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Is It Okay to Join an Organization That Supports Abortion?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about whether it's morally okay to join and pay dues to an organization that supports abortion in order to influence the organization, whether the verse that says people from "every nation" will be in Heaven includes the Canaanites, and how to respond to someone who says sexuality doesn't need to be understood, just accepted.

* Is it morally okay to join and pay dues to an advocacy organization that also supports abortion in order to influence the people and the organization?

* Does the statement in Revelation 7:9 that says people "from every nation, tribe, people, and language" will be in Heaven include Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, etc.?

* How would you respond to the claim "Sexuality isn't something we need to understand; sexuality is something we need to accept."

Transcript

[Music]

[Music] This is Stan Theresa's #STRASK podcast with Amy Hall and Greg Cockel. Amy. Welcome to the show.

[Laughter] Okay, Greg. Let's start with a question from Julie. Is it morally okay to pay dues and join an advocacy organization that also supports abortion in order to influence the people and the organization? So I assume it supports something else as well, I would assume.

Yeah, this is an interesting question. And I'm pausing because like many of the questions here, we're getting questions we've never gotten before and we haven't had to think about which makes it kind of fun. But it also makes it harder to come up with an answer, especially when there's some complexity here, moral complexity.

I think it's one thing to attach oneself to a group in order to have an influence in the

group. I know of people who have joined atheist groups or skeptics groups with their permission, even though they were Christians, because that gives them access to a lot of people who need the truth and they're engaging with them. Nothing wrong with that.

The trip up here is pay dues because now you're giving money to an organization that is doing harm. Now is the organization one that supports abortion or is involved in abortion? It could be ideologically in support of abortion. But to me it's different because we patronize all kinds of organizations who then as an organization support things we don't agree with.

But that's our patronizing their organization is to buy a product and not to help them with whatever other projects they have, political projects, and they may be multiple. Some we agree with, some we don't. I don't think I'm morally responsible for how a person uses the money that they earn from me through a legitimate means.

Now people may disagree with that. That's fine. And some might say I don't think there really is a moral connection.

You're right, Coco. However, I just don't feel good about it. Fine.

Then don't do it. No beef. The question here was is it moral to give funds to an organization? Could you finish the sentence? Because that's where I'm not sure.

So is it okay to pay dues and join an advocacy organization that also supports abortion in order to influence the people and organization? Yeah, see this is an advocacy organization. So their purpose is to advocate for certain causes including an immoral cause. Sometimes I think it's easier to answer this question if we change the immoral thing in question.

So to me the best substitution for doing this little exercise is slavery. So is it immoral to pay dues to an organization that is an advocacy group that includes advocating human slavery or sexual trafficking, if you will? Well I think most people would say immediately, no, that ain't right. Okay.

So in this particular case I think that would be the proper answer. No it ain't right. Because you're giving money to the group that is itself in existence for the purpose of advocating certain points of view some that are clearly immoral.

And by the way abortion is worse than human slavery. It's worse. Because in human slavery people are enslaved.

In abortion people are killed. So one certainly is more egregious than the other. The second more egregious than the first.

So this is why to argue from the lesser to the greater if it's not legitimate, if it seems to

us not legitimate to support an advocacy group that advocates slavery then it would not be legitimate for us to support financially a group that advocates a greater moral harm. And that would be abortion. What do you think? I think first to say that's nothing to say that slavery is less bad than people think.

That's to say that abortion is worse than most people think. Thank you. So what I would say too is that you're very unlikely to change the organization.

Even if you mentioned people who go to the atheist group so that they have access to atheists and they can interact with them. Even in that situation it's good to have access to people who have those beliefs so you can talk to them and you might influence a few people but you're not going to change that group to not be an atheist group anymore. That's just not going to happen.

I think the same is true with the organization. You may interact with a few people although I'm not even sure how joining an organization and paying dues. Maybe this is something a local thing.

Gives you a voice. Yeah. Are you actually going to see these people? I don't know.

Do you have a vote? I don't know. It's very unclear and maybe there would be a different, maybe it would be different depending on if it's a local organization where you actually have an influence. But in most organizations just joining them is not going to change the overall goals of the organization.

That just seems so unlikely. So I think everything you said there is fair, Greg. I would, obviously I don't have all the facts in this case but I would probably argue against it.

Let's go on to a question from Chris. Revelation 7, 9 says people from every nation, tribe, people and language will be in heaven. This presumably includes Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, etc.

How do we account for this without resorting to some kind of universalism? Well, it's clear that there were, but let me back up for a second. We have to be alert at least or open to the idea that some generalizations that are made in Scripture are hyperbolic. So this phrase is meant to identify the expansiveness of the impact of the gospel on people's lives.

That may not be meant to be taken literalistically like every little bitty self-identified tribe will have at least one person that's a believer. I don't know if that's actually what it is meant to be stretched to mean. So just keep that in mind.

