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If Abortion Is Murder, Then Is Miscarriage Manslaughter?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about whether miscarriage is manslaughter, the implications of removing explicit pro-transgender books from the children's section of a library, and responding to an evolutionist who rejects Jesus because believing in creation would "add incoherence to the universe."

* If abortion is legally deemed to be murder, then shouldn't miscarriages be considered manslaughter?

* If we removed explicit pro-transgender and pro-homosexuality books from the children's section of a library, wouldn't we have to accommodate those asking for the removal of religious books?

* What would you say to a friend who won't follow Jesus because believing in creation would "add incoherence to the universe"?

Transcript

[Music] Welcome, this is Amy Hall. I'm here with Greg Cockel, and you are listening to the #STRSecPodcast. So, Greg, are you ready for this first question? I'm not sure.

I'll let you know at a minute. All right, this question comes from Ryan. How does one respond to this? If abortion is legally deemed to be murder, then miscarriages are manslaughter using the same logic.

No, I'm not ready for that. No, I am ready for that, and it's silly. Okay? If shooting someone in the head is murder, then when someone falls off a clip by accident, that must be manslaughter.

That's the parallel, which is silly. Okay? Miscarriages are when human beings die by accident. Now, in a miscarriage at any stage, is a human life taken? Sure, absolutely.

Man's slaughter has to do with culpability of another human being for that event. I don't

know why this is so difficult for people to see the distinction. It's discouraging in terms of people's ability to think morally that they don't see the difference between human action that causes a human death and natural circumstances that causes a human death.

Mm-hmm. If somebody causes a... Okay, let's say I punch a pregnant woman in the stomach and she has a miscarriage. Okay? Guess who's responsible for that miscarriage? I am.

My assault caused it. Therefore, in the state of California, I would be held responsible for a homicide. Why? It's just a miscarriage.

Yeah, but you caused the miscarriage. But if the miscarriage was a spontaneous miscarriage that no one caused, then no one's culpable. Why is this difficult? It's the same as if you had a child who had a disease who died.

We don't charge the parents with murder because the child has a disease and dies. This is just natural causes. But I do hear this question a lot, Greg, because people are... That's one of the things they say against abortion laws and they say, "Well, if you have a miscarriage, then they're going to come and they're going to come after you and put you in jail." Well, maybe... Of course, I just answered the question.

I didn't use a tactical approach. But I guess the tactical approach would... Why would miscarriage just be manslaughter? Maybe that's a simple question I could ask. Well, why would that be manslaughter? What is manslaughter? Manslaughters when somebody acts in a way that to some degree inadvertently causes the death of another person.

This is why there's a distinction between... I use the wording there to distinguish homicide for a second degree or whatever from manslaughter. Manslaughters may be culpable, but it isn't like you went out of your way to try to take somebody's life, either by planning it, or lying in wait, or by a spontaneous action of anger and then you pulled out a gun and shot somebody. No, this is something you did that you shouldn't have done that resulted in somebody's death.

And so you have a culpability for manslaughter. That's what manslaughter is. So how is that parallel with a miscarriage? It's not.

It's not. And again, I can understand why people would argue this way because they're grasping at straws and they're trying to throw anything out there that would make, that would sanitize their own commitment to having the freedom to take the life of an unborn child. Okay? What I don't understand is why any pro-lifer wouldn't be able to answer that simply on reflection.

What's manslaughter? What's miscarriage? They're different in morally relevant ways and no duh. So anyway. Yeah.

I mean, it can be tricky helping people see that. So I'm sure Ryan will appreciate with that. Yeah.

Yes. Thank you for asking the question. Yes, Ryan.

And my... Before we got that, before we started, Amy says, try not to get to a set of these questions. And so she predictably understood my own incredulity at these kinds of challenges. Okay.

What's the next one? All right. These are all somewhat controversial ones. So here's one from Natasha.

In regard to requesting pro-transgender and pro-homosexuality explicit books be removed from the children's section of a library, how do you counteract responses such as if we do that for your reasons, then we would have to accommodate others asking for the removal of religious books. Okay. So the question then becomes, is it ever legitimate to restrict books in a children's sections in a library? Is it ever? So I'm going to take my tactical approach here.

