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Should Christians Really Be so Concerned about Homosexuality, Abortion, and Science?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about whether Christians should really be so concerned about homosexuality, abortion, and science when Jesus doesn't seem to care about those things and thoughts on AI leading a congregation in prayer or giving a sermon.

* Are gays, abortion, and science really the foremost concerns of Christianity, or have politicians figured out how best to herd us? I can't picture those things making the top 50 things out of Jesus' mouth when he returns.

* What do you think about the fact that AI can now lead a congregation in prayer and even give a sermon? It doesn't feel right to me.

Transcript

You're listening to the hashtag, S-A-R-S-C podcast. I'm Amy Holland with me is Greg Kogel. Hi, Amy.

Hi, Greg. Alright, let us start today with a question from Bailey. Are gays, abortion, and science really the foremost concerns of Christianity, or have politicians figured out how best to herd us? I cannot picture Jesus returning and that making the top 50 things out of his mouth.

Oh, okay. I wonder what the top 50 things are going to be. What we see in those care, let me just write those down.

Abortion, homosexuality, and science. This is a confusing question to me. Okay.

When Jesus returns, it's over. Okay, the author walks on the stage, the play is over as Lewis puts it. Okay.

None of those things are going to matter then, because now Jesus is coming with the word. Judgment. Okay.

Any decisions that have been made by people regarding the gospel proper will have been made by them. It's done with. It's over.

Of course, he's not going to be concerned about any of those things. Okay. It's like when the, you know, when the bulldozer comes to scrape the lot of the old house, it will not matter what kind of wallpaper people put on it 30 years ago.

But it did matter 30 years ago for the people that were living in it. When it comes to final destruction, none of those kinds of things matter. Okay.

The only thing that mattered is which side you're on, so to speak, and whether you have been, your names are written in the book of life, or you're judged by the deeds that are written in what I call the books of death. That's what matters then. Okay.

But how do people's names get into the book of life? Okay. In a practical sense. Now, I just saw and we've seen parts of an episode and whole thing.

Stephen Meyer did an interview with Joe Rogan on Joe Rogan show. Joe Rogan. I'm not really familiar with them, but apparently it's the most popular podcast in the country.

11 million subscribers, something like that. And open to talking about things. All right.

What does Stephen Meyer bring to the table? Science. That's his strength. That's his specialty.

It was a magnificent discussion. Actually, he goes total of three and a half. But it was an opportunity for Stephen to make the case for God to not just Joe Rogan, and a lot of times, a circumstance like that, the interviewers, not your audience.

The audience is 11 million people listening in for God and for Christ. And the scientific quote unquote discussion then becomes a factor in whether a person's name is written in the book of life. Okay.

And homosexuality is similar in one sense because if you have a culture that is championing something that God says is an abomination in the Mosaic law, or in the New Testament, they are degrading passions, Romans chapter one, and are characteristic of rebellion of God in suppressing the truth and unrighteousness. When you have a culture that's championing that in a powerful way and spending a whole month of the year celebrating it, then there's a whole lot of people that are going to be taken in by that and their names will not be written in the book of life. Okay.

So this relates to that final assessment when Jesus returns as well. But not only that, when we live in a way that is not in accordance with God's designs and purposes for human flourishing, we don't flourish. And so this is not good for people to embrace these sinful lifestyles.

All right. And this particular one is in our face constantly. I just mentioned the month of June, one whole month.

It's in our face everywhere you go. I mean, the attorney that was working on our, my wife and I, you know, last, well, in Testament, what did they call it? You know, all of our, all of that stuff. I can't remember the word for the category.

Sorry. She sent it a letter celebrating gay pride went off to all of her people in June. Yeah, we're celebrating this.

So, you know, you can't avoid this. It's in your face. All the time.

It's not just a point of view. It's, it, there's, there's a lot of attitude that is associated with it and a lot of hostility to those who are not celebrating along with everybody else. So this has this plays a part.

And even though it may not be on Jesus lips when he returns, it is a concern of everybody who is writing under Jesus inspiration because we have lots of passages that speak to sexual morality, especially to the behavior, homosexual behavior. Okay. So, you know, I don't know why, why would some Christian want to be dismissive of some issue that God certainly is not dismissive of just because Jesus won't be talking about it when he returns.

