

“It’s OK to Patronize Pro-Atheism Films to Provoke Christians to Action”

Regarding *The Golden Compass*, I agree, age-appropriate viewing along with informed parental guidance is required for the film, but I personally don’t have a problem spending my money on this film. In fact I would pay double the cost to show my teenage children simply for the opportunity of “inoculating” them against the false perceptions of God, the church and sexuality that are pushed in these stories. I actually hope that the other movies are made so that Christians are forced to react INTELLIGENTLY regarding defending the Christian worldview. The war is already won! But we do need to pick up our swords and finish the battles.

But thank you for all your work for the sake of the Gospel of Christ, God bless!!

Thank you for your interest in my [Probe Alert article](#). I commend you for your commitment to take advantage of opportunities to equip your children to recognize and respond to contrary worldviews pushed on us in our culture. As you know, I suggested this as one alternative in my article.

However, I don’t agree with the idea that we should encourage more of these movies to be made by supporting them financially (especially, when we can read the books and watch the movies in ways that do not directly benefit the author and producers). Let me summarize several reasons I am taking this position:

Most of the children and young adults who would view the movie and/or read the books will not have a parent discuss the worldview implications or issues with them. On the contrary, most of them will strongly identify with the

protagonists in their battle against the authority of God. Without critically evaluating their feelings, this emotional experience can influence how they perceive their relationship with God. As we have witnessed over the last forty years, movies and television have helped move the norms of our society further and further away from holiness and purity.

Phillip Pullman openly states his intent is to influence people to view Christianity as misguided and damaging. Providing him with more resources to support this objective does not seem to be a prudent use of the financial resources entrusted to us.

Early financial success will lead to more advertising and greater distribution of these books to a largely unchaperoned audience. It will probably also encourage New Line Cinema to take a more anti-Christian approach in the production of the sequels.

This trilogy and any associated movies are not going to single-handedly convert our culture to atheism. However, they reflect the greater and more public antagonism to religion being espoused in our society. In general, we should not encourage these attacks through our financial support. At the same time, we should not be on the defensive. When these attacks do occur, we can use them as opportunities to share Christ whose position as the Way, the Truth, and the Life is not threatened by the imaginations of those who oppose Him.

Steve,

Well said; I admit my pro-atheism movies position may be a bit naive; I do see the value of your arguments. Maybe I take this extreme view just to provoke my fellow Christians to take up arms and not be afraid of the fight as I find so many from my (reformed) Christian circles tend to take isolationistic approach rather than see logical and reasonable discourse as a legitimate means to answering a fool according to his folly or

casting down every lofty thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Thanks for your reply, I really appreciate the attention to individual concerns, (even though I probably agree with almost everything you said).

I recommend Probe.org, Stand to Reason (str.org) and others to all my friends.

Keep up the good work!!

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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 uncleanness (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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Can People Do the Right

Things Out of Compassion and Not Because of a Moral Law?

I have a question about moral law. Everyone knows what pain feels like and everyone knows what sorrow feels like, etc., so isn't it possible for humans to not want to cause others to feel these things because they know how it feels to themselves and not necessarily because of a moral law?

Thanks for your note. You asked a good question.

I think your reasoning would work with someone who has a tender conscience and doesn't want others to hurt. But we all know there are people who don't care whether others hurt. So while the motivation to not want to hurt others could prevent you and like-minded people from doing others harm, others who don't have that motivation will have no constraints. And, I have to add, if the typically tender-hearted person has a day when he or she doesn't care, what will be his/her motivation to do good? If someone responds that it doesn't matter what a person feels like, that it's good to not make others suffer, then we're back with a moral law again.

A fixed moral law, grounded in the nature and will of God, taught in Scripture, and reflected in His universe, provides an objective standard against which we can measure our actions, regardless of our personal motivations.

Thanks again for writing. Write again with other questions, if you like. Or if you think my answer isn't correct, write back and we'll talk about it!

Rick Wade

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“What Resources Can Help Me Witness to Hindus?”

Please could you send me details about how to share my Christian faith with Hindu friends and any literature that I could use with them. At present I am running a large parent toddler group here in the UK [United Kingdom] and many Indian Hindus are coming and I need some good literature and advice on how to share Jesus with them. If you can help me please reply.

Thanks for your letter. One of the most useful resources I've found for this purpose is [The Compact Guide to World Religions](#). This book not only includes chapters on the history and doctrine of various religions (including Hinduism), but it also includes helpful suggestions on how to share the gospel with such people.

Helpful articles on the Probe site include "[Hinduism](#)" and "[Do All Roads Lead to God?](#)"

Of course, by far the most important thing you can do is pray for these people, show them the love of Christ, and offer them peace and rest in their hearts through the forgiveness of sins by faith in Christ Jesus.

Hope these resources are helpful to you. Blessings to you in your ministry!

Michael Gleghorn

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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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“Why Are Dating Methods Unreliable?”

I'm a Christian who believes in a six day literal creation and I have been looking at lots of material on the Grand Canyon to see if it can shed any light on how it was formed and how old it is, and in my search I come across your report which to me seems a very honest and an unbiased report.

