“God DISPATCHES Evil Instead of Sending It”

Why don’t you teach that Isaiah 45:7 is the simple mistranslation it is? Otherwise, without untangling this one verse, one is left with a god of darkness and evil rather than the God of light and peace.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and DISPATCH darkness: I make peace, and DISPATCH ADVERSITY: I the LORD do all these things.

Thanks for your letter. I’m assuming you are referring to a previous email response of mine, “Is God the Creator of Evil?”. I did, of course, refer the person to what I consider to be a better translation of this verse.

However, the difficulty with the version you have cited is, quite simply, that it offers a rather unlikely translation. The Hebrew term in this verse primarily means “create.” It is the same term used in Genesis 1:1 to describe God’s creation of the heavens and the earth.

According to the Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon, there are 54 occurrences of this term in the Old Testament. The AV translates as “create” 42 times, “creator” three times, “choose” twice, “make” twice, “cut down” twice, “dispatch” once, “done” once, and “make fat” once. But its primary meaning, as any good lexicon will note is to create, shape, form.

Thus, I still think it’s better to point out that, in its original context, the passage is an affirmation of the sovereignty of God over whatever happens in the world. Nothing happens apart from His will or permission. That includes whatever calamities or natural disasters occur. And while I would agree with you that God is not the cause of any moral evil in the world, the Bible still affirms that He is

sovereign over whatever moral evil occurs. So you can prefer the version you cite if you want, but it takes a minority view on how this passage should be translated (as a simple comparison of different versions will quickly reveal).

Shalom in Him,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Why Did Jesus Seem to Want Parables To Obscure His Message?"

In Matt 13:10 the disciples ask Jesus why he spoke to the people in parables. It seemed that His answer was Him not wanting them to understand and in doing so being saved. If God desires for everyone to be saved and gave His most valuable treasure (His Son), why did He not reveal His Word to all so that they would come and be healed and saved?

Great question! God does indeed want all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). In Matt. 13:10-17 Jesus is referring to God's judgment on willful unbelief. The religious leaders had just accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons (Matt. 12:24). People were willfully rejecting God's revelation in the person, teachings, and deeds of Jesus. Notice that Jesus says that in them Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled (Matt. 13:14). Notice, further, what this prophecy says in Matt. 13:15. They have willfully "closed their eyes" lest they should see, understand, repent

and be forgiven.

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Hope this helps. Shalom in Christ, Michael Gleghorn

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"Why Uphold the OT Laws Against Homosexuality When We Don't Observe the Rest of It?"

I don't know how to answer this powerful argument against continuing to condemn homosexuality when we don't observe the rest of the Old Testament laws. I got this in an email and now I'm just confused. Can you help?

> *Laura Schlessinger dispenses sex advice to people who call in to her radio show. Recently, she said that as an observant*

Orthodox Jew homosexuality is to her an abomination according to Leviticus 18:22 and cannot be condoned in any circumstance.

Dear Dr. Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your radio show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific Bible laws and how to follow them.

a) When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Lev. 1:9). The problem is my neighbors bitch to the zoning people. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

b) I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. What do you think would be a fair price for her? She's 18 and starting college. Will the slave buyer be required to continue to pay for her education by law?

c) I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanliness (Lev. 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offence and threaten to call Human Resources.

d) Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify?

Why can't I own Canadians? Is there something wrong with them due to the weather?

e) I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should this be a neighborhood improvement project? What is a good day to start? Should we begin with small stones? Kind of lead up to it?

f) A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. I mean, a shrimp just isn't the same as a you-know-what. Can you settle this?

g) Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here? Would contact lenses fall within some exception?

h) Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev.19:27. How should they die? The Mafia once took out Albert Anastasia in a barbershop, but I'm not Catholic; is this ecumenical thing a sign that it's ok?

i) I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

j) My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Lev.24:10-16) Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am

> ***confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging. Your devoted disciple and adoring fan.***

The "big picture" behind the argument about condemning homosexuality as an archaic, Old Testament rule can be understood by the fact that there are different kinds of laws in the Old Testament. Civil and ceremonial laws, such as those concerning religious sacrifices and penalties for unacceptable societal behaviors, were time-bound and limited to the people of Israel. They are no longer in force for a variety of reasons: first, all the OT sacrifices and ceremonies were given as a foreshadowing of the Messiah's ministry and of His death, burial and resurrection. They are no longer necessary because they were the preparation for the Reality that has come. Second, the civil laws pertained to a nation of people who no longer exist. (The current nation of Israel is a political one, not the same as the group of OT people God called to follow Him alone as their Ruler.)