And so the groups that were mentioned, what was Rahab? Rahab was one of those groups. I don't know exactly. She was always a Rahab, but she was a prostitute.

But I'm not sure exactly the ethnicity of those that were inhabitants of Jericho. But they weren't Jews, they were among those others, possibly Philistines. Philistines lived in the hill country, so she might have been Philistine.

And there were others who were God-fearers who attached themselves to the nation of Israel from these groups. And likely some of them became followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, the Scripture talks about the law applying to them.

Now some of them are just in the land, and so the law applies to them no matter what their views are. But they can't do illegal things. But I think it's completely reasonable to assume that there are going to be people from these tribes seeing the great things that God has done in the lives of the Jews when they were obedient, that are going to attach themselves spiritually to the Jewish nation.

So I have every reason to believe that there are people from those different ethnic groups of ancient Canaan that became followers of the true God. I don't know why we'd think differently. So I guess the simple answer is, "Yeah, why not?" Yeah, I think that's fair.

And I also do think the point here is that God is expanding it beyond the Jews. So I'm not sure how literally to take that. But yeah, I think your point is very fair about those in the past.

Because they weren't in a position to know about God. He's not just randomly taking them apart from them actually knowing who he is. By the way, there's some statements too in the Scripture, and we don't recognize these.

But scholars pick up on it because of their additional research that are, what's the right word, they're kind of like sayings that we use, like a snowball's chance in hell, kind of thing. All right, well, there's not going to be any snowballs in hell. Well we use that as a saying.

Now the phrase for example, something like, "This thing will happen, and it's never been seen before, and it never will be seen again." And we have some reference about the Second Coming of Christ. Well, it turns out that that phrase appears in lots of places. It is meant as a hyperbolic statement of some extreme thing happening, not that it is literally the case that this has never happened before, and it will never happen again, but this event is absolutely singular.

So now the only way you know that is to see how this language is used inductively, and that is we look at the places that it's used and see what the meaning turns out to be. To us reading at once, it seems to mean one thing, but two, those who read it, but those who are in the culture there, they understood. Some of these phrases to be generalizations that we use a lot, like a snowballs chance in hell type thing, and we're

not talking about hell, and we're not talking about snowballs, but we just use that kind of language.

And so it may be the case, just speculating here, that when it says from every tribe, every tongue, every this and that, and the other thing, that this is one of those kind of phrases that's repeated in different occasions, that is meant simply to communicate the breadth of the impact and not to be taken in the literalistic way that some people want to take it. I'm not sure the key here is, and some people may be getting uncomfortable. Wait a minute, you mean the Bible doesn't mean what it says? You know, the Bible means what it says, but it only means what it says when we take into consideration the intent of the author who's using what it says.

And so if the author is using a broad generalization, that's a phrase that's commonly used to mean one thing, and we read it literalistically to mean something else, then we are not reading it the way the author intended. Our goal is to figure out what the author intended. And so if we discover phrases that are used in a generalized way, then that are used in other ways to mean a general thing, then we have to pretty much presume that's the way the author is intending it to be used in this case.

Here's a question from Will Black. How would you respond to the claim sexuality isn't something we need to understand. Sexuality is something we need to accept.

I'm not exactly sure what that means. I would imagine that maybe he's made an argument to somebody about, say, why certain things are wrong when it comes to sexuality, and maybe they're saying, we don't need to understand what it's about or anything we just need to accept what people say about themselves when it comes to society. Well, but that's like saying, look, we don't need to understand why some people are violent.

Psychopaths or whatever, we just need to accept it. Well, why would we just accept something that's bad, they might say, that's different. Why is it different? Well, that is bad.

Okay, well, the whole issue here is whether the behaviors in question, whatever those happen to be where this response is given, the person who's given their response presumes that they're benign kind of behaviors. They are benign to culture and they are benign to the individual who practices them. This is another part that almost nobody ever talks about.

Well, I'm not hurting others. Well whether or not that's true, you may be hurting yourself. That's another factor in here.

Okay, but maybe these behaviors are not benign. That's really the issue. If a thing is morally benign, then Christians are making a mistake by barking up that tree.

This is where, well, I won't even get into all these. There are things that some Christians think are fine and other Christians think they aren't. Well, people should follow their own conscience, but whether a thing is moral or not has to be determined by some reasoning from Scripture.

Okay, and if it's not morally questionable, then all right, then we don't need to analyze it closely. We just accept it, allow it, whatever, live and let live. But if it's morally questionable, well, then that's an entirely different thing.

Or if it's dangerous, not just to others that would make it morally questionable, but dangerous to the individual, that also makes it morally questionable in my view. So that a lot depends on what is in view here. And when you see a hear saying like that, this is where it has to be unpacked with some questions.