What I'm trying to do now is just lay a foundation of what rules are we going to follow. Is it ever legitimate? Yeah. I think most people would say, yeah, it is legitimate.

What would legitimize such an act? Well, I'm imagining here, but this would be my response. And I think most even-handed persons would think this way. If, say, for example, the books were either beyond a child's or young person's ability to handle the material, and therefore would be, in some measure, psychologically harmful to them, or maybe encouraged things that would be harmful to them or for others.

So you don't put a book in there to teach as an eight-year-old how to make a bomb, for example. All right. So okay, good.

So psychologically harmful to the young person or encourage them to do something that would be harmful to them or to others. Good. Now we got to rule down on the table.

Does that apply to religious books? Now, I think there are going to be some very extreme people who say, yes, it applies to religious books because you're scaring kids into believing in hell when there is no hell. But of course, in that situation, it's only wrong to scare them about hell if there is no hell. If there is a hell, then it's a warning about how to escape it.

All right. But anyway, there may be a matter of debate there, but then the question is, are transgender books and homosexual books, are those disqualified for young people for any of those reasons? And for one, yet we're sexualizing children who ought to be protected from having to consider things that they're just not psychologically capable of managing. Let's wait until adolescence before we begin to talk about those things.

So that's challenging, difficult, and also may encourage some kids to misdiagnose and then ask to have body parts cut off. Okay, which is happening. So the reasons why someone would restrict books in a children's section of the library, apply to those books just mentioned, but don't apply to religious books.

And I would say even though on both sides, there may be some debate, it seems much more obvious that those apply to books on sexuality for kids and don't apply to religious books, which largely teach virtue. So it's comparing apples and oranges. But you have to get the rule down first.

And this is kind of the way I think the left is approaching us, people on the left. It's like, well, whose rules? We got to go by your rules or by rules. It's a totally relativistic way.

I'm trying to look at what do we know about young people that would cause us to act in a way to promote their psychological health and not expose them to things that would be psychologically harmful to them or physically harmful to them. It's not like you get your books I get my books. You don't get your books that I don't get my books.

The question is what books are good and healthy for them? But this is not a conversation most of those people are willing to have. It's all about power. Yeah, it does seem like a completely different category when you have sexually explicit material for young children versus religious material that could be instructive and it could be different religions.

I don't think any Christians are calling for other religions, religious books to be removed from libraries. But I would also say, I'm sure they are removing religious books. I'm sure there are communities that don't want religious books in their schools and they have removed them.

So I like what you say, Greg, about it. It's not just my books versus your books. I mean, a community can have conversations about what their standards are and remove books.

And there's nothing wrong with that for children. This is something we do. We protect children.

We don't put every single book ever created into a library. We don't fill the library with pornography. We don't.

There's we all understand this. So I think those are two different categories and the irony is though the left is calling for the removal of all kinds of books that are ideologically inconsistent with their views. I just think Abigail Schreier and her book Irreversible Damage and how carefully written that is and how well researched it is and how much concern it expresses for children and young people who are being abused by any standard of that, any definition of that word are being abused by teachers and by political authorities and politicians or whatever.

Yep, this is a book that the left wants banned simply because it has a different narrative about gender than their narrative. Okay, that's it. So there's all kinds of stuff.

It's going on like crazy already. I just realized Greg, I was thinking this was for a school library, but it sounds like this is for a public library, but a children's section in a public library. Right, but this is all I was thinking of public library.

Okay. So it doesn't change anything. So far as my rationale.

Yeah, if you are running a library, then you are obviously going to be picking and choosing what books you have in there and if there's nothing wrong with having standards, but there should be a reason for removing, there should be a harm reason for removing the book, I guess. Okay, let's go to a question from Seth. How would you go about gardening with a friend who won't follow Jesus because that would mean as an evolutionist, he would need to believe in creation and in his words, this would add incoherence to the universe? All right, you have a confused look on your face and I'm going to take a guess at what I think he's talking about.