He's not, he's not returning to fix things that way, to change culture and to change minds and to, you know, get people to live right. He's, he's first he came as the Lamb of God. Now he's coming as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

So this, this characterization that's offered about what Jesus will be concerned about when, when he returns, I don't think is helpful. The other thing I was mentioned is abortion. And does this, I don't know, does this person, I'm sorry, Bailey, is that it? Bailey is Bailey concerned about sex trafficking.

I wonder if that's a concern of Bailey's. Does he think that he's this is, or maybe he or she, does she, do they consider, I don't know if it's a male or female here. That's why I'm saying that.

Do they think that this ought to be a concern of Christian sex trafficking or slavery? Slavery is still happening as sex trafficking is a type of slavery. All right. And it's not just a thing of the past.

It's happening now. Is it something that is appropriate for us to speak regarding? Because it is an evil that happens to, to, to, to image bearers that God is concerned with. And so even if it's not related to evangelism itself, it still is related to how image bearers ought to be treated.

And in the case of abortion, we have, since 1973 in January to 2019, we have more abortions. We have killed more babies in America than, than all the Axis armies and all of the allied armies, soldiers, and all of the civilians on both sides that died in World War II, over 60 million. This is something that we ought not to be concerned about because Jesus isn't going to lecture us about abortion when we return, when he returns.

I don't understand this. I would start off by saying these are the areas where Christians are being pressured to conform to non-biblical views. So of course, these are the questions that we're getting from people.

People want to know, is this, is this correct? What the culture is telling me about these things, what they're pushing in right now, especially in June, like you said, there's no way to avoid that. We got tons of questions about this in June. So the, the, where the culture is pressuring Christians to adopt a non-biblical view, that's where they need to understand the issue.

Because it's very easy to just go along with culture if you don't understand why you shouldn't. And since, you know, for a lot of topics, if nobody is pressuring you on that topic, Christians don't think very carefully about it. And this has gone on since the beginning of Christianity.

You know, one topic will come up and that's when the Christians will address it. They didn't address the Trinity right at the very beginning. It's when someone started to deny it that it became an issue and they had a council.

And on all that. So, or evolution, I mean, this was a big thing in the early 20th century, you know, with the fundamentalist and everything in the scopes trial. And then it, it fell by the wayside for a long time.

I know the things became more important. Now it's come back into his ability, but that's a good point. So today, a lot of Christians have not thought about the question, why do we have man, woman marriage? Why is homosexuality wrong? Because we've all assumed it over the centuries and nobody's been challenging us.

Well, now the challenge has come and it's, it's pretty intense. So now Christians have to think about it carefully and respond. And that's why we're getting all these questions.

And that's why we talk about it. These are the areas where Christians are being pressured. Now I will say is, are these the foremost concerns of Christianity? Only in the sense that we're talking about the guilt of sin and forgiveness from God.

The, the gospels of foremost concern of Christianity, that is, I mean, the fact that Christians are being pressured. That's absolutely true. But how do you know what is sin, if you have questions about what is sin, how do you know what you need to be forgiven for? How do you know you need forgiveness? How do you know you need reconciliation

with God? That involves understanding what God has said is wrong and, and how we can best represent him, how we can live in a way he's called us to live, what is truly good, what is truly beautiful.

All these questions play into the gospel questions. So it's not the core issue, but it is certainly related to the core. And now the thing that first stood out to me when I saw this is this.

These three topics are definitely one of the, or three of the top topics brought up by the prophets. You have sexual immorality, which was a huge warning by the prophets. The prophets, they talked about this a lot.

And as you pointed out, Greg, Paul used it as, as the symbol of rebellion against God. The various Romans won. So sexual immorality.

Now, the killing of innocence, you look in the Bible and you will see that the prophets talked a lot about the killing of, of innocence. That was a huge, that played a huge part in the, the destruction of other nations and the destruction of Israel. Eventually when they were doing the same thing, right? When they were exiled.

