the delights of eternal life.

THE END

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