I suspect what he means is why do you think I'm confused? They first translate that one and then show me why you're misunderstanding. So go ahead. What do I think he's saying? No, what do you think that I am confused? Why would this add incoherence? Is that why would not believing in evolution create an incoherent world when I think it's just the opposite? Okay, so you're right onto me, Vulcan mindmill to find.

So to save me responding to that, you're going to clarify what you think that Seth means. I suspect what he means is that if there is a God who's creating, then we can't, what can we learn about the world because God could do anything at any time. So I think that's what he's, I suspect that's what he means by adding incoherence.

Okay, so let's take the charitable route here and I'll respond to that and then I might say something about the other. But what's very interesting and I actually went at length in the new book Street Smart's coming on September 12th. I'm just going to keep pounding that in my chapter on science and Christianity to make the point contrary to this issue that why science started precisely because when I say science, if you look at all the individual people who are founders of the scientific method, physics, botany, genetics, you know, no, not new mythology, but numerous.

I can't think of the right word, you know, like, like, like, um, you know, I never mind. I can't think of the right word. I can't even think of how to describe it.

But all these things, you know, um, chemistry and all this, these are all Christians who were convinced that God existed and had created an world of order that could be discovered in virtue of the fact that was orderly because God created it and gave us sensory faculties that allows us to assess the physical world with some degree of

accuracy. Okay, it is precisely the conviction that there was a God and that things were not just all wild and chaotic because what even the laws of nature that we observe having been consistent in the past, how can we argue that they will be the same in the future when nothing is managing them or controlling them? Well, they always have been, but that's the, that's the problem of induction. You can't say that the past is, the future will be like the past in those regards.

But if there is a God who made the world in an orderly fashion with, with patterns and Genesis one, there you got the sun and the moon that is for measuring times and seasons just to give one example. But the, the conviction that the world is a certain way because an intelligent God had made it that way is the, is an epistemological foundation for the entire some scientific project. God wasn't the science stopper.

He was the science starter. And therefore, almost everything that we look at and assess with very minor exceptions, now important exceptions, but minor exceptions are going to be examples of a cause and effect happening based on regularities that God has placed in the universe. Okay.

So the, the pen is writing here as we were both writing things down in paper while we're talking, not because God is pushing ink through the thing, but because God has set the world up in a certain way so that this you make things that operate this way. The exceptions are going to be miracles when, when a very unusual event happens because God's intervention, that's all. It's not a violation of the laws of nature.

The laws of nature don't even apply there. God is just simply intervened and done whatever he's wanted to apart from the, the normal series of events. And that's for a particular reason.

And the other one are unique events, like the origin of the universe, the origin of life, the origin of consciousness. These are things that define naturalistic explanations. And therefore it's reasonable to expect that there was an intelligent designer that intervened in those significant episodes to do something that the, the natural process of cause and effect couldn't accomplish.

So that's like to your take on the question. I do want to make a point though that the word God is creator or creation is ambiguous because there are two ways to understand that. One is just simply as God is the creator.

The other one is creation as a young earth characterization of creation, which is hard for a lot of people to accept because they think the science about the age of the universe completely goes against that. And so it would be believing contrary to fact. So I'm just making the point if the person is objecting to creation because they think to be a Christian, they have to be a young earth creationist.

That's not necessary. And in fact, to be a Christian doesn't mean they can't even be a Darwin Darwinian evolutionist because there's all kinds of people like that. And actually Bill Craig who doesn't hold a Darwinist view at the moment, he's agnostic on it, he has gone to great lengths to make the case that it's possible to believe in Darwinian evolution and believe in the God of creation and in Christianity.

And there are a lot of people who would, who I have no question that they are regenerate who believe in evolution. Now I think Darwinian evolution is false on the merits and I do think it's damaging and corrosive to good theology. But you strictly speaking, you don't have to believe in some version of creationism, either young earth or old earth, contrary to evolution, in order to be a Christian.

You can still believe in old earth or you could believe in evolution. I mean, God is a creator, but he might have, I'm just speaking theoretically, I don't believe this happened, but he might have quote unquote used evolution. So you don't have to abandon evolution in the Darwinian sense in order to be a Christian.

All right, that's not, they're not connected at the hip, so to speak. Okay, so that just clarification on that. And as far as the incoherence, to me, the Darwinian model creates incoherence on a number of different levels.

If the, it just does not explain the complexity of life. It has a model that is meant to describe how it happened, but it hasn't shown us happen that way. And you can't just look at some examples of natural selection that seems to improve the ability of something to get its genes into the next generation, and then look at the eye and the blood clotting system and ants who parade back and forth doing all their things or any particular detail of the entire natural realm and conclude, yeah, this is really the most reasonable conclusion is that this happened by a accidental process of natural selection working on mutations.

It's ludicrous. It's just ludicrous given the radical complexity of all of these things. And time isn't going to help.

And reagents isn't going to help. They've done the math on this. It just is not going to help.

So, and also, what do you make of human reasoning then if all of our mental faculties came about by an accidental process? C.S. Lewis has pointed this out. So has Alvin Plantinga and a bunch of others too. And if we are believing, if our, if our capacities to, to believe something, are only reflective of the Darwinian influence that causes us to believe these things, then it's not causing us to believe them because they're actually true, because evolution doesn't choose for truth.

It chooses for survivability, getting your genes into the next generation. This makes

reasoning and knowledge incoherent. This makes the incredible teleology of the universe and biological life incoherent.

Nothing is as it seems. Nothing is as it seems. That to me is the chaotic thing.

Yeah, I just want to underscore the idea that you pointed out, Greg, that science developed in the West because of belief in God, because there was no capricious forces behind the universe, there's actually order at the very center of the universe at the foundation of creation. And because there was order, that means then we could discover that order, which is why this developed. And I actually wonder what will happen with science because right now, we're kind of running on the fumes of Christianity in terms of science.

But what will happen is people reject God, and then suddenly they have no reason to trust their faculties, their rationality, any of those things. There's no worldview reason to believe that there is order. I suspect things will start breaking down ultimately.

Look at what's happening in the stem in those areas with the science they was forgetting. I'm not even sure. Technology, engineering, and math.

Okay. With all the wokeness, it's all going woke. You have doctors who are training people of the uses other interns in the UC system that are apologizing for saying the woman was pregnant, as if only women get pregnant.

It's like, because everything's relativistic now, it's all about feelings, then now even the stem areas, though they are last to be influenced, they still are being deeply influenced by this nonsense. Right. Because if we create our own reality, then what is there to discover at that point? Now, of course, Seth, we have been guessing at what he means.

The first thing you need to ask him is, what do you mean by that? Make him first explain how this adds incoherence to the universe. And then you can make sure you answer the question that he's asking specifically. So hopefully it's close to something we addressed here.

Yeah. What do you mean by coherence? What do you mean by creation? What do you mean by evolution? What do you mean by you can't believe in God or Christianity if some of those are true? Why does that seem to be the case for you? Spell it out. And by the way, this is where, you know, when I teach in tactics, this particular question is so important.

Tell me more, tell me more, tell me more, get them to talk more and more and more to clarify specifically what they mean. And when they are, in a sense, forced by your gentle, but genuine questions to be more specific about what they mean. Lots of times the problem, the challenge solves itself.

When you get more clear on these details, it's the ambiguity that's a big part of the problem. And then one last thing I noticed about this question, he won't follow Jesus because that would mean XYZ. The question here is not what would that mean for my life or whatever.

The question is, what is true? So that's another thing you can bring up. Oh, great point. So if Jesus really is who he said he is, then would you follow him? And then you can work out how all these other things work.

But if you want to know the truth about the universe, you don't pick one thing, you don't reject one thing because it might affect how you see something else. So just make sure that he has that and it may be he means something different in this question. But so that's why you ask him what he means by that.

But make sure he understands that you don't decide on truth pragmatically. You decide on it on what actually is. Well, thank you, Ryan, and Natasha and Seth.

We appreciate hearing from you. Send us your question on Twitter with the hashtag STRS or you can go through our website on the hashtag STRS podcast page. This is Amy Hall and Greg Kolkall for Stand to Reason.