And what do you mean by that question? Some variation is going to be a critical question to unpack this. Why wouldn't we need, if somebody's sick, we don't need to know. If there's a sickness, just saying, if there's a health issue, a physical sickness, we just don't need to know what caused it, we just need to accept it.

No, of course we need to know about, we have to do a diagnosis so we can do an antidote because the circumstances are good. Well, that could certainly be the case with a whole host of things that are moral, or at least arguably moral. And so this slogan is not adequate to dismiss things whose moral legitimacy is in question.

What it is is an attempt to dismiss the moral question. That's what's going on here. And you can see it from a mile away.

It's presuming everything's okay. So leave the person alone. You don't have to ask what caused whatever this proclivity in their life because it's not a proclivity, a tendency to evil in some sense.

It's not a proclivity. It's just a thing. So what does it matter? Some gentlemen prefer brunettes, some prefer blondes.

What are you making a fuss about? Who cares about why one or the other? Notice that you can say that without controversy because preferring a blonde over brunette has no moral ramifications unless the blonde you prefer over the brunette is a woman that's not your wife. Your wife is the brunette. But you see, we're bringing in different elements there that have moral consequences.

People who say these kinds of things guarantee you are simply trying to dismiss the moral claims that are made regarding this thing. If this behavior is immoral and unnatural, then finding out what might be at the root of an aberration that ends up producing immoral behavior might be helpful. But if a person is willing to dismiss the moral question, well, and of course, the question about source and change, that all is

irrelevant to them.

It makes a presumption though, and that's what's going on here, I think. And even if this isn't in terms of source, if it's just in terms of understanding what it is we are supposed to do and not supposed to do, I think what's at the base of this question is the idea that we don't have to conform ourselves to an objective morality when it comes to sexuality. We don't need to understand what is the arguments for each one.

We don't need to understand any of that because we just create whatever we want. So is sexuality something that we create for ourselves, or is it something that we're trying to conform ourselves to? And that's really I think what it comes down to for this. So what I like to do in questions like that, especially when this is very unclear after you get all the information about what they're claiming, try to bring it back to the base worldview question.

Because even when you get back to the question of whether or not there's something we're conforming ourselves to, there's a question of, well, why would there be something we're conforming ourselves to? It's because there is a God who created us. And if we can get back to earlier questions, not only are they less controversial, I mean, it's less controversial to talk to someone about whether or not God exists, but the later questions will make more sense because to a lot of people, it doesn't make any sense why we would say that there is morality attached to certain sexual acts. Because that implies that we are beholden to someone greater than us.

We have obligations about that. I remember Craig Hazen talking about going to being invited to a party that was almost exclusively homosexuals. And he being the only Christian there was addressing the challenges that came up.

And he said, let me ask you a question. This was a great way of setting the stage and he said, do if there is a God, if there is a God, do you think he would have any legitimate say in how we use the bodies that he gave us for sexuality, for sex? And since it's a conditional, if there was, the people according to his response, what Craig said was they responded, yeah, if there was a God, I guess he would have something to say. Now, I'm not sure if people nowadays would say this.

This happened a number of years ago, and people said it's change about these things. But then it shows that the real issue here is when you were just touching on a moment ago, Amy, is is there a God who has made the world a certain way? Is there? Now part of the problem nowadays is that people say there is a God, if he doesn't let me do, even if there is a God and he doesn't let me do whatever I want sexually, then he's not a good God. Because in order for a God to be good, he must agree with me on everything, moral.

It's really what that amounts to, which when I put it that way, you can see how infantile

that responses, but it is the way a lot of people think nowadays. I love that question. That is a great question to bring it back to the root of the issue here.

So everybody, remember that question. If there is a God, do you think that he would have any say so in our sexual behavior? And as soon as you identify the root of the difference between your worldviews, now you can discuss that root. That root, yeah.

By the way, the key isn't, it isn't just that he'd have something to say about our sexual behaviors, but I think the way I worded it at first was better. It was something along the, does he have anything to say about, it has to do with how God made us and our bodies to be used. You know, I'd have to think more about that.

I might put it in the new book and so I have to think the words out very carefully. He made us for a purpose for our, you know, does he have anything to say about how we use what he made us for? Something like that. Well, everybody can rewind a little bit and find exactly how to use for a sick or a. What the heck? We have that capability too, so we could check on that later.

All right. Thank you, Julie, Chris and Will. We really appreciate hearing from you.

Send us your questions on Twitter with the hashtag #SCRask or send it through our website on our contact page. Just make sure you include hashtag #SCRask in your question and keep it short. It has to be the length of a tweet.

So that's about two sentences, a lot shorter than people realize. But we hope to hear from you. Send us your questions.

This is Amy Hall and Greg Kockel for Stand to Reason.

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