So then you come to science. Well, I assume what we're talking about here when Bailey brings up science is maybe our response to arguments for evolution. That's the only thing I can think, you know, our arguments for intelligent design saying that science actually points to a designer.

Well, those who deny that God designed are engaging in idolatry. They're saying there's something more ultimate than God and that's just material things. So you have sexual immorality, the killing of innocence and idolatry.

Is there anything the prophets talked about more than those three things? Yeah. These are actually very serious things that cause great harm and destroys societies and bring about God's judgment. So if Christians get this wrong, we are in trouble.

We don't want Christians to get it wrong. We don't want our culture to get these things wrong because they're serious. We don't want people misusing their bodies and causing harm to society.

We don't want them killing innocent human beings. We don't want them to miss what science is pointing to and that is our good creator. So these are not small issues.

And I tend to think that people who accuse us of talking too much. These are the same people who are pushing it and they don't want us to push back. Interesting.

Because we weren't talking about this before people started pushing us. These weren't huge topics a hundred years ago. They are today because we are responding, not

because we're initiating.

So it's such an important point. We're answering questions that people are sending to us because of what they're experiencing in culture. They want to be good ambassadors for Christ and these are the issues coming up.

And they're coming up for a reason. It's because the other side is so aggressive. And when I talk about gender, for example, in some things written in the past and this made it into street smarts in that chapter on that, we are not trying to change principally right now.

The dynamic is we're not trying to change other people's views. We are simply campaigning to be allowed to have our own. And that's what's at stake here.

You can't have your own view. This is literally an example of the other side forcing their views on us. They are forcing us under penalty of punishment to act as if their views are our views.

And the irony here is that Christians are accused of being in a hypocrites. But what is a hypocrite? A hypocrite is the one who believes one thing but acts another way as if their beliefs are just a show. Yet this is exactly what the culture is demanding of us.

You may believe this, but you're bad if you believe these things and you need to at least act like you believe otherwise. So that's a lot of pressure. And they, Christians need to understand these issues.

That's just the bottom line because other people are pushing them right now. And oh, I have one last thing to add. And that is this.

I've been to a lot of churches and this is not, these are not the topics that most churches are talking about all the time in a church service. That's just not the case where you, where you will hear this are people who are doing cultural commentary like here in Stanford reason. So you can get confused and think this is all Christians are talking about.

No, that's not the case. The people whose job it is to respond to culture and answer questions and explain the Christian worldview. They're talking about it.

If you go into your average church service, it might come up once in a while, but it's not the main topic of the service. That's not how churches are run. And think of standard reasons, vision, three lines, confidence for every Christian.

Why? Because they're, they're faltering as a result of cultural pressure. Clear thinking for every challenge. Why? Because they're challenged on all kinds of things that represent foolishness and muddled thinking and we want to give them clarity.

And then finally courage and grace for every encounter and why that one, obviously we need courage. If you have the information that we provide, then you're going to have the confidence that breeds the courage so that you can act in a gracious way when you engage. All right.

So just to sum up, there is a lot about sexual immorality in the Bible. We're told to flee immorality. We're told that every other sin is committed outside the body, but this is a sin against your own body.

The only, you know, there are very few things that are, I mean, there are all, I mean, there are all sorts of laws in the, in the mosaic covenant to govern marriage and the proper use of sexuality. And the things outside of that are, are condemned. The only thing more serious than that is murder.

And the only thing more serious than murder is idolatry. So you've got these top issues. These are things that we should care about.

Right. All right. Greg, let's move on to another cultural question.

This comes from Mr. Speedy. Mr. Speedy. Mr. Speedy.

AI. Wait, Mr. Speedy or speaking? Speedy. Oh, Speedy.

Okay. Okay. Speedy.

AI can now lead a congregation in prayer and even do a sermon. It doesn't feel right. What do you think? I agree.

I mean, my, my initial reaction to a new thing on my horizons is coming up very, very strong. Why listen to a computer? Why let a computer do all of this kind of works? One thing to use your computer to help research and then you construct something yourself. No.

But I was talking to somebody else about AI recently and they had used AI, what chat GPT, right? To do some research on a particular issue. And the research was a controversial issue, more or less you or whatever. I'm not exactly sure what it was.