Could you help me by telling why dating methods of rocks are unreliable and sometimes come into contradiction? As since I have been doing my own research into how old some things are, I keep getting different answers from different scientists, whether they be young earth or old earth scientists.

Also, I have been informed that only a geologist with a Ph.D can tell the age of rocks and no one else in any other field; is this true?

Your confusion is reasonable. There are many conflicting

messages on this topic from people who ought to know what they are talking about. This is one of the reasons why I am undecided about the age question. I simply am unable to discern the reason for these conflicting views. Is it because of prior assumptions? Is it because of truly conflicting data? Is it because of incomplete knowledge of the facts? Is it because of a deep-seated prejudice against a particular position? As a biologist, I find myself unable to follow the technical critiques that go back and forth and so I am unable to truly answer the above questions for myself.

The conflicting age estimates can be due to a number of problems. The dating methods themselves can be unsound, based on faulty presuppositions (the position of young earth creationists). They can be due to local anomalous conditions that do not apply to most great age estimates (position of most old age creationists and evolutionists). Old earth creationists maintain that the preponderance of the evidence should hold sway over the few exceptions that young earth creationists have found. Yet some young age research is being submitted to the scientific community for scrutiny and is holding up well. But is it a local exception or something more significant?

Your last statement about only geologists being able to tell the age of something should be treated suspiciously. While it is reasonable to say that they have a better grasp of the details of geological dating methods, it is also an unveiled appeal to authority: "Only I know what I am talking about therefore you should trust me and me only." Scientists shouldn't communicate this way. Science has always been marked by humility before nature and openness to new information and theories. This view is not very open. It sounds like they have something to hide.

ICR has come up with some new data on dating methods and some of the information is online at <http://www.icr.org/research/>. Articles 3-10 in the first list all relate to your concern.

These papers were all presented at the 2003 International Conference on Creationism here in the US. They might help to clarify some things for you.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries

“Why Don’t You Just Let Homosexuals Live and Let Live?”

I find that you are very passionate about your thoughts and personal beliefs. At the same time, I think that the Bible also shares a very clear message that we are not God, and therefore should do as we believe God wants us to do. God never once asked us to become Gods; therefore we should not pass judgments on to others regarding their life styles, or beliefs. We get it, being gay is a sin, but all sin is on the same level. Killing a child and saying a curse word falls into one group of sin, one no greater than the other.

If you want to start a movement, how about protecting those that can not protect themselves? Children are being abandoned by their parents left and right... and even worse neglected, raped and molested. Adults choosing to be homosexual is just that, a choice. Live and let live, go after the helpless and innocent, they need passionate leader to protect them and their rights.

Thank you for writing. I appreciate your compassion for the

hurting and those who need a voice. Bless you!

The reason we address the subject of homosexuality is that God does. He knows it is not His intention for the people He made and dearly loves. He knows that homosexual activity is destructive and hurtful. Yes, choosing to act on one's same-sex feelings is, indeed, a choice, but it is not a choice like deciding between chocolate or vanilla ice cream. It is more like a choice between drinking grape juice, or Kool-Aid laced with poison. But the message of our culture about homosexuality is that there is no difference because there is no poison.

But God knows there is.

And the loving thing to do is to take a stand for truth, which we can know because of what God says.

I would respectfully disagree that all sin is equal. While all sin separates us from God, and all sin requires the death of His Son in our place, the *consequences* of our sin vary hugely. It is a sin for me to have an uncharitable thought about someone; it is a very different sin for me to pull out a gun and shoot them. If you really believe that no sin is greater than another, do you really not care whether someone thinks critically of your driving, or if they run you off the road into a ditch? Maybe that idea works better in concept than reality.

We aren't interested in starting a movement. We just want to speak the truth in love, as God calls us to. And sometimes that involves judging that some beliefs and lifestyles are dangerous and destructive and hurtful, and pointing that there is another way to live. (May I respectfully point out the irony that of the fact that in writing your email, you are judging our beliefs?)

One final comment. What I think and write about homosexuality is not mere opinion or philosophy. My passion for this issue

is fueled by the pain experienced by people I love who “drank the Kool-Aid” and entered into various kinds of gay relationships, and are now experiencing the hurtful consequences in their hearts and, in some case, their bodies. It is fueled by compassion for the hurting family members of those currently living in a way contrary to God’s intention for them. This is more than personal beliefs; this is taking a stand for what God says is right so that others can avoid needless pain, and standing in compassion and understanding (and prayer) for those now in that pain.

I hope this helps you better understand where we’re coming from.

Sue Bohlin

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“Will I Go To Hell For My Doubts?”

I have been a Christian my whole life. I have been struggling with faith lately. I am mostly intellectually convinced in Christianity, however I have a lingering doubt based on a few intellectual things. One is the battle between old earth and [young] earth [creation] and the other is the age of the book of Daniel—which online resources I have read seem to prove that it was written after the fact. (I have seen the Christian responses and they do not deal with all of the facts.) Anyway, none of these doubts would bother me except that Hebrews 11:1 and James 1:8 imply that any doubt might be cause for exclusion of me from heaven. I can’t even sleep at night because I am so afraid of going to hell. Is there any hope for

me?

I would suggest that Hebrews 11:1 and James 1:8 do not imply that at all. In fact, doubt isn't even mentioned. Hebrews is about the nature of faith, and James simply says that the double-minded person—one who continually wavers back and forth between trusting and not trusting—is inherently unstable in his thinking.

See, the Lord understands that we see through a glass darkly, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians. He understands that we are trying to make sense of a fallen world through a fallen intellect, and we don't have all the puzzle pieces. He gives much more grace than you know, I think. The issue is not about having doubts, which usually just means we haven't figured things out. God's indictment is on those who refuse to trust. They are not the same thing. The Lord Jesus said to love God with our minds, and wrestling through the hard, meaty issues of apparent contradictions and complications is one way we do that. The very act of pursuing truth to attack our doubts and questions is a kind of worship!

Let me encourage you that there are answers, even if you haven't found them. For instance, Probe's position on the age of the earth question has brought great peace to my husband, Dr. Ray Bohlin's spirit; he's been diligently studying this issue for 30+ years. He has looked at the evidence for a young earth and universe, and an old earth and universe, and found compelling evidence for both. They clearly cannot both be true. So he says he is an agnostic on the age issue. He doesn't know. And can live with that, especially since: 1) the issue is not WHEN but WHO created, and 2) the Bible doesn't tell us, which means it doesn't matter enough to get caught up in it. How long ago God created the heavens and the earth has nothing to do with whether Christianity is true or not.

I just read my answer to him to get his approval, and he added that he would be VERY careful about trusting online resources

on the book of Daniel. Why should you believe them? The nature of the web is that anyone can publish anything, whether they have any expertise or not. Are they qualified? Biased? Especially sources like Wikipedia, which are going to reflect the anti-Christian bias of the culture, since the entries come from people whose thinking is pickled in the brine of secularism. I invite you to read another [answer to email at Probe.org about the book of Daniel](#).

I would also spend some time shoring up your understanding of your security in Christ if you have placed your trust in Him. If you became a Christian years ago, you became a new creature, a forever child of God. You cannot lose your relationship with your heavenly Father, no matter how many doubts plague you, any more than you can become unborn from your mother. Our founder, Jimmy Williams, wrote an article "How Can I Know I'm Going to Heaven?" here: www.probe.org/how-can-i-know-im-going-to-heaven/

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Will Jesus Still Forgive Me?” – Did My Sin Re-crucify Christ?

Please help—I'm really worried Jesus won't forgive me. I regressed and viewed a pornographic image. While praying for forgiveness a voice in my mind said it hurt like nails and

that I had re-crucified Christ and that there was no sacrifice left for me. I'd heard of this verse but now I'm really worried is there any hope of forgiveness for me. Please, I'm worried really bad.

Sounds to me like you were hearing from a demon who was sending what scripture calls a "fiery dart" at you. Yes, your sin hurt the Lord. (Sometimes the Enemy throws some truth into the midst of his lies.) No, you did not crucify Christ because if you recall, His last words on the cross before He died were "it is finished," or actually more accurately, "it is paid in full." Lord Jesus fully paid for your sin of looking at porn 2000 years ago.

And no, it is not true that there is no sacrifice left for you. The verse you are thinking of is Hebrews 10:26, "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left." But consider that equally true is the promise of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When a born-again Christian sins, God promises to forgive us. What you are exhibiting is the regret and remorse that shows God is continuing to give you the grace of repentance. The people Jesus doesn't forgive are the hard-hearted ones who refuse to ask for it.

Concerning Hebrews 10:26, listen to what theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem says about this verse:

"A person who rejects Christ's salvation and 'has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him' (Hebrews 10:29) deserves eternal punishment. This again is a strong warning against falling away, but it should not be taken as proof that someone who has truly been born again can lose his or her salvation. When the author talks about the blood of the covenant 'that sanctified him, 'the word

sanctified is used simply to refer to 'external sanctification, like that of the ancient Israelites, by outward connection with God's people.' The passage does not talk about someone who is genuinely saved, but someone who has received some beneficial moral influence through contact with the church." (Bible Doctrine, p 343.)

Be encouraged, brother. Receive Gods forgiveness and cleansing according to the riches in Christ, which he has lavished on you (Eph. 1:8).

Blessings, Sue

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“Woman Caught in Adultery Story Not Found in Early Manuscripts”

I'm interested in John 8:1-11. The notes in my NIV Bible say that these verses are not found in early manuscripts, and I was wondering what your thoughts are on this account of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery.

Yes; you're correct. The earliest and best manuscripts do not contain this story. It was almost certainly not an original part of John's Gospel. Could it still be historical, though? Perhaps. It would be an unusual instance of a story passed down orally (and later included in John's Gospel) that actually goes back to Jesus. Of course, I don't think we can be dogmatic on this point. At most, I think we can say simply

that it may be historical.

W. Hall Harris has a good discussion of this passage at Bible.org.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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