

# **The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0**

**Number 59**

**"Q&A 4"**

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**With**

**Residential Layman  
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**July 26, 2015**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 59, Q&A 4. I'm your layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey Mike, how are you doing this week?

**MSH:** Very good, anxious to get into the Q&A.

**TS:** OK. Well, we've got 10 or 11 questions that probably span over 7-8 people, so why don't we get to the first question. The first question or two questions actually is from Seth from Michigan. Question one is, is there a dual relationship God has with the nations? For one, he disinherited them then raised up Israel to his own holy people yet commissioned them to spread his knowledge and worship the other nations. But then we also see him involved in the nations such as we see in Daniel and Jeremiah with Babylon and others, both using them and judging them, lifting one up and putting another down. Could you explain this relationship God has with the nations?

**MSH:** There's a lot that I say about this in Unseen Realm, but to try to keep this short, I wouldn't call it a dual relationship. That terminology that Seth is using, I'm not quite sure what he's packing into that? I would say God is sovereign over all things, people, nations, creation, whatever, and so he uses what he wants as an instrument of judgment directed against whoever he deems needs judgment at that point. God didn't entirely abandon the nations. Genesis 12:3, he calls Abraham but then leaves the door open. 'Through you all races on the earth will be blessed.' He doesn't entirely abandon the nations forever because of his love for humanity in general. And again, just to make a point that he wants his family to include people from all the nations. We talk a lot about that on the blog, the "Deuteronomy 32 worldview", but that worldview doesn't preclude God from using one of the nations to punish his own nation or vice versa because he is sovereign over all of them.

**TS:** Okay, his next question is, does the ecclesia, the new man, as a holy nation made up of Jew and Gentile, take on the mission, the original role the nation of Israel to the nations not as a replacement in the sense that Israel is done away with since we see God's heart for Israel especially reflected through Paul in Romans 11 but in faithfulness only being fulfilled through his servant, his Son, and thereby through his body, the new creation?

**MSH:** I suspect that this question is focused on replacement theology. He does use the word replacement. I'm not sure why ecclesia is defined as the new man. So I'm not going to get too distracted by the terminology. The church, ecclesia, refers to the collective body of Christ, the community of believers. And he has that in his question as well. It's not a new man like an individual. I guess I am not quite sure what to do with the terminology but let's just use that as sort of a segue way to jump into the whole replacement idea. I would say that I didn't hear anything in the question that rules out replacement theology so I don't know if the questioner's for it or against it. For listeners who don't know, replacement theology is the idea that the church, the circumcision neutral thing we call the church, has replaced Israel as the people of God.

And then that has a ripple effect, ramifications, in the minds of many anyway, noticed how we should look at the nation of Israel today, political Israel, whether we should sort of endorse everything they do, or don't ever criticize them because that's cursing them and then God's going to curse you because this is the chosen people. Somebody else will say no they're not the chosen people. The church has replaced them and all of that. So I don't really hear anything in the question that rules out replacement theology in the sense of I'm not sure where the questioner's at. But I think personally, you're asking me so I'm going to give my own personal take. Replacement theology sort of overstates its case. I like to say replacement theology affirms some really obvious things but then extrapolates some things that just aren't quite necessary.

For example, since the Messiah who is the King and, of course, therefore, the elect son, the elect son of the previous king and the elect son of God because God calls the King my son in the Psalms and the King is therefore the firstborn in the sense of inheritance, since the Messiah, the King and the elect son, the firstborn son, represented the nation and since the nation is in the Old Testament also called God's son, because of this co-identification, when the Messiah through his faithfulness creates through his death and resurrection the new people of God, the church, in that sense then Israel did indeed fulfill its purpose. So when we say through you all nations of the earth will be blessed, we shouldn't be looking into the future as though Israel as a nation is somehow going to be the conduit for blessing to all the other nations. Israel has already served its purpose. It's produced the Messiah who also is the son. Israel is the son of God so is the Messiah.

Israel has already fulfilled its purpose. And this is exactly what Paul says in Galatians 3:16. Here's what he says. Paul writes, 'Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.' It does not say and to his offsprings, plural referring to many, but referring to one, to your offspring who is Christ. Now Paul stresses the singularity of the language there, seed or offspring, not offsprings corporately. One of those promises was Genesis 12:3. One of the promises get sort of claimed and put under the person of Christ, attached to the person of Christ, one of those was Genesis 12:3, through you all nations will be blessed. Through your seed Abraham, not corporate seed, not the whole nation, but one seed Paul says Galatians 3:16. That seed is Christ. So consequently, there's no basis to argue that corporate national ethnic political Israel is still supposed to play this role. The role's already been fulfilled in Christ by virtue of Galatians 3:16 and other passages. Now is that a basis though to conclude that corporate and national Israel has no eschatological role? I personally doubt it but it's likely the wrong question to even ask.

There are of course eschatological purposes for Israel if we're talking about the gospel being embraced by Jews in a significant way before the Lord returns. Well, that's in the future yet. But the New Testament is clear that the future of national or ethnic Israel isn't the key to Gentile conversion. That was some that began at Pentecost 2000 years ago. We spent a lot of time talking about that on the blog. In fact, if the reverse is sort of the case where Paul says in Romans 9-11 that the Jews were set-aside, blinded, so that the Gentiles could be grafted in and then after the Gentiles, after the fullness of the Gentiles, we've talked about that theme a lot in the podcast, after the Gentiles are saved then we have the opportunity for "all" Israel to be saved, and I'll say something about that in just a second. I want to get back here to this ethnic Israel thing. Now what I mean by national Israel or ethnic Israel, political Israel, is that I'm referring to all the biologically ethnic Jews.

That's what I mean by national Israel. Jewishness is determined in that sense by biology. You're either a Jew or you're not. In the modern state of Israel, that isn't the case. Jewishness isn't just determined by biology. You can convert. There are different formulas for who's a Jew and who isn't. Now I personally know of no Old Testament prophecy that was specifically behind the events of 1948, the regathering, recovering, becoming a state again. I don't really know any Old Testament prophecy in context that pointed to that event. Lots of people get their through chronology and jubilees and all this kind of stuff. So I realize some are going to try and make that case. But there's nothing point-blank. Now having said that though, I believe Israel deserved a homeland. I don't believe Israel was the villain in the way things played out in the 1940s. I also believe that today Israel has a right to defend itself. So I'm not denigrating the nation. They have a right to do that. Israel today is a state that's largely apostate in a biblical theology sense.