Moral laws, such the Ten Commandments and all the laws constraining sexual immorality, are not time-bound because they are rooted in the character of God. Time and culture changes do not affect the importance of not worshiping any false Gods because God is the only true God; of not murdering because every person is made in the image of God; of being honest because God is truth; of not stealing because God wants us to trust HIM to meet our needs instead of taking what we want; of being faithful to one's spouse because God is faithful. And none of the Old Testament laws concerning sexual morality changed in the New Testament because they, too, are based on the character of God as pure and holy. It is always sinful to have sex with someone you're not married to, regardless of gender.

The scriptural prohibition against homosexuality is further underscored by what Paul reveals as the purpose of sex in marriage in Ephesians 5: sexual intercourse between husband and wife is an earthly picture of the spiritual union of two very different, very other beings—Christ and His bride, the Church. Sexual coupling of two same-gendered people can never reflect the deep spiritual significance of sex. Instead, it is really about pursuing pleasure, and pleasure is not the primary purpose of sex (despite our culture's views). But that's another topic.

This distinction between civil/ceremonial laws and moral laws is seen in just about any family with healthy boundaries. When our sons were small, we had rules about "no TV before homework is done" and "don't leave your bicycle in the driveway." Those rules were time-bound, not timeless, because they were appropriate only for their growing-up years. We don't have those rules anymore because they are both adults, out of the house and in their own homes now. But we still have character-based expectations that they be responsible, honest, respectful, and kind. Those "rules" won't change because they are a different kind from the training rules they grew up with.

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

P.S. I have seen this purported letter to Dr. Laura before (by someone who obviously thinks himself very clever). I think it's interesting that Dr. Laura is no longer an orthodox Jew. She is still a God-follower, though. And her views on homosexuality haven't changed because, for the most part, she has a biblical worldview.

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“What Sources Can Shed Light on the Bible Since It’s Not Authoritative?”

I don’t think I can truly look at the bible and tell my children it is the authority for them.

How can I cross reference historical documents and other sources for them, in addition to the bible, to present my religious faith to them?

I truly cannot look at the bible, a man made document, as “It.” Yet, I know one can believe without seeing it as the “end all.” It is wrong to tell my children to take all of it at face value. Yet, we know it presents the truth of our faith. I don’t want them to take it out of its historical context.

Thanks for your letter. Although we at Probe would hold the view that the Bible is a divinely-inspired text and historically accurate in all its details in the original manuscripts, nevertheless, if you want to educate your children about the Bible and be sensitive to its historical context, etc., then one of the best ways to do this is by reading good, scholarly commentaries on the particular book of the Bible that you’re currently studying.

In addition to commentaries, of course, there are excellent books dealing with Old and New Testament backgrounds. These books would discuss customs, important historical persons and events, etc., that really make the biblical text come alive.

For example, here is a link to some books on Old Testament

Backgrounds and here is one for New Testament Backgrounds.

Finally, a very helpful site, with hundreds of articles on all sorts of biblical and theological topics is www.bible.org . For example, here is a list of topics they have articles on: .

I hope this information is helpful to you and your family in studying the Bible!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Does the Bible Say Man Will Live Forever on the Earth?"

Does the Bible Say Man Will Live Forever on the Earth?

Im afraid you heard wrong. The earth will not last forever. (Have you been visited by Jehovah's Witnesses lately?) From www.crossroad.to/heaven/contents/earth_destroyed.htm:

> ***The earth will pass away.*** *Revelation 21:1-4, 1 John 2:15-17*
> ***The earth will be burned up.*** *2 Peter 3:10-13*
> ***God will shake and remove the heavens and the earth.*** *Hebrews 12:26-29*
> ***The earth will be shaken, broken up, and split apart.*** *Isaiah 24:17-23*
> ***The earth will perish like a worn out garment.*** *Psalms 102:25-28, Hebrews 1:10-12 (quoting Psalm 102).*

The people God destroyed were evil. This is the same reason a cancer doctor uses surgery, radiation and chemotherapy to kill cancer cells: they are harmful and destructive. See:

> *Genesis 6:5 (the world before the Flood)*
> *Genesis 18 (Sodom and Gomorrah)*
> *Deuteronomy 5:13; 17:12, 17; 19:19; 22:21-14; 24:7 (God calls for capital punishment to "purge the evil" in His nation of Israel)*

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

"Was God Silent Between Cain and Noah?"

One of her reasons my Wiccan friend gives for turning away from Christianity is that God was silent after dealing with Cain and Abel up to the time of Noah and the flood. For nearly two thousand years pagan civilizations thrived, say in Sumeria and Mesopotamia. Where was this monotheistic God at this time in history? In her mind this God is uninvolved and therefore heartless for bringing a flood. Where in the Bible does it say God was involved with man during this time?

