

“What’s Your Take on ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’?”

What’s Your Take on *Fifty Shades of Grey*?

The bottom line for me is that this verbal porn (and now visual as well, with the release of the movie) doesn’t pass the “Philippians 4:8 test”: “[W]hatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise—dwell on these things.”

But writer and speaker Dannah Gresh blogged about it so well, I’ll just send you to it: [“I’m Not Reading Fifty Shades of Grey.”](#)

There are some disheartening comments on her blog post, which are reasonably rebutted:

“You shouldn’t judge a book you haven’t read.” There’s enough information out there about this book series to make an informed judgment. Consider God’s command in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They didn’t know evil personally and experientially, but God still commanded them to stay away from it. God wasn’t going to buy the argument, “How can we decide whether or not to partake if we’ve never tasted evil?”

“I don’t question my faith after reading these books.” Okay, but did they bring you closer to the Lord and to His call to purity? How did they impact your view of God’s standards for sexuality? If you enjoyed books that glorify what God calls sin, how do you not see the discrepancy for a Christ-follower?

“It’s just a fictional book, for crying out loud!” This is the most disturbing of all, because it shows the writer doesn’t understand the power of story. People’s minds and hearts are

not swayed by a list of facts and statistics nearly as much as they are by story, whether in a book or a film or video. The power of story is that it can slip past the “watchful dragons” of one’s belief system and turn the heart, both for evil and for good. All we have to do is watch how the values of a TV audience change over time by watching certain TV shows. We need to be *more* careful about novels and movies, not less.

Sue Bohlin

Added February 13, 2015:

My pastor answered the question “Is It Okay for a Christian to Go See Fifty Shades of Grey” in this 7-minute episode of *Real Truth Real Quick*:

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“How Do You Respond to Vicky Beeching’s Coming Out as Gay and Proud?”

Dear Sue,

Did you happen to see this in the past few days? [Vicky Beeching, Star of the Christian Rock Scene: I’m Gay. God Loves Me Just the Way I Am](#)

What am I supposed to make of it? I have searched the scriptures, poured my heart out to God over the years and still struggling. I cannot work out how she came up with this

view, but it is really rocking my world view and I am in serious danger of coming unstuck. I am starting to wonder if my understanding of Scripture, of this being wrong and the reasons why for all these years is incorrect and it has made me so depressed since I read this article.

My heart hurts for Vicky.

Yes, she experiences same-sex attraction (SSA) and yes, God loves her just the way she is, but He loves her too much to leave her there. Her SSA is like the red light on the dashboard of a car. It means something is wrong under the hood that needs attention. God loves her just the way she is but He wants to bring healing to her heart. She may identify as gay, but God won't agree to that identity. He would say, "You are My beloved daughter, created in My image and for My glory."

100 years from today, when she is in heaven, she will not be saying she's gay. Sexuality is only for this earth. If something about us is temporary, then it shouldn't be our identity. That's why God, who doesn't make anyone gay (anymore than He makes anyone selfish or bigoted or self-centered), won't agree with her confusion about her identity.

I think it's good to acknowledge when one has a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). But saying it is good and it's fine and God accepts it as His intention and design is wrong. It would be better to say, "I experience same-sex attraction, and I need help to find out where it came from and what to do about it." And I would say, after fifteen years of helping people deal with unwanted SSA, that the way to deal with the holes in one's heart is [intimacy with the Father and the Son and the Spirit](#). The problem driving SSA is a sense of disconnection, of not belonging or being attached. The way that is resolved is by focusing on Jesus, who said in John 14:23 of His Father, "We will come to him and make Our home with him." Resting in the indwelling Father, Son and Spirit is how that hole is filled.

Blessing you,

Sue Bohlin

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“Is Animal Homosexuality Proof that It’s Normal?”

A teenage girl in my church has just been confronted by discussions on homosexuality in her high school classroom. When she told the class that homosexuality was not “normal” behavior because it did not exist among animals, the teacher said that studies have “proven” that homosexuality is prevalent among animals, esp. elephants. While browsing on the web, I have found this to be a widely used “proof.” What would you answer? How can I help this girl?

First of all, I would encourage her to ask with humility and softness (i.e., no edge in her voice) where she can find the studies that “prove” the prevalence of homosexuality in animals. People toss off assertions all the time (such as, “science has proven homosexuality is genetic”) but when we ask where the articles are, they don’t have an answer. They’re just parroting what they’ve heard.

Same-sex behavior DOES exist in the animal kingdom, for a number of reasons. Usually, it’s either playful antics, or dominance behavior to assert hierarchy. For one male to mount, or attempt to mount, another male is a very powerful way to communicate his higher position in the “pecking order” of the community. But if you bring in a female in heat, suddenly the

male-male behavior is abandoned in favor of the female. Sometimes males mount other males in a type of practice before the females come into heat.