And the entire answer was very left leaning. Somebody is telling AI what to say. That's the way it works.

The A stands for artificial and you can take computer code and logarithms and all kinds of stuff, which I don't begin to understand and get them to work in particular ways so that now they can give very sophisticated response, but it's all a result of programming. And people are taking, it seems to be more and more AI to be people, to be persons who just give the facts. When in fact, they give the answers that they're told to give.

Now, if you're, if you're trying to get information that is factual nature and not controversial in any moral ethical way or spiritual way, chances are you're going to get good information. Okay. But if you're, why would you want a computer guiding you in prayer? I do not understand that.

And what I am very resistant to is seating my own actions and mind over to technology. And I do not like cars that drive themselves. I can drive.

All right. And I don't want to beep in me every single time some other cars passing or that kind of stuff. There's some good things about it.

If I'm getting too close to somebody and speed control here, then they let me know and they can set the distance. That's great. Okay.

That's a safety feature, but I don't want cars to drive myself. My nephew has a, has a car. He let musk's is I can't remember the name.

Tesla. Yeah, Tesla brand new. Actually, it's not even out yet.

He put the thing in the GPS, started the car and then car drove all the way and parked itself. Basically, he didn't touch anything to get where he's going. Went through traffic and everything like that.

All right. That's not for me. But if people like that, fine, they could choose that.

But we're now talking about prayers. We're talking about people leading prayer. Or non people leading prayers.

That's right. Computer's leading prayer. Okay.

Now, I think there are prayers that people wrote from their heart that we can pray from our heart. And I guess if a computer writes a prayer and it reflects our feelings, we can do that. I just think that's crossing a line.

I think there's a danger there. And I think we have not begun to see the danger. These are fallen people who are using powerful technology.

All right. Be where? Be where? All right. And read a live not by lies.

If you want to get a sense of the drift of the culture and drift toward that apart from the spiritual aspect, the potential for totalitarian control, unbelievable. We already have a government administration that is on record now as manipulating social media outlets so as to silence certain types of views, you know, with shadow banning and stuff like that. So, you know, why would we think any administration that gets power like this is not going to use it in a way that's inappropriate power corrupts.

And Lord Acton, you know, an absolute power corrupts absolutely. And this is a move towards more absolute power. AI can it may have a role and we're not going to be able to avoid it.

But boy, am I resistant? Am I suspicious? And I think we all ought to be very, very careful about this. This is an example of what I was talking about, Greg, where it's an issue Christians have not thought carefully about because it didn't exist. Right.

Good. We didn't have a reason to think through it. And so now here's somebody asking a question and says, it doesn't feel right.

And a lot of times that's how we start out. It doesn't feel right, but we can't put our finger on it because we haven't thought through it carefully enough to explain what is wrong with it. And I think we'll start to see more of that as we go.

But I would say trust your gut on this, Mr. Speedy. And if nothing else, why do you want someone leading your worship who isn't a Christian? The computer is not a Christian. The computer is not even a person.

Right. It's an illusion. It's something fake.

It's not real. Worship is not a mechanical recitation or a ritual. Saying the right thing at the right time.

Worship is about a communion of persons, communion between us and God, communion between the persons around us. Don't bring in someone to lead you or someone, something to lead you that's a machine. It's not made in the image of God.

And this is where I think our materialism of our culture is coming into play here because there's not enough of an understanding of the difference between a person who is not a Christian. And a human being and a machine that can do a lot of computations and spit out a sermon. But because that's exactly what materialists think we are.

Exactly. We are wet machines. They're terminology online.

So they don't have a way to distinguish between the two. And that's why they ask all the time, do you think it's going to become self-aware? Well, no, I don't because it's not a living being. It's a machine that's different from life.

But of course, if you're a materialist, you have no way to explain anything beyond a machine. So therefore, you maybe can't see the difference. But as human beings, we're made in the image of God.

We are persons. We are persons who commune with other persons. Worship is communing with other persons and with the greatest person.

So let's keep this real. Let's not bring in these artificial things that, you know, we can't be, they can't mentor us. They can't teach us.

They can't hold us accountable to things. They're just a machine. We need a leader.