God was indeed involved in the affairs of His creation between the time of Cain and Abel and the Flood. The clearest example of His involvement (in a clearly miraculous sense) can be found in Genesis 5:24 "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (see also Heb. 11:5). Clearly, such an event requires Divine intervention.

Obviously, this one example is enough to prove God's involvement in the affairs of men and the world between the time of Cain and Abel and the Flood. But God is actually constantly involved in the affairs of the world. In the first place, the world only exists because God created it (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; etc.). And the universe is continuously upheld in existence by the word and power of God (Heb. 1:3). Thus, God's involvement with His creation is continuous. And God has revealed Himself to man not only in the Bible and Christ (special revelation), but also in creation (Psalm 19:1-4; Rom. 1:18-23), providential acts of kindness (Acts 14:17), and conscience (Rom. 2:14-15) all examples of what is called general revelation. Such revelation is also continuous and ongoing to all men, at all times, in all places.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Your Bethlehem Star Article is Wrong"

Your Bethlehem Star article is out of date. Check out www.BethlehemStar.net. Also, they recently discovered there were 2 Sejanuses to correct the date. Finally, check out *The Case for Christ* by Strobel.

I did indeed write the Bethlehem Star article well before Rick Larson and his Star model became better known.

However, I have come across it many times since then though I have never had the pleasure of seeing him personally.

He hasn’t convinced me.

1) He is correct that the Bible indicates that stars are for signs but it is very obscure as to what kind of signs. Psalm 19 only says the heavens declare God’s glory. The following verses he quotes don’t change the context. God’s glory is not the same as historical information.

2) The Romans 10 passage he refers to as obviously indicating that the stars communicated the “gospel” to Israel is a huge stretch for me. I just don’t see how he arrives at that obvious conclusion.

3) You mention Lee Strobel’s *Case for Christ* as apparently affirming something about Larson’s theory. I found no references to the Star, Wise Men, or Magi. Bethlehem was only discussed as it relates to the massacre of the innocents by Herod. However what I did find was on page 101 where Strobel mentions that Herod died in 4 BC and his interviewee, John McRay from Wheaton does not correct him.

4) From my quick reskimming of the website, Larson still does not engage the very reasonable possibility that the star was the shekinah glory of God and has nothing to do with actual astronomical events. This is still the most reasonable explanation to me. Other Christian astronomers I have consulted don’t give Larson’s idea much credit.

5) Larson embarks on a rather naturalistic, modernist explanation that is not necessary and despite his confident proclamations otherwise, has not firmly established Herod’s death in 1 B.C.

6) It’s interesting to me that the quotes he gives on the website while congratulating him for his scientific and reasonable approach, no one explicitly says they agree with him. I would think that if they had said they agreed with his theory, it would be quoted on the website.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD

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“Was John the Baptist Elijah?”

Was John the Baptist Elijah? John 1:21 and Matthew 11:14 appear to give different answers to this question.

To begin, the Lord had promised Israel that He would send them Elijah the prophet before “the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:5). When the Jews saw John, and heard his preaching, they clearly wondered if he might be the promised figure of Elijah. But why?

First, as Edwin Blum points out in his commentary on John, “John had an Elijah-type ministry. He appeared on the scene suddenly and even dressed like Elijah. He sought to turn people back to God as Elijah did in his day” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, eds. John Walvoord and Roy Zuck [Victor Books, 1983], 274). Thus, when the Jews saw someone who dressed like Elijah and had a similar ministry as Elijah’s, they rightly wondered whether he might in fact BE Elijah.

But John said he was not Elijah. And, as you pointed out, this seems odd because in Matt. 11:14 Jesus says of John, “And if you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come.” So what’s going on here? Charles Ryrie comments on this verse, “Jesus is saying that if the Jews had received Him, they would also have understood that John fulfilled the O.T. prediction of the coming of Elijah before the day of the Lord” (*Ryrie*

Study Bible, 1463). But of course the Jews did not receive Jesus at His first coming. Indeed, in the next chapter (Matt. 12) there is clear evidence of the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish religious establishment (vv. 22-45). Afterward, Jesus began to veil His message in parables (see Matt. 13:10-15). And later still, after the Transfiguration when the disciples ask Jesus why the scribes say that Elijah must come first, Jesus responds by saying, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished." Then the text goes on to say, "Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:10-13).