Secondly, I have read of same-sex attachments in animals, but the fact that they exist doesn't make it normal any more than the fact that cystic fibrosis or diabetes exists makes those diseases normal. From a Christian perspective, we live in a fallen world, and that fallenness extends to the entire creation on the planet. It would make sense that things would go wrong even among the animals. For instance, I understand that a hormonal imbalance can result in homosexual behavior in some animals. (Here are links to a couple of articles concerning that. Note the naturalistic bias underlying them: "What is, is normal and natural and therefore to be embraced."
<http://www.noglstp.org/bulletin/1997spring.html> and
<http://www.libchrist.com/other/homosexual/sheepandanimals.html>
)

Even from a godless evolutionary perspective, there is no benefit to homosexual behavior since those who engage in it do not reproduce, and from an evolutionary perspective, the only purpose in life is to make babies (the bottom line for the more scientific-sounding "survive and reproduce").

I recently discovered an excellent article on the "animal homosexuality myth" at the NARTH (National Association for the Research and Treatment of Homosexuality) website. This article points out that we can find occurrences of "homosexuality," cannibalism and infanticide in the animal kingdom, but the fact that these aberrant behaviors exist should not lead us to deduce that they are acceptable and normal HUMAN behaviors to engage in! www.narth.org/docs/animalmyth.html

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Was Jesus Crucified Outside Jerusalem?”

What is the meaning behind Jesus being crucified outside Jerusalem?

There is an interesting passage in Hebrews 13:10-14 which speaks of Jesus suffering “outside the gate” of Jerusalem. Since this letter was originally written to Jewish believers who were tempted to abandon their Christian faith and return to Judaism and the Temple, the author seems to be encouraging his readers to share Christ’s humiliation and rejection by the Jewish community. This is symbolized by their going “outside” the Jewish community and sharing in Christ’s sufferings. As one commentator puts it, “In essence, the author’s command to ‘go forth to’ Christ was a command to abandon Judaism. Anyone found with Christ—outside of the city gate—would be considered outside the Jewish community.”

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“I’m a Mormon and I Have Questions about Your Article”

I read your article [A Short Look at Six World Religions](#) and it said that many of Joseph Smith’s prophecies never came true. Which prophecies are those?

I also read, “Both of these religions teach salvation by works, not God’s grace.” I have been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 8 years of age, and I have always been taught that we are saved by the grace of God. However, salvation is not free. For example, if one chooses to not live the commandments that God has given, then how can he be worthy to live in the presence of God? Here is a quote from the Book of Mormon: “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved after all that we can do.” (page 99-100). Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins, but we must do our part to accept his atonement and live his commandments. Accepting his atonement is not enough. Through the grace of our loving Savior we can be redeemed from our sins and return to the presence of our Heavenly Father clean from all sin, again if we keep his commandments the best we know how. God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ are the perfect examples of mercy.

Have a good day and thank you for teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is my best friend.

Hello _____,

Jesus is my best friend too! <smile>

I read your [A Short Look at Six World Religions](#) and it said that many of Joseph Smith’s prophecies never came true. Which prophecies are those?

I cited a few of them in a response to an e-mail about my article. Your question prompted me to add a link to that

article at the end of the one you read, but here's a [direct link](#) for you.

I also read, "Both of these religions teach salvation by works, not God's grace." I have been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 8 years of age, and I have always been taught that we are saved by the grace of God. However, salvation is not free.

I would agree that salvation was not free for God, for whom it cost Him EVERYTHING. But it *is* a free gift for us. Please note Ephesians 2:8,9:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

This scripture is diametrically opposed to Mormon doctrine. We cannot do anything to contribute to our salvation. Isaiah 64:6 says that all our righteousness is as filthy rags; what can we possibly give to God that will overcome the heinous sin of requiring the death of His Son to be reconciled to Him? If someone came in here and murdered one of my sons and then said, "Hey, I don't want you to be mad at me. . . let me do something to help me get myself in your good graces. Here's a nickel. . ."—Well, guess what? That wouldn't work! And it doesn't work with God either.

_____, I pray the Lord will open your eyes to see that trying to earn salvation with our paltry efforts—even WITH His grace—is a slap in the face of our God. He wants us to come to Him with empty hands and the realization that we do not deserve and cannot earn the gift of eternal life that comes ONLY through trusting in the Lord Jesus.

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“John 8 is a Condemnation of Capital Punishment!”

In [your commentary on capital punishment](#) you completely miss the point of John 8:1-11. This passage is a condemnation of capital punishment and the hypocrisy that is inherent in it. You say, “Since He did teach that a stone be thrown (John 8:7), this is not an abolition of the death penalty.” Jesus knew that none of them were without sin, just as none of us are without sin. Jesus knew that his answer would lead to no stones being thrown, just as he intends for us (today) to not throw stones. An example of “throwing stones” today, is sitting on a jury and sentencing someone to death (since we don’t stone criminals today). You seem to think this passage is in the Bible simply to illustrate Jesus’ craftiness at conflict avoidance.

Thank you for writing about my radio program on capital punishment. Although I taped that radio program back in 1992, it amazes me that I still receive e-mails about the transcript posted on the Probe website.

I believe this is the first time I have received a response to my passing comment on John 8. When you are doing a radio program with a set time limit, words are at a premium. So I welcome the opportunity to elaborate on my very short comment in the midst of a week of radio programs devoted to the issue of capital punishment.

First, I should point out that this passage in John 8 is a disputed text. There are very few disputed texts in the New Testament. This is one of them. The passage is not found in any of the important Greek texts. So I think it would be fair to say that most Bible scholars do not believe it was in the

original.

Whether you believe it was or was not in the original, I think you would have to admit that it is a disputed text. And a basic principle of biblical exegesis is to never build a doctrine on a disputed text. In other words, I wouldn't use this passage in John 8 to argue for or against capital punishment.

Second, I only mentioned the passage in passing because there are a number of opponents of capital punishment who have tried to use this biblical passage to argue against capital punishment. It does not. In fact, you can make the point (as I did) that it argues just the opposite.

Third, I am not the first person to point out that Jesus did not set aside capital punishment in this passage since "He did teach that a stone be thrown." In one of his early books on ethics, Dr. Charles Ryrie makes a similar point. He argued that since Jesus said a stone should be thrown, he was not forbidding the Old Testament practice of capital punishment. Dr. Ryrie is the author of the *Ryrie Study Bible* and former professor of theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. I think it is safe to say that Dr. Ryrie knows more about New Testament theology and exegesis than both of us combined.

Finally, the Pharisees were indeed trying to trap Jesus between the Roman law and the Mosaic law. If Jesus said that they should stone her, He would break the Roman law. If He refused to allow them to stone her, He would break the Mosaic law. I don't believe that the passage is (to use your words) about "Jesus' craftiness at conflict avoidance." But I do believe it shows His response to a deliberate trap set by His enemies.

This passage does not forbid capital punishment, despite what some opponents might try to make it say. Since it is a disputed passage in the Bible, I would not base a doctrine on

it anyway. But even if you accept its authenticity, the passage doesn't teach what you say it does.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“How Do I Convince My Friends to Be Saved?”

I have some really good friends who claim that they are Christians but I know for a fact that they aren't saved and I'm not exactly sure how to talk to them about Christ and getting saved. I also hear some of them who claim to be Christians say that they are glad that their parents don't go to church because then they wouldn't be able to sleep in on Sundays. I have brought a couple of them to my church but they acted like they didn't like it. How should I convince them that they should believe in Christ?

My second question is this: I have a friend who always talks about Christ and how he has changed her life. But I know that she hasn't been saved. Do you have to be saved go to heaven?

Having an attitude of trying to convince people to believe in Christ will seldom be successful. There needs to be a sincere desire to seek the truth. Your time would be well spent demonstrating an attractive vision of the Savior through your life and be ready to discuss and answer their eventual questions. Those who are indifferent to Christianity—or even hostile—need to see a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ which faithfully follows 1 Peter 3:15: a life that sanctifies Jesus as Lord of their lives and is always ready to give an answer for the hope that they have and yet do so with

gentleness and respect. Evidence and arguments will rarely make an impact unless there is an inquisitiveness first.

And yes, we must be saved to spend eternity in heaven. Be careful however, about being certain in judging someone's salvation. Even the greatest saints still sin and while there should be a pattern of good works to verify someone's salvation, we all go through periods of rebellion. Also, only Christ can judge the true condition of a person's heart.

If a person truly thinks they are saved and seems to at least have a basic understanding of salvation through Christ, we should take them at their word until something incontrovertible happens that leads you to believe they have been living a lie. I'm just asking that you be careful in making these kinds of judgments and that as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men (Rom. 12:18).

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Is Soul Sleep Biblical?”

I am writing to seek clarification on the rather thorny issue of life after death. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 Paul outlines how the process of judgment will take place. He says, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first.” Isn't this a substantive indication of “soul sleep”? If what Paul asserts is anything to go by it means that after death the soul remains in somewhat a “holding

cell” until the day of judgment regardless of the person’s beliefs and tenets prior to death. An appendage would be 1 Samuel 28:1-14; I believe this passage also corroborates the “holding cell” school of thought.