Not only are they still in the state of rejecting the Messiah, many people anyway, but a lot more are even agnostic or atheist. Israel today is not a mirror image of in what we think of as godly Israel in Scripture. That just isn't where political Israel is today. Again having said that, as a state opposing the desires of other nations to wipe them out, wipe them off the face of the earth, they certainly have a right to exist and defend themselves even if we're talking about just humanitarian grounds. I would also say on a biblical theological level that there are not two peoples of God. There is one people of God. I don't know what the New Testament could say different that would make that any clearer. Paul in Galatians 3 just goes over that again and again and again. There's one people of God. This thing we call the church made up of both Jew and Gentile, both physical descendents of Abraham and spiritual descendants of Abraham. There's no biblical warrant for saying that that truth either tells us to look down on the nation of Israel. I'm not a leftist. Let's put it that way, but I'm also not someone who thinks that America is a new Israel or something like that. That basically turns the whole question into idolatry in my opinion. When Israel does right today we should support them. When they do wrong, we should say, hey, you did wrong.

That's not incurring a curse of Genesis 12 or any other passage when we point out sin. Frankly, God did that in the Old Testament. God's railing against Israel all the time when they do wrong and they do do wrong. So this whole I'd idea of a hands-off Israel, don't ever criticize them, I think is just absurd because God does it and he does it a lot in the Bible. Let's go back to Romans 9 to 11 a little bit. We ought to spend a little bit of time on this. This is an involved question. I don't want to skip anything here. In terms of biblical theology, all Israelites are Jews who refused the Messiah are still left in exile. It's as though they're in exile from Yahweh. Paul tells us in Romans 9 to 11 that this blinding was partial and it was the key to the gathering of the Gentiles and reclaiming Yahweh's family from those nations. I mentioned that a few minutes ago. This is why the prophetic timetable, now this is a key thought. This is why the prophetic timetable in the New Testament was not marked by the existence of Israel as a state. Instead, in several places, the key idea, the key event in the New Testament was the fullness of the Gentiles. It has nothing to do with Israel being a state. Paul's concern, what drove Paul was that the reclaiming of the nations, defined as extracting people from every nation who will embrace the Jewish Messiah and become part of one family of God.

His concern was that that activity, that program, that plan be accomplished for the sake of Israel. Here's what Paul says in Romans 11:25, 'Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel until

the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and in this way all Israel will be saved.' Now before we presume that all Israel means every Jew or the entire Jewish state or something like that, you need to look in Romans 9, similar phrasing there. Listen to what Paul says here about Israel's salvation. This is Romans 9:22. 'What if God, desiring to show his wrath and make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles as indeed he says in Hosea, those who were not my people, i.e. the Gentiles, I will call my people. And her who was not beloved, ie the Gentiles, I will call beloved.' God can do that. Verse 26, 'and in the very place where it was said to them,' now he's alluding to the Jews, 'you are not my people.' Remember Hosea, you're not my people. In the very place where it was said to the Jews, you are not my people.

There they will be called sons of the living God. God will take them back. And this was Paul's hope but we've had is partial hardening so that the Gentiles can be brought in. And we need to accomplish the fullness of the Gentiles because then "all" Israel would will be saved. Now here's the kicker, Romans 9:27. Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.' Paul I would suggest does not contradict what he says in chapter 9:27 with what he says in chapter 11 when he says, 'in this way all Israel will be saved.' Paul knows that not every Jew is going to be saved. He knows that why? Because he said that quoting Isaiah back in chapter 9. So the question becomes with respect to what we're reading here in Romans what does all Israel mean? Does it mean all believers, whether Jew or Gentile?

That's a possibility because according to Galatians 3, the Gentiles have inherited the promises given to Abraham, Galatians 6:16, Israel, the Church of God the church is the Israel to God and all that kind of language. So it's possible all Israel might just mean that all believers, all the people who God knows, are destined to be saved. Does it mean that all the Jews that form the remnant of Romans 9? Well maybe, could. Does it mean every Jew everywhere including the entire nation? Probably not because Paul is not going to contradict himself in Romans 11 by virtue of what he said in Romans 9. So let's review some of this. I'll try to recapture this a little bit here. Has the church replaced Israel? That's what I sort of read into the question. In some sense, yeah, Paul couldn't be clearer in Romans and Galatians. I might as well read Galatians 3 since I keep bringing it up. Galatians 3:7 says, Paul writing to Gentiles, 'Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham and the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,' isn't that curious.

The Scripture foresaw that. Well, that's what we've been reading, Isaiah Hosea, and all that. 'The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, in you shall all the nations be blessed so that those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.' now that's Galatians 3:7-9. Skip to verse 24. 'So then the law was our guardian until Christ came in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer under a guardian. For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' And here's the climactic verse, verse 29, 'and if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise.' I don't know how Paul could be any clearer at least in this sense, in this whole plan of salvation.

The church has replaced Israel in that sense, in that context. I just don't know what he could have said to make it any clearer. Now that was the first question, has the church replaced Israel? Well yeah, in some sense, sure. Second, does this replacement mean that God is no longer interested in Jewish salvation?

Well of course not. He absolutely it is because we get the fullness of the Gentiles and that's tied to salvation of Jews, at least some of them, at least a remnant. So it's not like the Jews are castoff and they're all like going to hell or something like that. That's baloney. They shouldn't be treated as enemies is the point. Third, does this replacement mean that Israel as a nation has absolutely no eschatological role? In my mind that goes too far and I think it's fairly obvious because of things in the book of Revelation. I'll give you two examples. The 144,000, now, hear me when I say this. The whole chapter about the 144,000 does not have to be literalized to be about Israel, to be about the tribes, national Israel. You don't have to take a literal view of that to know that it's still about national Israel in some sense. But that's one case.

The second case I think is probably a little clearer, Armageddon. By the way, as people will learn if they don't already know, Armageddon is not a battle at Magiddo. It's a battle at Jerusalem for Jerusalem that involves the Antichrist. So Israel has an eschatological role because that's the territory, that's the thing, that's the prize that's being fought over right at the second coming. I would say that it's important but all that is just not the covenantal role, this idea that somehow we have to look at Israel in such a way or never say anything bad about Israel in such a way because somehow our eternal destiny is based upon it or something like that. That's just is not something that's really scripturally defensible.

**TS:** Our next question is from Tom in Texas. Does Mike believe that the angel of the Lord is pre-incarnate Christ or is the angel of the Lord a member of the divine Council?

**MSH:** I get this question periodically. It's a good question, a fairly common one. I would say it this way. I believe the angel of the Lord is the second Yahweh figure. Now I've written a lot, talked about in videos and YouTube and whatnot, about the two powers in heaven, the two Yahwehs of the Old Testament., the fact the Old Testament has a Godhead idea. I would say it that way. The angel of the Lord is the second Yahweh figure, the second person of the Trinity. That doesn't mean that the Lord was Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth would be born of Mary and therefore physically genetically related to her and of course physically descended related to David. Now if we look in Romans 1, here's why I say it this way and why I think that language is also important.

We have in the first verse of Romans, we read, 'Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures,' verse 3, 'concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh.' Jesus of Nazareth, his flesh was physically related, genetically related to David and also of course to his mother Mary. You can't say that about the angel of the Lord because Mary and David didn't exist yet. So I'd say second person of the Trinity better describes the angel of Yahweh and eventually that second person of the Trinity would become incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. But in the Old Testament times, the second person of the Trinity was only embodied. The Angel of the Lord is embodied in the Old Testament but he is incarnated as Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament. Embodiment and incarnation are two different things. Incarnation involves being conceived in the womb, traveling through your mom's birth canal,

being literally birthed out and being a human being by birth, by the whole birth process. That is what incarnation is, born as a man. Embodiment in the Old Testament with the Angel of the Lord, we just don't have that. So that is why I would use the language I do in relation to that question.

**TS:** Okay our next question is from Craig. I thought Mike would swerve into the issue of the unbelieving dead and the last Q&A, eternal punishment or eternal destruction. Thinking about Jude 7 Sodom and Gomorrah are not still burning today. The punishment of eternal fire did its work and they were destroyed. Also the death of death in Revelation 20:14. Craig wants to know your expanded thoughts on this issue.

**MSH:** Well, I'm not going to offer too much by way of expansion because I think he hits two important ideas here. I think annihilation and the eternal punishment idea are both viable views. The way he asked the question you can see they overlap as well. Is hell eternal everlasting punishment or does hell speak of annihilation? And of course if you're annihilated, you're always gone, you're always dead. That's eternal too. So I realize Christians talk about these things differently. I think both ways of talking about those things has some scriptural support. For me, I think annihilation actually makes more sense because of the verse that he brought up, the death of death. If death is destroyed, I don't know how it's still everlasting. It doesn't mean it's the only possible way to take that statement. There others who would take that statement and affirm something that still is destroyed but alive or destroyed but here and everlasting. All I'm saying is I think because of that line, the death of death, I think annihilation does make more sense but I'm not going to say it's the only way that the issue could be understood.

**TS:** The next three questions are from Slash here. First one is, Mike posted an article. As I read that, I search the iconography of the divine beings and gods. How do I interpret the content of images? Are they symbolic or are these actual representations of the divine beings?

**MSH:** Well, the divine beings by nature are not embodied. Going back to how we talk about elohim, an elohim being is by nature not embodied. They can be embodied. We see that in the Bible. There are clear examples that I don't need to repeat. So they can appear in ways our senses can discern them but I see no reason to believe that they can't alter that appearance when they do so. In other words, who's to say they have to appear the same way? There's no permanent physical appearance. I don't see any real evidence for that. That wasn't even true with respect to God. God didn't always show up in human form. If there is a distinction between the angel of the Lord and Jesus of Nazareth, and I think there has to be because what we just talked about, I don't see any evidence that they would've been mirror images of each other either.

So that's part of the issue. Additionally, I would say both in the Bible and ancient near Eastern literature, divine beings use nonhuman form like animals to interact with people. They don't have to do that. Sometimes they're animals, sometimes they're more human, that kind of thing. That doesn't mean that they are those animals, which in turn requires the conclusion that we can't assume any given divine being always looks that way. So consequently divine being could have taken the form we see in iconography. That's possible. I tend to think the forms, those iconographic forms in which they're depicted, have more to do with attributes or the place

of dominion or perhaps place of origin where they're thought to, that particular entity, is thought to have originated from or certainly the territory that they govern, that that has something to do with. There are elements that go into the iconography to telegraph where that deity belongs or is from or rules so that it can be distinguished from other ones as well. So I tend to think that the iconography is a sort of "natural" but it's sort of after-the-fact and reflects what is believed about that particular divine being.

**TS:** How would Slash distinguish between what is fallacious and what our true divine beings in the historical references because if these divine beings showed up looking like how they're represented, they are terrifying.

**MSH:** I would say I sort of covered that in the previous answer a little bit. I don't know that it's possible to make this distinction given what Paul says that Satan himself can appear as an angel of light. They're not locked into any one thing and I think a lot of the iconographic representation. When you portray an entity as terrifying and horrific, you're basically trying to telegraph, don't mess with it. It'll do bad things to you and that sort of thing. There's a reason behind that. I think that's part of the iconography, but I also think place of dominion, perceived origins, some attribute has something to do with it, too. I don't think there's just one "natural" appearance. As far as distinguishing them, they can change like Paul even says Satan appears as an angel of light, can be deceiving in that sense. So I don't think there's any way we can sort of normally or with great confidence and regularity make such distinctions.

**TS:** OK, Slash's last question, in Acts 16 and 17, it says, you followed Paul and the rest of the shouting. These men are servants of the most high God who are telling you the way to be saved. Now there is no definite article in the Greek so if it reads a way of salvation, it changes the meaning a lot. Mike did not make mention of that but I would like to know which it is. I read the translation notes for that verse and now don't know what to believe, the text or the translation.

**MSH:** I would actually say it doesn't change the meaning a lot but I understand completely where the question is going, the way of salvation or a way, that's something definite or pluralistic. So it's an important question. Now there are two ways to think about this. First one is sort of easy. The second one is really involved and I actually have some notes from Wallace's Greek grammar, so if any of you are Greek geeks out there, this is going to float your boat. But the first one, the easy one is that the statement that "these men are telling you a way of salvation" doesn't need to mean they're telling you one of several ways. It could mean that they're articulating a way of salvation whereas prior to that, we sort of assumed or thought that no way existed. In other words, the good news is that there is a way of salvation and these men know it, so listen to them.

In other words, the indefinite syntax, the absence of the article, doesn't produce or prove a pluralistic idea despite the fact that it can be read that way. It's just not a necessary conclusion. Now secondly, and I think, again, more exegetically, there's some Greek here to bolster this this notion, the short pithy articulation I just gave you in the first option. Now Wallace, Dan Wallace, if you're not familiar with him is a very well-known Greek grammarian, probably one of the leaders in the field today, teaches at Dallas. He's known for his grammar, his grammatical work and his work in contextual criticisms as well. His reference book is called Greek Grammar



Beyond the Basics. If you're into Greek at all I recommend you having it. It's quite a large book. I also recommend it in digital so you can search the thing, which is how I was able to easily find some examples that Wallace had that goes with this question. So Wallace says this on page 243.

He says, 'it is not necessary for a noun to have the article in order for that noun to be definite. But conversely a noun cannot be indefinite when it has the article thus it may be definite without the article and it must be definite with the article.' Page 245, 'By definition an articular noun is definite and anarthrous noun, that's a noun without the article, may also be definite under certain conditions.' Wallace said as we mentioned earlier there are at least 10 constructions in which a noun may be definite though anarthrous. In other words, Wallace says hey, I'm going to show you 10 constructions in Greek where nouns lack the article but they're still definite semantically. Those of you who are listening can you breathe a sigh of relief. I'm not going to read all 10 of these. They start on Wallace page 245 and follow. But I think number seven and eight are possibly applicable to what the question's really aiming at, and in particular, number eight. So here's category number seven from Wallace says, I'm just going to summarize it here.

Abstract nouns don't need the article to be definite. Now way is not, in one sense, it's not an abstract noun because a way can refer to a road but you can see how way can be abstract semantically, way of salvation. It's not a literal road that you walk on so it's more abstract. So that's a possibility but I actually think a category eight is more likely the answer here. In category eight in Wallace's grammar is known as Apollonius' Corollary, and it has to do with the genitive construction. If you haven't had Greek, you can tune me out now. Maybe go get something to eat, go get something to drink. But for those of you have this is going to be important, so it has to do with nouns in the genitive construction. Here's what Wallace says. The general rule is that both the head noun and the noun the genitive either have the article or lack the article. This is known as Apollonius' Cannon or his Corollary. It makes little semantic difference whether the construction is articular or anarthrous. Thus, he says, *ha logos tu theu*, notice *logos* and *theu* both have articles there.

He says that means the same thing as *logos thetu*, when neither of them have the article. The corollary to this rule is developed by David Hedges and that is when both nouns are anarthrous, both nouns lack the article, both will usually have the same semantic force. Now there's a good parallel to this from Acts. If you look in Acts 7:8, we have ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ διαθήκην περιτομῆς, which translates, he gave to him the covenant of circumcision. The two nouns there are διαθήκην and περιτομῆς. Neither of them have the article. You would not translate this, he gave to him a covenant of circumcision because we know by context there is only one specific covenant of circumcision. So even though we lack the article before διαθήκην covenant, it doesn't matter. In the genitive construction, both of them lack the article. But nevertheless, the meaning there is quite definite. You go to Acts 16:17, what the verse says there, again, the questioner was pointing to is this whole idea of a way of salvation. They proclaim this and so what's the deal here?

What's going on? Is it one way or is there a plurality here? So in that instance, we have ὁδὸν σωτηρίας. Notice both nouns lack the article but the meaning can still be definite, the way of salvation, why? Because salvation is definite. That's a definite thing that happens to you semantically and so by virtue of this construction where you have a genitive chain, genitive relationship here, when both nouns lack the article, the meaning can still be definite. And I think that is the best grammatical exegetical answer to the question. So no, you don't have to look at

this verse and worry that Acts 16:17 teaches pluralism. There's no grammatical basis to draw that conclusion.

**TS:** This next question might be my favorite. It's from David from New Zealand. I've heard you say that the offspring of the watchers and human women, the Giants, that when they died, instead of their spirits going to the netherworld like humans do, that the spirits would stay on the Earth roaming around becoming the demons. I question this sense we have many human tribes with giant ancestry. So what happened to the second, third, fourth, fifth, etc. generations of people when they die? Would someone with 25% or 12.5% etc. ancestry had become a demon when they die or does it only work of first-generation Giants?

**MSH:** Yeah, this is actually a question that's more common than you'd think. Maybe that's why, yeah, it's entertaining. It gets into the bizarre stuff. So I would say first of all, the first part of question he said something about he heard me say the offspring of the watchers and the human women, the Giants, when they die, instead of their spirits going to the netherworld, their spirit stays on Earth. Okay, yeah, I've said that but the way it's worded isn't really quite accurate. The Bible has Rephaim spirits in the underworld as well. And the Rephaim are Anakim who are related to, according to Numbers 13:33, the Nephilim. So it's not that they're only running around disembodied on Earth. The Bible as the Rephaim spirits of the underworld as well so there's no indication necessarily that what the New Testament considers demons do not also make the underworld, the realm of the dead, their abode. So I just want to sort of get that out of the way initially.

The rest the question, all we're really told about directly in Jewish traditions, books like Enoch and whatnot, and of course implicitly in the Old Testament, is the specific generations that are actually mentioned. Now I think for this question we have to keep something specifically in mind here. I don't see any basis for concluding, so I'm going to dispute part of the question here. I don't see any basis for concluding that there are surviving giant lineages beyond the biblical period, much less today. Now that was presupposed in the question about people having giant ancestry or something like that. I can't remember the exact phrase. I don't see any basis for concluding that on the basis of Scripture because the giant clans were killed off in the biblical period. And if you go with a Masoretic text that's the time of David, Goliath, and his brothers, if you follow the Septuagint, it's actually a little later. There's a reference in Jeremiah 47:5 in the Septuagint to the Anakim. Let me read that in the Masoretic text and I'll tell you what the difference is in the Septuagint here now. Some people probably thinking, man, I never saw that. Jeremiah 47:5 says this.

Now this follows the Masoretic text, traditional Hebrew text. It says, it's part of a diatribe or Oracle against the Philistines. 'Baldness has come upon Gaza, Ashkelon has perished. Oh remnant of their Valley, how long will you gash yourselves?' And you say well, what does that have to do with Giants? Gaza and Ashkelon are Philistine cities and we know Philistines are part of this giant clan stuff. The phrase that is different because there's a textual difference in the Septuagint, or at least the Hebrew text the Septuagint translator was using, instead of 'oh remnant of their Valley it reads, 'oh remnant of the Anakim, how long will you gash yourselves?' The difference between the two words there is one letter. I actually did a paper on this at an academic conference in a textual criticism section. It's actually really interesting. I think the better reading is Anakim there, and I think the Masoretic textual tradition at some point ascribe

who was looking at the old paleoscript where M and N are almost identical, put the wrong letter down. And so we get *'im-q* valley as opposed to *'in-q anak*, children of Anak, the Anakim. So I think Anakim is actually a better reading there so if you're going to go with that, you have this Oracle against the nations that Jeremiah is preaching about and prophesying, which we know historically because of what Nebuchadnezzar did in these territories, wiping out these cities. The Philistines were destroyed and the Anakim with them, so I don't see any evidence scripturally to conclude that these "bloodlines" have survived to this day. I just don't. I don't know how else you would argue that because if we have these lineages, which are in the Old Testament and it's equally true that the Old Testament has these lines dying out, I don't know why you'd have them now. But I get this question a lot. I just don't know any basis for it. I just don't. It would be like, I don't want to use an analogy to get us into the whole Neanderthal thing because that's controversial, too, especially among certain brands of creationism. I just don't see any basis for the idea so that's how I would answer the question.

**TS:** Our next three questions are from David from Florida. There are always experts and always two sides of any subject. How can we as non-experts who do not have the time to study a subject in depth and detail know who to trust?

**MSH:** Well this is a good question and I can really only speak for myself as a layperson, an amateur in lots of different fields, especially the hard sciences. I would say what you need to do is insist on each side producing peer-reviewed research that specifically addresses the same issue or the same study or the same finding that you're wondering about. So as to prevent the two sides from sort of being ships that pass in the night, you want to get peer-reviewed material of both sides and they're actually shooting at the same question, same issue. I do this all the time. I look for peer-reviewed material on both sides of some question. I think one of the problems is for a lot of Christians is that they just don't know where to find that stuff. And the answer isn't for the most part the Internet or some organization that promotes one view or some guy that gets invited to speak to your church who takes one view or the other. This kind of stuff is found in scholarly journals and high-end academic publishers.

The easiest way to illustrate this is every Christmas or Easter you're going to be down at the grocery store. You're going to go pay for your groceries and there on the impulse shelf will be the Newsweek or the Time magazine story about Jesus. Was Jesus really real? Was he really born in Bethlehem, something to make people doubt the biblical story. It's there every holiday. And those pieces will entertain certain questions. They'll quote certain authorities. They'll quote this or that study. What you're getting in that publication, in a trade periodical is you're getting A, a writer who is not a PhD in the topic summarizing, distilling, pulling, and also of course omitting certain statements because he has a word count that he has to observe to get that thing published. Peer-reviewed literature does not suffer from any of that. Peer-reviewed literature is written by experts for experts, people who know the field that they're reading in, at least in theory.

Now when I read a peer-reviewed medical journal article, I'm not a PhD or an M.D. so I'm going to have to go ask questions but what I'm getting to here is you need to focus on peer-reviewed material because that is where the real data is, or the real data are to be more grammatically correct. For instance, another myth that genes predetermine your life, they are pre-determinative. You'll read that all the time on the Internet and all the time in articles like

Time and Newsweek. The journal literature will reject that. People who do genetics know that just because you have a gene for this doesn't mean that your behavior is going to be that with that gene expresses or this disease or whatever. It means there's a propensity. There are other environmental factors involved.

Genes do not predetermine you, especially when it comes to certain behaviors and whatnot, certain propensities. But you'll never figure that out. You'll never find out unless you go to the journal literature because that's where the data are. That's where the real research is. So my first piece of advice is find that literature, find the peer-reviewed journals for whatever topic it is. Find the topic, find what the sides are, find what the points of argument are and what not, then do your best. Now beyond that, what I do is if I can't decipher something in that material, I ask somebody with a PhD in that field to decipher it for me. I'll copy out a paragraph or I'll send them the articles and say, hey, on page 20, the second paragraph in there, there's this statement. Can you just briefly just tell me what in the world that means? What are they talking about here?

Decipher it for a layperson. And I've had a lot of people do that for me. People I don't even know. I'll just pick somebody out of the air. I hate to bring up, the whole month back this whole Roswell aliens slides controversy, which to my eyes look like a mummy. So what I did is I got the slide. I got the best image I could and I sent it to people, one of whom I had corresponded with before, but mostly not, who I knew were Egyptologists who focused on mummies. And I said, what do you think of this? And then I asked where might I find the database of mummies, especially of children. And where would I go to look for this, and who's doing to research in this area? Does this ring any bells about anything that's been published? Is the surroundings of the picture, does look familiar to you in some museum? I would ask them a litany of questions like that, and I had five or six responses. That's just what I do and anybody can do that.

So try it but here's the warning. If you're going to ask a professional in some subject area to do that for you, you must only give them peer-reviewed material because if it's not peer-reviewed, they are going to immediately conclude that this is a waste of their time and 99.9 times out of 100 they're right. They know who the experts are. They know who is writing in a specific discipline or area because part of their job, if they want to keep their job, is to keep up with that stuff. They don't want to take the time to read something from Billy Bob's website or something that some amateur produced because that amateur is not conversant with the literature. They are not up to date in the field. So why would they even bother to do so? So if you do the legwork to get that material for them from a journal that they're going to recognize, chances are they'll actually look at it and be sort of flattered or grateful that a layperson is asking, interested in what they're doing, or what their field is doing, and they'll decipher it for you.

Now I do this a lot. I'm going to tell you, I don't know where the question's necessarily going but I'm going to throw this out and it might offend, might even disturb some listeners, but I'm going to say it. I haven't really gotten into this publicly before. This is why you listen to the podcast I guess. What I have discovered doing that, that exercise as a layperson, going to the peer-reviewed literature, trying to read it myself, asking questions when I just don't follow something, especially in the hard sciences, what I have discovered doing that is that when it comes to two groups, what I'll call paleobabblers, that is, the people who just believe nutty stuff about the ancient astronaut crowd, the alternative Jesus crowd, all this stuff, that the stuff they

say just has a zero support in peer-reviewed material. They're just making it up half the time or they just show a deeply flawed understanding of what they're saying. And it's not rocket science. You go to the experts.

The experts can evaluate what's being said, and they can show you that it's databased or it isn't, same thing with the sciences. The other group that cheats a lot are the young earth creationists. They do cheat. Now that might disturb some people but I'm just telling you I've been doing this for 20-25 years and I know that they cheat because I come across it. And I don't want you to listen to my voice on this because my view of Genesis is that none of it has anything do with science. It's written from a prescientific perspective because that's who God chose to write it, people living in that era. I'm going to just direct you to somebody. Not this is a guy that I admire. He is a young earth creationist and I don't agree with some of what he says with respect to biblical interpretation. But this is a guy you should know if the question is about creation, creationism, and claims of evolution, and all that stuff. Todd Wood formerly was a biology professor at Bryant College. He now runs something called Core which again is about creationism. Todd Wood is a young earth creationist. He has a PhD in biology and he specializes in genetics.

Now I'm going to read for you some things that Wood says because Wood is, and this is why I admire him, he is unfailingly honest. I'm looking now at something called Todd's blog. It's just [ToddCWood.blogspot.com](http://ToddCWood.blogspot.com) and this is from 2009. His post is called the truth about evolution. This is a young earth creationist, PhD in biology and his focus is genetics. It's short and I'm just going to read you the whole thing so you know it's not me. He writes,

I hope this doesn't turn into a rant, but it might. You have been warned.

Evolution is **not** a theory in crisis. It is **not** teetering on the verge of collapse. It has **not** failed as a scientific explanation. There **is** evidence for evolution, gobs and gobs of it. It is **not** just speculation or a faith choice or an assumption or a religion. It **is** a productive framework for lots of biological research, and it has amazing explanatory power. There is **no** conspiracy to hide the truth about the failure of evolution. There has really been **no** failure of evolution as a scientific theory. It works, and it works well.

I say these things not because I'm crazy or because I've "converted" to evolution. I say these things because they are true. I'm motivated this morning by reading yet another clueless, well-meaning person pompously declaring that evolution is a failure. People who say that are either unacquainted with the inner workings of science or unacquainted with the evidence for evolution. (Technically, they could also be deluded or lying, but that seems rather uncharitable to say. Oops.)

Creationist students, listen to me very carefully: There is evidence for evolution, and evolution is an extremely successful *scientific* theory. That

doesn't make it ultimately true, and it doesn't mean that there could not possibly be viable alternatives. It is my own faith choice to reject evolution, because I believe the Bible reveals true information about the history of the earth that is fundamentally incompatible with evolution. I am motivated to understand God's creation from what I believe to be a biblical, creationist perspective. Evolution itself is not flawed or without evidence. Please don't be duped into thinking that somehow evolution itself is a failure. Please don't idolize your own ability to reason. Faith is enough. If God said it, that should settle it. Maybe that's not enough for your scoffing professor or your non-Christian friends, but it should be enough for you.

I think that's all I want to say today. Rant over.

**MSH:** That is Todd Wood, PhD in biology, young earth creationist, but he's not a cheater. He is honest. If you can find people like that in any given discipline, you will be blessed. I'm just telling you. I've corresponded with Wood about a number of things in genetics. He's very good at answering his e-mail. He's very patient. He's a good guy. I don't believe that he needs to be conflicted in any way, that he has to make a faith choice over or against any this sort of thing because my personal view is that Genesis, the Bible, the whole Bible, is a prescientific document and that was God's choice. God knew what he was getting when he picked people and prompted people to inspire it. All of this creationist, young earth, old earth, all this battling that goes on I think on some level is just ridiculous. It's just a failure to affirm the Bible for what it is. It's a failure to just have a firm grasp of the obvious. Just let the Bible be what it is. Let God's decisions stand.

It's not trying to teach science in any way. It's trying to teach us theology. It's trying to give us truth assertions about the fact that there is a Creator, we're accountable to that Creator. There is such a thing as alienation from God, sin. We are separate from God. Big fundamental things that Genesis talks about, there is a spiritual world. It's in conflict with our role, these big things and that's what it's designed to teach us. And God said people who don't have a scientific worldview are perfectly capable of communicating these ideas. They can use symbols like Leviathan. It's not a dinosaur. It's a well-known chaos symbol but they're going to use that to communicate to the same people, their audience, who are also prescientific, and they'll get the point. They'll understand it. It communicates and powerfully. It has great explanatory power. To us it doesn't because we're thousands of years removed. This is why my mantra is you must have the original writer in your head. That's just the only this is going to work. You don't have some other context in your head. You don't have the 19th century. You don't have Darwin in your head when you read the thing.

There was no Darwin. There wasn't any of this and it's just as a firm grasp of the obvious. I think that has been the most effective way for me to defend Scripture to critics because at the end of the day I get to look at them and say, look, why are you mad at the Bible for not being what was never intended to be? Are you mad your dog for not being cat? Are you mad your son for not being a daughter? If you can explain to me how your approach makes any sense, has any

logical coherence, then we can have a discussion. But right now, I think your approach looks really really dumb. In my own experience, that has been very effective, just let it be what it is. I bring it up because what I want to encourage you to do is go for the high end scholarship, the high-end research. Don't be put off by it. Don't be intimidated by it. You'll be able to decipher some of it, some of it you won't. But ask people, get help, find someone who can decipher the material for you, and then look at who's being honest and look at who has the better argument, the better data, and sometimes it's indeterminate. You can't know, and that's okay. That's the state of the question then.

It could be this, it could be that. We don't know. Good people, intelligent people who are really up on the subject disagree. They're not sure. That's just where it is. That's okay. But until you make that effort, what you've given yourself to think about is not the best material and you haven't tapped into people that could be a real resource for you. I'm just telling you what I've learned doing that. I've done this a long time and I hate to say it but I have not, Christians listening to the blog are going to be thrilled when I say this. I have not come across any evidence for any this ancient astronaut foolishness. And that's what it is, its foolishness. I have looked because everything I have come across, I'll write the peer-reviewed material. I want to know are scientist really astonished by this claim or by this object. No they're actually not. There are like 20 peer-reviewed articles on that.

It's not new but Giorgio on the History Channel or the fantasy channel wants you to think like, oh, this is just perplexing everyone. Well it might perplex Giorgio but it doesn't perplex a lot of people. So on the one hand, its foolishness, but on the other hand it was something I really care about when it comes to creation, and just frankly, Christian honesty. I have found Christians who just cheat. That's just the bottom line. So what your goal should be is to find some people. I'm throwing Wood out there because I admire the guy. He is just transparently honest and he's telling you exactly what the truth is, where he's at, and where his tensions are. You just need to find people like that. It will just go a long way with you. It will really help you. The bottom line is creationism, the important fundamental ideas just do not depend on science. They don't. God chose people to communicate these ideas who didn't have a scientific worldview.

That alone tells you that these ideas are not dependent on science. They can't be put under a microscope. They have to be assessed for coherence, what makes more sense. We look at the material world that it had a beginning, it had a cause, or it didn't. These are ancient questions. They can be assessed for coherence but they're not things you can put under a microscope. And everybody knows this. So you try to approach it the best way you can with logic and reason and data, and you keep working it. And that's why we're still talking about creation. It doesn't matter, 1000 years from now in the advances of science, we're still going to be talking about it. I don't want to just go off too much on this but I think Christians a lot of times get really troubled by things that really they shouldn't even give the floor to. They play to the antagonists way of talking about a topic when they don't need to and then they wind up either getting really disturbed or saying ridiculous things to defend their view. And that just doesn't help. It doesn't help you convince that person it doesn't help what's going on inside your own conscious, your own heart, your own security. It just doesn't help.

**TS:** Okay, David's next question is, in the Bible, there is mention of the book of Jasher. I know that this book is not considered canon but is it a reliable history book?

**MSH:** Well I'm going to say no because I think what the questioner is thinking about, when we think of the book of Jasher is one thing as opposed to the Old Testament allusions to a book of Jasher. I think these are two different things. There apparently was a book of Jasher at one time. There are alternative ways to take that word and that phrase in the Hebrew that actually have you coming out that there really wasn't a book as a source. It was something different but I'm going to set that aside for now. There apparently was this source, a book of Jasher at one time and it's been lost. Now what people think of today as the book of Jasher is not that ancient book. What people think of today as the book of Jasher was created in the 17th century. It has a demonstrable literary history in that respect. It's not an ancient book. It's not that ancient book. Anybody who says otherwise really hasn't made any effort to investigate the matter. I'm just going to say that bluntly.

If they have, then they're hiding the information from themselves or somebody else. Now if you go to my website, I actually blogged recently about this. Go to DRMSH.com and in the search field at the top, type Jasher. I know sometimes it's spelled with an A R but spell it with an E R so that you can find this. Type that in the search field and that will produce a blog post titled the mysterious book of Jasher. You click on that post you'll find that there is a link to an article in that post by a guy named Rabbi Arthur Keele who goes through the whole history of what people today call the book of Jasher. So you can have that article. It's up there on the website I've given it to Trey to post with this episode, so you don't even have to go to the website. You can just get it, download it right from this episode. When you do download the file you may have to use your Adobe reader to reorient the page view. It might show up sideways. It was correct when I uploaded it but I've seen it in other viewers, other browsers where it's flipped. So just download it to your hard drive and open it in Adobe reader and then you can flip it if it's not viewing correctly. It's not a terribly long article but it's pretty detailed about the history of this book that we call the book of Jasher today. So since that's really what we're talking about here, no, it's not a reliable history book, but it's something invented in the 17th century.

**TS:** Okay David's last question and last question of the show is, I have seen recordings that Dr. Heiser did some years ago where he explains from his perspective the meaning of Genesis 1 to 3 and he pointed out that this text does not support the gap theory. Does Ezekiel 28:12-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15 really back up the claim that the being commonly referred to as Satan sent prior to the creation of Adam and Eve?

**MSH:** The short answer is no. Neither of those passages do that all. The point with Genesis 1:1-3, I should throw this in for people who have not seen that video, it's something you can find if you go up to the website, put in that verse reference and put in gap theory, and you'll find the video that is referred to here. Genesis 1:1 to 3 in terms of Hebrew syntax is not a linear chronology. The first creative act by rule of Hebrew syntax is in verse 3, God said let there be light and there was light. It's not actually in 1:1. And if you observe the Hebrew syntax, it's either going to have verse 2 as a parenthetical thought or verse 1 as a title, some sort of disconnected title from it. Then that opens the door to long eons of time before you ever get to first creative act when matter preexisted and the days of creation are about God's refashioning that material. The gap theory argues some of that but it tries to put a gap of time between verse 1 and verse 2.



You can't do that syntactically because it's not a linear sequence so that's the first problem. Going to Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, here's the problem there. Neither Ezekiel 28 nor Isaiah 14 give you a chronology of events in Eden. There is no chronology in these passages. Neither has any basis therefore for timing the fall, giving us the timing of the fall in relation to Adam and Eve and the divine rebel in Eden. We don't get a chronology. There's no basis for using those passages as some sort of chronology when they don't give you a chronology. So consequently, neither really offers any support for gap theory and neither does Genesis 3, by the way. Second thing I would say just for listeners' sake, I think the questioner probably knows this, but the divine rebel of Eden is never called Satan in the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament. So the wording of the question itself might feel inaccurate to some listeners but I think the questioner probably knows this anyway but for the sake of convenience, this is the wording that we're getting.

The Hebrew word *satan* is not a proper personal noun in the Hebrew Bible, in the Old Testament, and that's by rule of Hebrew grammar. Hebrew grammar does not put a definite article before a proper personal noun. Neither does English. I'm not the Mike. Trey is not the Trey. That makes no sense at all. This is not the way English normally works other than with huge egos. English does not prefix the definite article to a proper personal name, and neither does Hebrew. So in Job 1-2, in Zechariah 3, every occurrence of *satan* in those passages has a definite article. That tells you immediately, if you care about Hebrew grammar and isn't that what the Old Testament is inspired in, that tells you right away that we do not have a proper personal name. So Satan, S, Satan as in the divine rebel of Genesis 3 is not in Job 1-2. He's not in Zechariah 3 either. There is no instance where *satan* is used as a proper name for any entity in the Old Testament. Now when it lacks the article, unfortunately, you don't get any help there either.

When it lacks the article in the Hebrew Bible, there's no evil divine being referred to as *satan* without the article. There is a good one, the Angel of the Lord, Numbers 22. He's referred to as *satan* without the article. So there you have a divine name in the title and whatnot, but it's a good guy. So I don't want to go too far afield on this but there's a certain disconnect in the popular thinking about Satan and Genesis 3 and Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. I go into all the stuff in an Unseen Realm but a lot of it exists on the website. Go up to DRMSH.com, put in Satan and you're going to find a video of me doing a search in the Hebrew Bible and showing you these things I just summarized. It's not thrilling but makes the point. Now, lest people be troubled by listening to this, the divine rebel of Genesis 3 the *nacash*, that's the name he is called, serpent or shining one, the divine one who's deceiving or whatnot, trying to dispense divine revelation when he shouldn't be, that being, the *nacash* in Genesis 3, eventually is referred to as Satan in later literature, in intertestamental literature. What we would properly call the Second Temple period literature and in the New Testament.

So there, Satan becomes a proper personal noun. By that time it had been used as a proper name and it fits. Satan means adversary and that's what the rebel in Genesis 3 was doing. He was opposing. He's taking on an adversarial role to what God wanted to do in Eden so it fits. It just so happens that in the Old Testament, that word isn't used as the name for that particular being. So this is just what the text is. I'm not looking at any other information. This is the phenomena of the text. And the Bible was inspired, Old Testament was inspired in Hebrew, New Testament in Greek and whatnot. Some in Arameic, of course in Hebrew, but this is the way it is. If you're going to note inspiration here, this is what you got. I think the question is a bit of

importance because the enemy of God we know as Satan, because we use the New Testament obviously, that enemy is the rebel of Eden because the New Testament makes the identification, even if the Old Testament doesn't.

He gets cast down to earth, which is *erefs* in Hebrew, which also is the word, one of the words, for underworld, the realm of the dead. And that's significant because the being that's cast down in rebellion, if we look in the New Testament, that being has no authority over believers, and frankly when he's cast down to the earth or the underworld, he really has no authority in the Divine Council from that point on. People know my view as that the *nacash*, the divine rebel of Genesis 3, was a Divine Council member. Get the Unseen Realm. You'll read all about that. He has no authority in the Council from that point on because he is in rebellion and has been punished. Now when you get to the New Testament, Luke 10:18, we read, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Jesus says that. Jesus utters that as he begins his public ministry about the kingdom of God. And so what's the point? Well, up until that point, the *satan* was an accuser of God's people. He had authority over all humans after the fall because all humans are no longer born in Eden. There is no Eden. It's gone. People are born alienated from God just by virtue of Eden not being here and also because of their sin, because they sin. They are born separated from God's presence.

And so when Jesus turns around and says in Luke 10:18, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,' it's a significant statement. And he is referring to this being back in Genesis 3, even though the Hebrew Bible doesn't use that term for that being, uses *nacash* and another terms. Jesus is looking back there and is saying, look, I'm announcing the kingdom of God. He sends out the 70 or the 72, depending if you're reading the Masoretic text or the Septuagint, which in the Divine Council worldview is really significant. Jesus is saying, hey, I'm here and now it's time to reclaim the nations. We're going to kickstart the kingdom of God right here. And as soon as he sends them out, they return and say, wow, we got authority over demons and all this great stuff. Jesus says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven meaning Satan has no legal claim as the Lord of the dead over a citizen of the kingdom of God. They will never die. They will die physically but they will live forever. Their sin has been taken care of.

They are reconciled to God. All this New Testament language we refer to, Jesus, right when the whole program starts, he announces, this being, who caused all this trouble, has no claim on your soul if you embrace who I am and become a citizen of the kingdom of God. So I'm not denying anything of importance of biblical theology. You just heard really good biblical theology there. All I had to do was quote some verses. What I'm saying in the matter of Satan is you're going to need to be a little more careful with our terminology and we don't need to import him into certain passages to make certain theories stand up. There is no chronology in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 for a gap, for when this rebellion occurred and all that sort of stuff. You can't build a gap theory on any of these passages, especially going back to Genesis 1:1-3 which is not a chronology. So that got a little convoluted but I think there's some important things people should be aware of because you're going to run across it on the internet. You're going to run across somebody who's hostile to the faith and point this out and you might find it's true, then, oh, my faith is going to crumble now because *satan* wasn't a proper personal name in the Hebrew Bible. So what? It's just grammar. We're talking about the theology here. The theology is what's important here.