We need a person just as a family needs a father. A church needs a pastor. It's a leader.

Needs a leader. Needs who is actually a real leader, who loves God, who's made in the image of God, and who cares about the people. Now that's another thing.

A pastor ought to care about his congregation. He ought to know his congregation. How are you going to input all the information about your congregation into some machine so it can spit out a prayer for your congregation? Yeah.

You know what my pastor and I have talked about this a bit. You know, when I go before a congregation and teach the Bible and then lead in prayer, lead in prayer, only a leader could lead not a machine. I want the congregation to hear content and phraseology that communicates my personal love for God submission before him and content that has to do with his character.

Okay. I want to be a model to those so it doesn't sound like I'm just doing something right. All right.

I want them to see the life in my communication with God. A computer is not going to do that. I just had a couple of quick thoughts.

I know we're a little tight in time here, but if somebody just wants to do an exercise, I've never done this. I'm not going to waste my time on it. Some others have done something like this.

That's where I got the information. Just go to chat GPT and say, give me a thousand word article on abortion. Give me a thousand word article on Jesus being the only way of salvation.

See what comes up. You know, my understanding is when people have done things, you get a very, very leftist kind of characterization in any event. Just try that.

And you'll see what this thing has the bias or not, all right, so that you can do a little experiment. As far as computers becoming self-aware because they appear to think, that's backwards. Thinking is a function of self-awareness.

Okay. Thinking is a function of consciousness. No combination of zeros and ones.

And that's all we are talking about here. A sophisticated set of dominoes. No set of dominoes falling is going to cause consciousness to appear in thin air.

This is the problem with consciousness right now with human beings or any living thing. Where did consciousness come from? They don't know. And this is why leading, you know, mind scientists guys, they just say, you know, it's an illusion.

Daniel Dennett, consciousness is an illusion. It's not real. Why? Because they can't make it into something physical.

And just because once again, thinking is a result of consciousness. It isn't the artificial thinking, which isn't real thinking, that a computer is doing, that's going to create consciousness. It's just a big mistake to think that.

And all you have to do is reflect on the nature of zeros and ones and the nature of consciousness. And you can see the two are completely different. And the second will not produce the first.

And one final thing that just occurred to me, Greg, as you are leading a congregation in prayer or whatever it is, you are also, there's communication happening between you and the audience. You can react. You can tell how they're responding.

You can tell if you need to explain something more. You can tell if they're getting what you're saying. You can tell if they're hurting.

You can tell if they're happy. There's, there's a communion between, I know I've said this a million times, but that is actually playing into how you can tell. You pray or how you speak.

Machine can't do that. It just can't do that. It's not, that's not what it was meant for.

We were meant to worship with other human beings and we were meant to worship God together. So there you go. There you go.

But I feel, I'm sure there's a lot more I haven't thought about. I think, didn't Jay Wesley Richards write a book on AI? That I don't know. Okay.

I think he might have done that. I can't remember the name of it, but that might be somewhere if people are interested, where they can look. I know he's thought about this.

One of my friends wrote a piece reflecting very briefly, said, what's going to happen when so many jobs are done by AI? What's going to happen to all those people that are out of business? Where are they going to go? And he said, we maybe find some new things, but not that many people. One company just laid off 90% of its people in substitute for AI. And so now you've got a generation that is not taught industry, that is not taught to work hard, that is not taught to earn their own way, but rather they are, they, they, what's they've received, not just implicitly, but explicitly, is that the world owes you.

And now they, they don't have the jobs. What's going to happen now to that generation and how will they respond when they have no way of being meaningfully employed and they think they deserve the world just for breathing. That's dangerous.

Yeah, there's a, there's a lot there to think about. So thank you for sending in that question. We really appreciate these cultural questions today.

These are, are things that are important to think about. And I'm sure we'll be seeing more of this in the future. If you'd like to send in your questions, send it on Twitter with the hashtag STRS or you can go through our website if you look for our hashtag STRS podcast page.

You'll find a link there and it's really easy. Send us your question. I will read them all and consider it in the queue and hopefully we'll get to yours.

All right, thanks for listening. This is Amy Holland. Great Coco for a stand to reason.