Thanks for your letter. This is a very important issue. I am personally persuaded that the doctrine of “soul sleep” is incorrect. When the Bible speaks of death in terms of “sleep,” it is speaking this way because the person’s body looks as if it were asleep. In other words, this way of speaking has to do with the body, and not the soul.

This is evident, I think, when one considers a passage like Luke 16:19-31. Both the rich man and Lazarus die, but their souls are very far from being “asleep” (in the sense of unconscious). The men in this story, although physically dead, are pictured as consciously awake and aware of their surroundings. Their bodies have died, but their souls are very much conscious in the afterlife.

This is also evident in Revelation 6:9-11. And it is further supported by the teaching (concerning believers) that when we die, we go immediately to be with the Lord. Here, remember what Jesus said to the thief on the cross, “Today, you will be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Or consider Paul’s statements in passages like 2 Cor. 5:1-10 or Philippians 1:23. All of these passages indicate, I think, that believers are conscious and with the Lord in paradise between death and resurrection. Unbelievers, likewise, are also conscious (though they are in torment and separated from the Lord).

Hence, the Bible seems to teach that we continue to experience some form of personal, conscious existence between death and resurrection.

I hope that these passages from Scripture will help to clear up this issue for you.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“My Girlfriend’s Parents Won’t Accept Me Because I’m Not Saved”

My girlfriend’s parents do not accept me because I am not saved though I have never put a foot wrong. I would like to know where Probe Ministries stands on this. As a footnote, she has a child which I have accepted as my own.

Thanks for writing. Although I do not know all the details of your case, there is actually biblical justification for your girlfriend’s parents reaction to you. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians as follows in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16:

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’

This passage clearly forbids believers to marry unbelievers. If your girlfriend is a Christian, then this could at least partially explain her parents’ reaction to you.

Of course, the good news is that you don't need to continue relating to your girlfriend's family as an outsider! After all, Christ died for you too! So why not repent of your sin, give your heart and life to Christ, and place your trust in Him for forgiveness, cleansing, and the free gift of eternal life? Of course, you must do so genuinely and sincerely and from the heart. But if you do, then you will (most importantly) be an adopted son of God and a member of His family forever. In addition, if you sincerely give your life to Christ, it might also make you more acceptable to your girlfriend's parents. Of course, I want to be very clear, that you do not PRETEND to become a Christian in order to win their approval. That would be a very great sin in the eyes of God. However, if you genuinely and sincerely give your life to Christ and become a member of the family of God, then He may (as an added bonus) grant you the approval of your girlfriend's family as well. And even if He doesn't, you will still have the greatest good that any man can ever have/M a personal relationship with the Triune God, your Creator and Redeemer who loves you, and gave His Son for you. And what could ultimately be better than that?

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

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“Your Answer About OT

Prophecies of Jesus' Resurrection Are Troubling"

You responded to a question written by someone titled, ["Where are the OT Prophecies of Jesus' Resurrection?"](#) Your answer is troubling. In Acts 13:32 God the Holy Spirit through Luke makes it expressly clear that He did prophesy in the OT regarding Christ's resurrection. You answered that there are no prophecies in the OT about Jesus' resurrection. Summed up: Your answer is in contradiction to Acts 13:32. Resolution?

I do (in fact) believe that there are OT predictions concerning the resurrection of Christ. The issue I was wrestling with in my response, however, is whether any of these predictions are "explicit" or "specific." I state this quite clearly in my original letter:

"I do not think there are any specific predictions of Jesus' resurrection in the OT."

And although I could always be wrong, it doesn't seem to me that the predictions are of this sort. It is only after His resurrection that we can clearly see that these passages were intended to refer to the resurrection of Christ. Prior to this, however, it does not seem to me that it was clear from the OT that the Messiah would be raised from the dead. This is certainly not something that the Jews of Jesus' day (including Jesus' own disciples) were expecting. This is quite clear, I think, if you look at those passages in which Jesus predicts His resurrection to His own disciples (e.g. Mark 8:31-32; 9:30-32; etc.). Indeed, the apostle John tells us quite explicitly that he did not believe until he saw some evidence of Jesus' resurrection. And (speaking for himself and the other disciples) he specifically tells us why:

"For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He

must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9).

In other words, _____, in spite of all the OT prophetic evidence AND Jesus' repeated predictions that He would rise from the dead after being crucified, the disciples did not understand any of it. It was still not clear to them. They were not expecting the death and resurrection of their Messiah and they were initially quite surprised by it all.

So while I agree that there are OT predictions of the resurrection of Christ, I just don't see that these predictions are explicit in the sense of telling us directly, "The Messiah will be raised from the dead," etc. Of course, if you can point one out to me that is explicit in this sense, I would be very grateful.

So it seems to me that the resolution to your difficulty, _____, is to read your sources a bit more carefully in the future.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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