Here's what I think is going on. John the Baptist would have served as the fulfillment of God's promise to send Elijah before the day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5) IF the Jews had received Jesus as their Messiah. They did not, however, and so, as Jesus makes clear in Matt. 17:11, Elijah is still to come. Indeed, some commentators believe that one of the two witnesses mentioned in Rev. 11:3 may be "Elijah". Of course, as in the case of John the Baptist, this does not necessarily mean the literal, historical Elijah, but simply someone who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah and performs a similar ministry. At any rate, this is how I think we should understand the Baptist's response in John 1:21. He is led to deny that he is Elijah because God already knows that the Jews would reject His Son. Hence, as Jesus later affirms in Matt. 17:11, Elijah is still to come.

Hope this helps. God bless you!

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“Do the Bible’s Statements on Head Coverings Apply Today?”

I would like to hear your explanation of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 where it talks about woman wearing a head covering and if this applies to us today. And why.

Thanks for your letter. You’ve asked a rather difficult question about an extremely controversial and emotionally-charged issue. For what it’s worth, I will offer my opinion (we don’t have an official Probe position on this issue). But I certainly don’t think I have any special insight into this issue.

Commentators point out that Paul offers a number of reasons why women should wear head coverings in the church. First, it appropriately reflects the Divine order mentioned in vv. 3-6. Second, it is based on creation (vv. 7-9). Here Paul seems to allude to Genesis 2:18-24. Third, Paul mentions that the woman should wear a covering because of the angels. Apparently, angels observe church meetings and may be offended to witness the insubordination of wives to their husbands (in particular), or the rejection of the Divine order by women in general. Fourth, Paul offers an argument from nature (vv. 13-15). His point may be that just as a woman’s long hair is her natural glory, and is given to her as a covering, so also it is her glory to wear a covering in the church as a symbol of subordination to her husband and/or to God. Finally, Paul seems to argue for women wearing head coverings on the basis of this being the universal practice of the church in the first century (v. 16).

Of course, this is not the universal practice of the church today. But should it be? Although I don’t know for sure, I tend to think that the key issue in this passage (i.e. the timeless truth which applies to all believers at all times and

in all places) concerns subordination or submission. In particular, the man must understand that Christ is his head. Just as Christ willingly subordinated himself to the Father (Phil. 2:5-11, etc.), so also should man subordinate himself to Christ and follow his example. Similarly, a woman should be submissive to her husband (Eph. 5:22-33). It's important to understand that this does not imply inferiority. Just as Christ is not inferior to the Father, so also the wife is not inferior to her husband, nor is woman inherently inferior to man. However, there is a Divine order, also reflected in creation, and men and women have different roles and different responsibilities in that order.

Thus, I tend to think that the timeless truth of this passage is that both men and women need to recognize and accept their God-ordained position and purpose in both creation and the church. Just as it would be completely inappropriate for a man to refuse to subordinate himself to Christ, so also it is inappropriate for a wife to refuse to submit to her husband (or for a single woman to reject the Divine order, etc.). The head-covering was a visible symbol of such submission in the first century church. But I don't think that head-coverings are the real issue. The real issue is one of subordination to the will of God and an acceptance of the Divine order. In a sense, it's the distinction between the letter of the law—and its spirit.

At any rate, for what it's worth, that's my opinion.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

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See Also:

- "What Do You Think About Headcoverings for Christian Women?"
- Sue Bohlin's Blog Post: "Why I'm the Lady in the Hat"

“Apostle John: Senile Upon Writing Gospel?”

“Could John Have Been Senile When He Wrote His Gospel?”

1) Approximately how old would the Apostle John have been when he wrote his Gospel?

2) I assume he would have been very old; would his age have affected the reliability of his Gospel and thus render it not very reliable, i.e by becoming senile because of old age [sic]?

3) What exactly are the effects of being senile?

4) Does everyone elderly become senile, or is it possible to be old and not senile?

5) Approximately what age do people usually become senile?

John was probably very young when Jesus called him to be His follower. If John was around 20 years old at the time of Jesus’ death, and if Jesus died around 33 A.D., and if John wrote his Gospel around 90 A.D., then John would have been approximately 77 years old when he wrote his Gospel. This is a reasonable estimate.

There is no reason whatever to suppose that John was senile when he wrote his Gospel. The author of John’s Gospel is clearly someone in full possession of his mental faculties. There is absolutely no indication that the author of this Gospel was senile. Please note: Deut. 34:7 says that even at age 120, Moses was still a vigorous man.

As for your questions about senility, I will leave you to explore that on your own. WebMD has a search engine which will allow you to research senility and old age. You can find it at: http://www.webmd.com/.

Hope this helps.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries