

The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0

Number 71

"Q&A 7"

Dr. Michael S. Heiser

With

**Residential Layman
Trey Stricklin**

October 18, 2015

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 71, Q&A 7. 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. The listeners should know you and I are enemies this week. Our two teams are going head to head in the Naked Bible Fantasy Football league.

TS: And so after Thursday, I have the initial lead which I hope to sustain through Monday.

MSH: No, that will fade fast. Let the smack talk begin.

TS: We should have wagered on this somehow. I don't know what we could have done but we should have put something on the line here.

MSH: I don't want to take anything away from you.

TS: I appreciate that. That's sweet of you, although it won't happen. It will be me taking it away from you.

MSH: I kind of doubt that.

TS: Well, Mike, this week we've got several questions, around ten-ish, plus or minus one or two so you want to just jump right in?

MSH: Sure. Go ahead.

TS: OK, the first one's from Neil. He's got two questions so this is the first one. Can you help point me in directions for a better understanding of certain laws in the Old Testament that can get a bit tricky to explain, especially for nonbelievers? One that is brought up is that raped women must marry their rapist.

MSH: Well, most of the Old Testament's laws reflect an ancient patriarchal culture. That's pretty obvious. Old Testament law didn't drop out of heaven as some sort of unique morality system that was shared by no other culture, even though that tends to be the way that Christians think about the Old Testament law. That is not the case, and it's easy to demonstrate that it's not the case. What we have to do is look at other ancient near Eastern law codes like Hammurabi is probably one people heard of, but there lots of other ancient law codes, some from Egypt, Hittite laws, whatever. And Old Testament law will invariably have some touch point with these other law codes.

Now some Old Testament laws are different. In other words, they're uniquely tied to Yahweh's special relationship with Israel, things like the Passover, the Sabbath and whatnot. But most civil regulations, most laws, civil law, rules for warfare, rules for marriage, that kind of thing, most of those have clear parallels in other Ancient Near Eastern cultures and their law codes. So part of the answer is to lose the conception that the Old Testament law dropped from

heaven. If that's what's in your head and you come across a question like this from some Bible debunker or something like that, then you're going to be in trouble. You need to get reconnected back to reality and that is the Old Testament laws reflect an ancient patriarchal culture. This is no surprise to God. It shouldn't be any surprise to us because these are the people that God chose and prompted to write the Bible. Now for those who might be new to the podcast, one of the videos I did sort of for newbies to sort of start here, it's on the website, if you're new start here, is about how I approach Scripture and I talk a little bit about this. There is no divinely inspired culture.

God chose people to write Scripture that already had a culture. They lived in a specific time in a specific place. God knew what he was getting with the biblical writers, Moses or otherwise, and the culture in which they were raised since he made choice of using people from that specific time and place, so Israelite laws and life are not going to be alien to their own time and place in the patriarchal ago context, He knows what He's getting. He also doesn't endorse that particular culture as being the divine culture. You say Mike, how can you say that? It's the Mosaic Law. Well, you have to dispense with this flawed notion that the Old Testament law dropped from heaven. It's not difficult to make that statement because if you look at the salvation plan of the Bible as a whole, in other words, you take your head out of the Mosaic Law, out of the Pentateuch, it's quite apparent that the Old Testament system, the theocratic system and the laws that go with it were planned to become obsolete. There was going to be this person call the Messiah, the son of David.

What that person does, he's going to include the Gentile, the icky nations, the disinherited nations of the ancient world. Even in the Old Testament covenants, the nations' aren't entirely dispensed with. I've talked about this many times on the podcast and especially my book, *The Unseen Realm*. The theocratic system and the ancient patriarchal culture system that went with it were designed to become obsolete. That alone should tell you that God doesn't endorse a particular culture because he planned for it to go away. As soon as Israel goes into the land, part of what they're doing as far as their civil laws and their way of life, is automatically going to change. This is why you have the differences in laws between Exodus and Deuteronomy. The setting of Exodus is they're wandering around the desert. They're nomadic in their lifestyle. They're not urban. The situation in Deuteronomy plans for urban life, life in cities in a particular land. This is why a lot of the laws are different at points because they adapt to a different context.

They change. So this is sort of built into the system and ultimately, when you take the big picture look, the system was designed to become obsolete so there is no one divinely inspired culture. There is divinely inspired morality but how a culture reflects that morality is an open question. Israelites could demonstrate their fidelity to their spouse or their children in somewhat different ways than some other culture would do that. Everybody knows what adultery is and you're not going to avoid that, and all that kind of stuff. But there are relationships that are talked about in civil legislation, in the Mosaic Law, that may not get talked about the same way in a different culture but the principle is the same, and that's okay. The Gentiles were supposed to be part of this from the beginning. They're put into the plan. It's designed to become obsolete.

There is no one inspired culture. We're not supposed to go back to the Mosaic Period and sort of go back to the Stone Age here. There's nothing like that in Scripture so we need to think a little more clearly. Now beyond that, I'd actually need to know what law the questioner's talking

about. The question is a little bit vague. I'm going to make an assumption here in the next minute or so about what the person is thinking. But the penalty for rape in the Old Testament is pretty clear. It was the death penalty, not marriage. Now Neal was the questioner's name, I think, might be talking about some of the laws in Deuteronomy 22. That's my guess in which case it isn't saying a woman was forced to marry her rapist. That's a bit of a simplistic reading. But let's go look at Deuteronomy 22 and I'll read it. We'll just pick up here in verse 23. These are various laws in this section of Deuteronomy. We get to Deuteronomy 22:23, and I'm going to be reading ultimately through verse 29. It says this, verse 23,

²³ "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, ²⁴ then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

MSH: Now notice, this is kind of interesting, betrothal, the verse begins in verse 23 with betrothed virgin, is actually equated with marriage, neighbor's wife, in verse 24. So here you have a situation that involves a woman who is betrothed, and in that culture, basically that amounts to marriage. They're both put to death so the woman willingly violates her betrothal, violates her marriage "she did not cry for help", and a man who either knowingly seduces a woman who's already betrothed or married or seduces a woman he thinks is not married or betrothed, whatever, he forces himself upon her. So this is why they're both put to death, even though you have the man doing something forcible and probably, we aren't really told what the man knows.

We are told that the woman is married or betrothed or whatnot. So when she doesn't cry out, she's complicit in what's going on. I would say though that it's probably more likely that the man knowingly seduced someone who was married, that he had that information. There was some way he could tell because he winds up being punished with death whereas the case of a man that seduces a woman who clearly isn't betrothed or married, we're going to read about that later on in a few verses, you don't get the death penalty in that situation. So probably what's going on here is you have a woman who willingly violates her marriage and a man who willingly seduces or forces himself upon someone's already married and he knows it. So when it's discovered, they're both put to death. Now, one of the reasons why this crime and others that involved adultery was punishable by death is cultural. We're back here to the patriarchal culture and sort of their life setting.

So very clearly in this case, you don't have you two guys got to get married now because one was already married, so we don't have that. But we do have the death penalty and that's because in their context in their culture, women and children were utterly and I mean totally dependent economically, I mean really, it's a matter of life and death, do we have anything to eat or not, upon men. They're totally dependent economically on men. So when a man committed adultery, he, in theory, might literally be abandoning one wife, or a wife and the children he already had, and if he does that, to go off with another woman, he basically leaves them destitute. He leaves them in a situation where their lives are threatened, really, truly. And so that was viewed as something that was a crime that put someone's life in jeopardy. And in the

Old Testament, just generally speaking, these are the kinds of crimes when someone else's life is put in jeopardy or taken, they result in the death penalty for that reason.

If you put someone in this kind of situation deliberately, you're going to forfeit your life. You have forfeited your life to live because you put their life in jeopardy or actually taken it. So that's one issue. You have your sort of another layered issue here. Adulterous relationships in this time period confused inheritance rights and that could result in people losing literally their livelihood. Men and women could be equally guilty of putting other people at risk in this way when you have people who are living in a subsistent lifestyle situation when one person, man or woman, decides to forsake their marital relationship and go off to another. If it's the woman then the second man sort of gets invited to the situation and he can lay claim to the first man, the husband, the first man's inheritance, his property, his livelihood, then he could kick out the kids that aren't his and their destitute.

So you have all these kind of situations, either a man willingly doing this or a man being brought into the picture. The victims here, women and children, could in theory be left utterly destitute and that is one of the reasons, not the only reason, one of the reasons why this crime, adultery, was looked upon so severely. It wasn't just about the sex act. It was about dependence and inheritance and day to day means of staying alive. So it sounds severe to our ear and, of course, it is, but again, the theocratic system in the patriarchal culture that was tied to it because God revealed himself to these people at this time in this place who were living in this culture, all that stuff that was tied together was planned to be obsolete from the very beginning. This is what salvation history shows us so were not obligated to go back to the system. It just is what it is.

It is a reflection of the culture, the severity of some of these things because when you put someone's life at risk, when you threaten them with bodily harm, that was viewed as an extreme act and, frankly, because people were viewed as imagers of God, God's image, it was like doing that to God in effigy, committing some violent act or some act that put that person's very life at risk. That's why it was viewed so severely. Now let's go back to the passage. The first cases you got a willing woman committing adultery with a willing man, then you get to verse 25.

²⁵ “But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. ²⁶ But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, **[MSH: It's linked there to murder because it's violence against someone's bodily wellbeing, a physical violent act.]** ²⁷ because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.

MSH: So this case is viewed differently than the first one really because of where it happens, the open country. The betrothed woman is given the benefit of the doubt. The law assumes that she cried out, in other words, it assumes she was raped. It assumes that she wasn't willing whereas in the first scenario, she didn't cry out. But since she's in the open country, nobody could hear and come to her aid because they weren't in a city or town. So here we clearly have rape and look at the situation. There's no forced marriage. Only the man is put to death. The key element is

that the woman was betrothed or by implication, back to the first case, she was looked upon as belonging to her husband, to this man she's betrothed to.

It's assumed that since she was the unwilling victim of a crime, her spouse would still have her after-the-fact meaning her livelihood is still intact and so she and her children, if she already had some, won't be destitute. The assumption is that the man who does this, he's the only one that's going to get the death penalty because of the violence of the act and she by implication, there's nothing really said about her, about the situation she's in. So, most scholars would assume that her spouse would take her back and she'd be okay, even though she's been shamed in this way. Now the next case is probably the one that the questioner's thinking of, and the question is, is this rape or not? And frankly, it could go either way, so here's verse 28.

²⁸ "If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found,²⁹ then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her. He may not divorce her all his days.

MSH: Now this case law could be read in two ways. On one hand, it could be read as a rape of an unbetrothed woman. In other words, there was no marriage violated here. The language can work, the language that the notion of rape can work and the language can support it but it isn't actually conclusive as we'll see in a little bit. The ambiguity is probably due to the elements in the parallel law. There's a parallel to this in Exodus 22:16-17 where very specifically seduction is mentioned and the woman's father can refuse his daughter to the offending man. Now here's Exodus 22:16,

¹⁶ "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. ¹⁷ If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins.

MSH: So I think the law in Deuteronomy needs to be interpreted in light of the more detailed, or these other details in the Exodus 22 parallel. But eliminating the parallel, which is what most Bible debunkers will naturally do, does make it sound more like rape than anything else, than any other possibility. But I'm not going to exclude the parallel. I think they need to be interpreted in tandem. So let's talk about that. In Exodus 22:16-17, the woman's fate, you'll recall from having just read it, actually depends on the disposition of her father. Did he think his daughter was raped, she's wronged or that she consented? In either case, she has been sexually violated or deflowered or however you want to put that, and in their culture is basically on marriageable after that point.

Now it's not an impossibility that a man would still marry her but it's very unlikely. If the father believes his daughter was wronged, he can refuse to give her to the man. There's no death penalty because the woman is not at risk of destitution. It's assumed her father would take care of her but the offender must pay compensation to the father, the brideprice, because the father's likely to never get the brideprice for his daughter in a normal marriage, a dowry. I would add that the law is actually designed to deter rape if you think about it, not to make it attractive.

What man would want to be forced to live with a woman who would hate him the rest of her life and so on so forth, not to mention her family.

They would also hate him. So you have this odd situation where depending on what the father thinks, the father makes the decision about, okay, you have to get married now or no, you wronged my daughter and she's going to stay with me and now you have to pay the brideprice. Now on the other hand, if the father is inclined, because he didn't view the situation as rape, we have to assume that, he can part ways with his daughter who shamed him and the family because she willingly had sex before betrothal or marriage. So in that case, the deed is still viewed as wrong. What they did was wrong. Now the couple must get married and can't divorce. So the consenting couple, this is viewing the passage, this situation, not as a rape but as a premarital sexual situation. In this case, if this is what the father sort of decides then the consenting couple is stuck with each other.

Since they both knew the law, they both knew what the outcome could be, they shouldn't have done it, and the offender, the man, still has to pay the brideprice to the father, because now it's treated as a marriage. So the first view is look, you should've done this. You forced my daughter. We don't have a death penalty situation because she wasn't already married and she's not going to be destitute. I'm going to take care of her. But there's no way you're getting her. Pay up the brideprice because now she'll never be able to get married normally. So that's scenario one. Scenario two is okay, you two wanted to do this and now you're stuck and you can never get divorced, and I expect the brideprice now, like this would be a normal marriage. So there's actually two ways you could read the passage. Now the system, we can look at it and I think it's honest. The system isn't perfect. No legal system is because of the nature of people. An unhappy offending man might be abusive to the woman he's forced to marry. That could happen. But no law presumes omniscience of all situations. The Bible has laws to protect people, or to promote people to treat each other well, but do they always do that?

No, people still harm each other. Wives are under the protection of laws punishing violence but that doesn't mean violence never happens to them. In other words, the law, even biblical law, didn't stop evil. Biblical law's typically about crime and punishment, that kind of thing, what you're supposed to do and not supposed to do, then what happens if you disobey. You're guilty of neglect or something like that. The system isn't perfect. Just because it's the Mosaic Law doesn't mean that it nullified the evil in people's hearts and that crimes weren't committed. That's absurd. So the system is not perfect. You could have a situation where the offender might be abusive to the woman but they weren't supposed to do that either. There is no biblical law that allows domestic violence.

On the contrary, even though biblical laws often tend to use masculine language, things like if a man does this then that happens, that doesn't mean that the laws also weren't for women. Think about it. If these laws against doing violence to one another weren't about women as well, then that means that there are no laws in the Mosaic Law that pertain to women. Women can do what they want. It's absurd. It's just an absurdity. Even killing a female slave was a serious crime in biblical law, Exodus 21:20. Domestic violence was not okay in Israel even within a patriarchal system. You say, well, were they really looking out for that? We're they really as sensitive as we are to that? Well probably not. I think that's probably a reasonable given, but there's nothing in Mosaic Law that endorses what could happen in a tough situation like this.

So yeah, the system isn't perfect, but no system of law can be because of the condition of the human heart and the laws don't assume omniscience. So I think back to the original question, what you have here is you have the passage, if I'm guessing correctly that it's this passage, you have a passage that yeah, it could be read as a rape but I think it could also be read not as a rape and if we bring Exodus 22 into the picture, then the situation is really at the disposition of the father. What does the father think happened and why. So the father has to make a decision about protecting his daughter, having her stay with him or forcing these two to get married or whatever. And you say boy, he could make a mistake. He could be wrong, the poor woman.

Yeah, you could say all those things. But again, no legal system is perfect. Our legal system today, if we think of ourselves as more enlightened than these primitive biblical people, go ahead and think that. But is our system perfect? Get your head out of the sand. There's no way It's not even close to being perfect. It is wide open for abuse and people are very clever at how they abuse it. So the answer isn't laws, even biblical laws. The answer is a changed heart. That's really the bottom line. Did he have another question?

TS: He did. Neal's other question is, Mike, can you please shed some light on the Lord your God instead of the Lord our God in Deuteronomy 2:30? He knows Dr. Ron Johnson touched on this a bit with the Saul David relationship but this one seems a bit more out of place.

MSH: Deuteronomy 2:30, which says this is a reference to

³⁰ But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day.

MSH: So this is Moses speaking to the Israelites. Honestly, I don't see a problem. Moses is addressing the people of Israel and he refers to God as the Lord your God, Israelites, this is your God who's giving you Sihon the king of Heshbon into your hand. Well, of course Yahweh's their God. What other God would he mention? How else would he say it? I don't think we have Moses saying Yahweh is your God but I'll all of the sudden have a different God. Maybe I'm not getting the point of the question. I don't see a problem so I don't really know what else to do with that.

TS: OK, our next three are from Jack and he wants to know, after Genesis 1:1 whenever the Bible talks about the Earth or the world is it ever hundred percent certain from the original language grammar that the entire planet Earth is in view?

MSH: It sounds like Jack hasn't ever watched by my lecture on Israelite cosmology. We should put a link to that lecture on this podcast episode. My answer to this is I don't think that Israelite cosmology ever has the entire globe, the entire planet in view, and that's because of who they were. Now I've said it many times and even on the podcast website, I think it's in one of my videos, How Mike approaches the Bible or something like that. The human writers of the Bible, the biblical writers, were from a prescientific age, a prescientific culture. They didn't know that the Earth was a round ball of rock floating around in outer space. That isn't the way the biblical language describes their cosmology.

The picture you get, and we'll put the link to the lecture up on the episode page or near the episode anyway. The picture you get is biblical writers believe that the earth was round and flat. It was covered by a dome, underneath was Sheol. The Earth itself is supported by pillars. The Dome, the *raqia*, the firmament, had waters above it. God lived above it. He walked on the firmament, all this language you get in the Old Testament about cosmology. So I don't think that they ever, there's anything that ever makes it "100%" certain that we're talking about the entire planet so it really has nothing to do with grammar. It's just the way that they speak. Think about it. Human writers, human beings are embodied. We live in bodies and we only experience place in terms of latitude and longitude.

So biblical writers and frankly, if we were writing this stuff today, we would by definition use geographical language even when we're describing places that don't have literal latitude and longitude like heaven and hell. It's full of language geography but those places don't have latitude and longitude, that sort of thing. There's really no other way for us to talk about it. So when it comes to cosmology, they're writing what they're writing because of the way things appear to the naked eye. They believe that the mountains secured or held up the firmament. Well, they weren't mountain climbers. They can't go to REI or whatever the new sporting goods place is and get mountain climbing gear and go up there and look. They don't have space travel. They don't have satellites.

They don't have flight. They don't have any of this stuff that that tells us that the top of the mountain really isn't resting on the sky. It just sort of looks that way. It's all the language of appearances so it's not really a grammar issue. Israelite cosmology doesn't conform to what we know about Earth being a ball in outer space so I don't think we can assume the biblical writers were trying to inform us about a modern cosmological understanding at all.

TS: His next question is, when the beney elohim inherited the nations in the post-Babel dispersion, is there any indication from the various texts you have studied that any of these states were founded more than say 2000 miles from modern-day Palestine?

MSH: Yeah, so what about China and India and North and South America, Central America, Australia, all this stuff? My answer to this is no. The biblical writers, now catch this. This is going to sound awfully simplistic but think about it. The biblical writers wrote about the world they knew, not the one they didn't know. The language of "all the Earth" that you read in the Old Testament is designed to be all encompassing. From the writer's perspective when the writer uses phrases like heaven and earth or all the earth, it's everything they can see. They're writing it from the language of the naked eye observation, the language of experience. And because we can see that their intention was to be all encompassing, we can read it that way. It's just that we know that the world is truly it's this globe that floats around in outer space. It's bigger, the world is bigger than the biblical writers knew it was.

That's just part of being in a prescientific culture but you can't expect biblical writers to write about the world they didn't know. They wrote about the world they did know. So they're just dealing with a smaller world. We know the nations of the biblical world. We know what the writers were thinking when they thought about the nations. How, how can you say that Michael? Well, you go read Genesis 10. That gives you the geography that was known to the biblical writers. It lists out the nations. And there's nothing else that's going to be beyond what is accounted for in the Table of Nations. You just don't have that anywhere in the Bible. But

because we know their intent with their language was to be all encompassing, all of the nations God created, all the places that are here that humans experience, since we know the intent was to be all encompassing, I think it is legitimate for us to read it that way, as far as what they were intending to communicate.

If God's the Creator of heaven and earth, that means that God is the Creator of all material reality. It doesn't mean that the biblical writers knew about that. They didn't know about atoms. They didn't know about quantum. They didn't know about all this stuff but yet their language shows us that they're trying to get everything in the box. They're trying to be thorough and comprehensive. And so I think it's fine to read it that way but we have to realize what's going on in the text and in their head when they do that. So this goes to the whole situation, we basically create reading problems when we filter biblical content through our own modern science and our own modern worldview. You get creationists that just stumble all over themselves to get these other nations somewhere in the Bible. And I did a whole lecture just a couple weeks ago in Missouri. One of the lectures was called Biblical Racism and it was about the crisis brought on in Europe, human civilization at the time, Western Europe, when you had the age of discovery, when other lands started being discovered because people crossed the Atlantic, or they penetrated further south and they find India. They spent more time in China. You get this widening of discovery, of places and peoples that are not specifically in the Bible so that just freaked people out.

How'd they get here? And so it became sort of an issue, I think sort of a pseudo-issue of biblical authority. And so many people thought the solution was to find those places in the Bible somewhere and that's where you come up with these pre-Adamic race ideas and co-Adamic race ideas. That degenerated into certain racial theories and that's why I called the lecture Biblical Racism because a lot of what we know today as racism that we're still dealing with, which came from European attitudes toward other races and the slave trade and all that stuff. That in turn came from, it got a "biblical legitimacy" in this era when people were inventing interpretations of all sorts of passages to account for these alternate races so that they can sort of keep their Bible so that the Bible would remain intact as this thing that had authority. It was really misguided. Instead of just saying let's just let the Bible be what it is, an ancient Mediterranean centered document focused on the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world. That's what they knew, the Table of Nations instead of just saying the Bible must be totally comprehensive. Everything that's real has to be in there somewhere. It was just as really odd quirky mentality frankly you still see today. It's alive and well today. But because of the age of discovery and these other people in these places that just, where's North America in the Bible? Where's that? Where's Australia?

Well, it's got to be in there somewhere. We got to account for these people somehow. And so that's when you get all these strange theories about alternate human origins and ultimate races. And think about it, when you do that, then there are only certain peoples who are actually descended from Adam. Other peoples are descended from something else or someone else. And so surely, the best races, the race closest to God, most like God, the ones who actually are in the image of God, those come from Adam. But these other races, not so much. They're lesser. It's not hard for us to see where this led. We have plenty of hindsight that's frankly tragic. And we just do this to Scripture all the time. I'm not saying the questioner is but we do this stuff to Scripture all the time. We take these modern questions, we take modern science, we take modern debates, we take modern concerns and we go looking for them in the Bible. And by God, we're going to

find them somewhere or we're going to bend the Scripture to our will, that whatever position we take on those controversies, we're going to bend the Bible to our will to make it work. And why do we do that?

We think we have to for biblical authority. And that comes from this frankly Slav-ish literalism that has just run through the church for far too long without respecting the original context of older New Testament, without looking what New Testament writers do with the old. Do they always interpret it absolute literally? No they don't. We teach it like they do but they don't. We just ignore these things because we think we can't give this ground or else the Darwinists win something or it's just crazy. It's just crazy town when you get into these situations. I understand the motivation to keep biblical authority. Well, I haven't surrendered biblical far but I don't buy any of the methods and that's what infuriates critics that I talk to and frankly, it makes a lot Christians angry, too but that's too bad. It's just a more coherent way. It's a very obvious way to approach things.

TS: Jack's last question is, is there any indication that there were already some beings in rebellion to Yahweh prior to Genesis 1:3?

MSH: No, there's nothing in the grammar of Genesis 1:1-3 that endorses a pre-Adamic race or a prior rebellion of Satan or anything like this. My views on this have been out on the web for quite some time. If people went, we should probably post this video as well. I have a video on Genesis 1:1-3 and what's going on there. The real issue is the grammar. Maybe not, it doesn't really specifically pertain to what the question asked so maybe I don't want to rabbit trail too much. The idea of gap theory, for instance, is just dead on arrival. There is no exegetical support for the gap theory and the reason is, there are a lot of reasons for it, but the most simple reason is something we call Hebrew syntax, that is, Hebrew grammar, Hebrew grammar, even word order, just how the grammar works. For the gap theory to have any chance of being reality, you have to read verses 1-3 in Genesis 1 in linear succession. You can't do that because of the way verse 2 begins.

It's a vav conjunction attached to a noun which in every Hebrew grammar in the universe, every example of Hebrew you're going to get, that is a dis-junction. It is designed to break a sequence. That alone kills the gap theory. Darkness, part of this is oh, it's sinister and there was judgment. Satan must have rebelled. God must have judged Satan in the first creation then he has to history recreate...baloney. Darkness is not of necessity speaking of evil or sinister things in the Bible. 1 Kings 8:12, Solomon says the Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. Is God evil now because using darkness? No, other verses have Yahweh dwelling in darkness, Psalm 18:11, Psalm 97:2. This is fresh in my mind because this is actually an assignment that I give for students in my Hebrew exegesis class at Liberty I'm actually grading right now. But it just doesn't have any basis in Hebrew grammar and the Hebrew language. So if you believe the Bible's inspired in English, okay, you can get the gap theory. Just play with the English words. If you believe it was inspired in Hebrew, you're in trouble.

TS: Okay our next one is from Will in Nashville, Tennessee. Many Old Testament commentators talk about the Old Testament being written by the priest of the Aaronic tradition versus the Moshite Moses thus generating for example Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. They go into a lot of details throughout the Old Testament that show different data about the same subjects making the Old

Testament a mashup of sorts. This is a variety of the documentary hypothesis that actually refers to two or more other document strands. What is the status of this approach today in Old Testament studies and what are we to make of these different priestly divisions?

MSH: This is actually an interesting question because on the surface, there is no legitimate way to divide the Pentateuch into Moses tradition and Aaronic tradition. Now I said on the surface. What you have in standard documentary hypothesis, and for those who aren't familiar with that term, maybe they have heard it as JEDP, the JEDP theory that the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses are actually composed of four different documents which is sort of a rough and ready explanation for it. There's actually more documents than those four but without rabbit trailing, the Pentateuch is a patchwork quilt of at least four major sources. One of those sources is called P, the priestly document. And so that's where you sort of could get in theory this Aaronic contribution as opposed to Moses contribution. Some commentators use that terminology to sort of soften the blow of the Pentateuch not being written entirely by Moses. Oh that's his brother.

That's good, he's a good guy and we can live with that. But nobody in sort of mainstream critical circles will try to use Aaron to link it to Moses so that people feel better. That's why I say it's kind of interesting the way the questioner phrased the terminology. I can see where some people would use that terminology but maybe for different reasons, some better than others. But the dominant view today, the consensus view in biblical scholarship is that Genesis 1 and 2 are different textual traditions from different sources. One would be P in the standard nomenclature. Another one is J. It doesn't matter to the dominant consensus view that Genesis 1 and 2 have been skillfully woven together, even to the point of the entirety of Genesis 1-11 being one massive literary chiasm. There was a scholar named Isaac Kikawada who was a literary specialist that come up with this huge chiasm where events go along and they hit a focal point and then they fold back on each other and parallel each other at every point. He argued Genesis 1-11 is a giant chiasm.

Even if that's true, and Kikawada has plenty of detractors, his chiasms tend to become artificial. You see parallels where you need them. But even if it's true, the standard consensus view isn't going to care. They would say that's just the work of a master editor or several master editors, doesn't mean anything about sources. It's still different sources so they're not going to care. Personally, I don't care one way or the other. Law of Moses, *torah moshe* in Hebrew, doesn't have to mean Moses wrote every word of the Torah or even most of it. It can mean the law associated with Moses or the law about Moses. It doesn't have to mean the law that originated with Moses. This is a simple Hebrew construct phrase, two nouns joined together, X of Y relationship, *torah moshe*, Law of Moses, and the construct phrase in Hebrew has a wide variety of semantics. You look at some Hebrew reference grammars, you're going to get 12 or 15 semantic possibilities for a simple X of Y 2 nouns next to each other relationship. Anybody who's taken first-year Hebrew knows that anyway.

So Law of Moses doesn't have just one meaning. It doesn't have to mean that Moses wrote every word. So I don't really care if Moses did or didn't or whatever. Even the fact that Jesus and New Testament writers cite parts of the Pentateuch and say the Law of Moses says this or that, even that doesn't require Mosaic authorship of that material. Why, because saying Law of Moses and then quoting something in the Pentateuch doesn't have to mean Moses wrote that any more than saying Daniel the prophet says this. The book of Daniel never claims Daniel

wrote it. Lots of biblical books, the books of Samuel, they never claim Samuel wrote it. The book of Joshua never claimed Joshua wrote it. But what else do you call these books? You call them by their title. You name them by their main character, the main figure. This is very simple thinking. This is a very simple observation. But we're still married in Christian circles to this idea that Moses has to write every word of the Pentateuch or we have to give up inspiration and inerrancy. That is just absurdity.

It's just an absurdity. I realize why it's done. It's done because people attacked Mosaic authorship in the late 19th century, actually even earlier than that but it really got going in the late 19th century, the early 20th century and now is the dominant paradigm of theological liberals. I get that. But just because a theological liberal says something doesn't mean that a) it's not true in whole or in part and even if it is true, it doesn't mean that the truth of it leads to the conclusion that the liberal wants it to have. This is just basic logic. We just need to think a little bit better about what we're talking about. When it comes to Scripture, the fact that a biblical writer, Jesus, or a biblical figure like Jesus, calls a book Daniel or calls the *torah* the Law of Moses, it doesn't mean that it was written by that person because most of the time, most Old Testament books, we don't know who wrote them. And they're very clear evidences, especially like in the prophets. I think it's part of the video I put on the website with Ezekiel 1-3. It's very easy to see that this material was edited because the switch between the first and third person.

This happens everywhere in the Old Testament, this kind of thing, so we have a very sort of, I refer to it as a paranormal view of inspiration that really needs to be dispensed with because it doesn't conform to what you actually find the text. And in this case, Law of Moses can mean lots of different things. A book or a portion of Scripture that bears a certain name doesn't mean that person wrote it. These are very simple observations. What else are they going to call the book? So I don't want to belabor the point, but in my view within Genesis I don't really like JEDP. I don't really like the documentary view because I think the view itself is built on circular reasoning but I think the idea that Moses wrote every last of the Pentateuch or even 90% of it, I don't want to put a percentage on it. He certainly didn't write all of it. That's not that difficult to show. How much of it did he write?

I don't know. I don't have anything against the idea that Moses could have written sections of the Torah. Why not? It's just critics don't even like to say that Moses lived and so they don't want to cast him as a real person and that's why they go where they do and for all sorts of other reasons, and that's not me. I'm what used to be called a supplementarian. And a supplementarian in the late 19th century was someone who believed that the Pentateuch had a mosaic core, that there was material in there that came from the hand of Moses or perhaps the time of Moses, people who knew Moses and had experienced the things that you see in the Pentateuch. And so there's this mosaic core and then it gets accrued to it. It gets added to it, material gets edited, rearranged, and whatnot to form what ultimately becomes the Pentateuch.

I think Genesis 1-11 was either wholly or substantially written during the exile which is quite distant from the time of Moses, those first 11 chapters. Well, why do I say that, because I like liberal theology? No, I'm not a liberal. People listening to me are going to know that. People who visit the website, read my books, read through the blog, they're going to know that. So why do you say that Mike? Well I say it because there's so many Mesopotamian things and Mesopotamian contexts in Genesis 1-11. Genesis 1-2 have clear parallels to Babylonian creation stories. Even the Egyptian creation story, the Memphite theology, that's from the sixth century BC. It's not the pyramid age. Its six century. So it is very possible that they could have had a copy

of that in Babylon during the exile. the Memphite theology is one where Ptah creates from the spoken word. That and the Old Testament, Genesis 1, are the only two places you see that. Is it a coincidence that the Egyptian version of that coincides with the time of the exile? I don't think so. I think it's a response. I think it's a polemic. It's a poke in the eye on the part of the Israelites.

Whoever's writing Genesis 1-11, they're going to poke Ptah in the eye. It isn't Ptah who created by the spoken word. It was Yahweh of Israel, that kind of thing. Genesis 3 you get Adam and Eve, the paradise stories, clear parallels in the Mesopotamian material. The flood stories, it's just part of the general knowledge now that there are Babylonian versions of the flood story. Genesis 5, the pre-flood patriarchs, we have the Samarian King list and some of the names in the Samarian King list are in, they align with the names in Genesis 5. Genesis 6, the Apkallu, the unseen realm, a clear Mesopotamian parallel. How about Genesis 11? It's the Tower of Babel. There's clear, unmistakable, you'd have to trip over them, parallels to Mesopotamian material in Genesis 1-11.

Well, Moses was trained in all the wisdom and knowledge of, oops, Egypt, and a lot of this material that Moses is responding to, Enuma Elish, Atrahasis, a lot of the specific versions of that were the parallels are guess what, they're written later in Mesopotamian history, six century BC. This is where they're at. They're exiled in Babylon. They're going to have access to these sources and this theology and Israelite writers are taking shots at it every chance they can get. This is very basic to me that Genesis 1-11 has a very obvious tilt toward this time and this material for theological purposes. This is why it's written. Does that mean other parts the Pentateuch couldn't have been written by Moses? Of course not. So I don't like any of the standard JEDP sort of articulation. I think the general idea that something is non-mosaic, okay, I can buy that. I can see where that might work. It might actually help in certain places. I'm not a JEDP or I think that theory itself depends on circular reasoning but I'm not everything is Moses guy either.

TS: The next one's from Sean. There is a link between the Old and New Testaments I've never heard anyone comment on. It is the two 400 year blank spots. When the tribes go into captivity in Egypt, 400 years passes with nothing recorded in the canon. Then the time period between the Old and New Testament is also 400 years. Again, nothing is recorded in the canon. Many people speculate the 400 year period in Egypt would have allowed for the gathering and organizing of stories about the patriarchs while it is common thought that the 400 year period in Babylon is when the better part of the Hebrew Bible was organized and edited. Does no one find it odd that these two time periods matched so well? Would you think people who look for connections between the Testaments would make more hay out of this issue?

MSH: Well, no. I hate to say this way and this isn't directed at that the questioner, at Sean. No one's going to take this seriously because it has so many problems and no one has taken it seriously because it has so many problems. The question presupposes a couple things. For example, that the 400 years are precise in both respects. This is a nice and neat round number and all that sort of thing. That actually isn't the case. And second, because it's assumed nothing canonical was written during the 400 intertestamental years. Well, you got problems with both of these assumptions at least in the way they're articulated. So let's start with the number. How did we get the 400 intertestamental years? Do we begin at the end of the exile? Do we begin with the book of Malachi?

Do we begin with Esther? What if a book like Job was late? What if Daniel was written in the second century? All of these things are possibilities so let's take Esther. So Esther you would think has to happen after 465 BC. That's assuming that Ahasuerus in Esther is Xerxes, and most scholars have built a good case for that. So let's just call it that Esther gets written 400 BC. So you don't have canonical material, we're making that assumption at this point. We don't have canonical material written in the year 0, so that's your neat 400 years there, 400 to 0, 400 years. Earliest New Testament book is typically in the 40s so now you're at the 440 mark. So the round number isn't so round and isn't so decipherable and it isn't so accurate. So let's take Ezra and Nehemiah, when was that written? Some would say in the reign of Artaxerxes the first, which is the 460s and the 420s. Others would say that Ezra chapter 7 onward, that's the part that was written by Ezra and Nehemiah. It was written right around that same time, about 400 BC. But most scholars, evangelical and otherwise, think that Ezra 1-6 was actually written around 300 BC.

Does anybody really know for sure? No, but you can build good cases for this. So that messes up the 400 years. You get Daniel, lots of people believe in a late date for Daniel, second century BC, that's in the 100s. Why, because Daniel, because of the tight correlation, this is the way it's usually explained, the tight correlation between the events of that period and Daniel 10-11. That couldn't be prophecy. Daniel had to be alive at that time. Well, a lot of people are going to say that and Christians get offended because they look at people saying that and say well, you just don't like prophecy. You don't like the idea predicted prophecy. Well, lots of liberals don't but that doesn't explain why there are evangelicals who do believe in inspiration and in prophecy take a second century view. Yes, there are those people out there. I know many of them personally. They do exist. They're not like Bigfoot. There's actual literal proof of that. Maybe Bigfoot's still out there. Maybe there is one. But I know factually that there are evangelicals with a high view of Scripture that do not deny the supernatural that take a late date view of the book of Daniel. I could introduce them to you this November in Atlanta if you come to the academic meetings.

I'll even take a picture. I know they are here. You say, well, why do they do it. They do it for other reasons. For instance, Daniel is the primo-example in ancient literature of what we call apocalyptic literature. There are other books that are apocalyptic, parts of 1 Enoch I for instance, some pseudepigraphical books are apocalyptic. What's apocalyptic literature? It's end of the world final battle, final cataclysmic stuff where angels are usually mediating knowledge to people. It's this day of the Lord kind of stuff mixed in with angelic visitations and re-creation, destruction of the entire Earth and then being replaced by a new Eden, that kind of thing. That's Daniel, okay? Another thing, another part of the apocalyptic genre is when you have symbols that are assigned to empires and then empires are described in succession of events and all that kind of stuff. Well, that's Daniel 2. That's Daniel 7. It's the textbook example of apocalyptic literature.

Well guess what, while apocalyptic literature has some threads that predate the second century, as a genre, it is only known from the second century as a full-blown genre. So for that reason, many evangelicals look at that and say well, if Daniel was a sixth century book, it would be totally unique. If it's a second century book, it fits in with everything else, so let's go with the second century. That's how they're processing it. I'm not saying it's a conclusive argument. There are reasons to look at Daniel and think sixth century BC as well, but this is why there's a debate over the book. The debate is real. There are real things to debate about the authorship of

Daniel. So if Daniel's written in the second century, that blows the whole 400 year sort of template right out the water. Job, everybody always says Job is the oldest book in the Old Testament. Well, actually probably not. Well it has to be because the Law of Moses isn't mentioned. Well, that's nice. Why does the Law of Moses have to be mentioned? If I'm writing a book in the second or third century BC and I'm writing a book and I'm casting the book in a distant age, it would be idiotic of me to include things like the Law of Moses that would mess up the picture.

There are a lot of things in Job in the story and the characteristics of the characters that reflect a patriarchal time period which would be before the Law of Moses, the time of Abraham we'll say. So people read the story and they assume that's when it was written. Well, if we're dealing with either a record of people who lived back then or we're dealing with a story designed to teach us theology, either way, if I'm an intelligent writer, I could write it today. If I had an intimate knowledge of this time period, I could write the book of Job today or something like it and not make chronological mistakes. We confuse what a story is about and it's setting with the time in which it was written. You can't assume that. For Job, good scholars, evangelical or otherwise, have dated Job anywhere from the eighth century BC all the way to the third, into the 300. So it's just one of those books that's almost impossible to really know for sure. There's a lot of old, I shouldn't say old.

There's a lot of late Hebrew features in Job but it's mixed in with old Hebrew. Hebrew's just like English, just like any other language. It evolved in stages. Old English is not like the English we use today. There are words we use today they'll never find in older texts for very obvious reasons. You're not going to find Internet in something Elizabethan. This is just the way languages are. They develop over time. The grammar develops, things change, things drop out. That's just the way it is. Hebrew's the same way and so there are late Hebrew -isms in Job that wouldn't make sense if the book was written way back in the time of Moses or something earlier. That's just the way it is. So Job is a book that really people struggle to date and date coherently. They guess, that's what scholars do, they guess, and they build an argument to take a position and then they go on to the next thing. That's just the nature of what we're dealing with here. I would say also, lastly, the question presupposes a Protestant canon. What if certain books in the Apocrypha, which the Catholic Church and the early church would've called deuterocanonical books, what if they belong in the canon?

They were in the LXX, in the Septuagint, which was the Bible in the early church. You say well, okay, it was the Bible the early church because Christians couldn't read Hebrew so they read Greek. That's correct. That is why the Septuagint was the Bible of the early church. But because it was the Bible the early church, Christians grew up with books that Protestants don't have in their Bible in their Bible. They look at a book like Tobit and thought Tobit's in there. Well, the Protestants are saying, no, we don't like that. Why do we have the Protestant Bible to begin with? We have it because of the Reformation. Well, why did Luther and Calvin and all these other guys in the Reformation, why did they kick these books out? Well, it's because, the cynical answer is because they didn't want to be Catholics. That's a little silly. The reason they did it was because they wanted to have an Old Testament canon where they can trace each book back to the ones that the Jewish community, the Hebrew community, used and they didn't use the Septuagint. So right away if you make that shift in your thinking, you lop off these extra books, that yes, they are in the Septuagint which was the Bible of the early church, but you lop them off.

So what we're dealing now is we have a Protestant canon and we have this other canon, a Catholic canon if you want to call it that. That's kind of a misnomer, kind of a pejorative to some Protestants to call it that. But that's the historical situation we have. So if you're going to presuppose a Protestant canon, go ahead, why not. I don't really care. I think we should read all these books because they were all part of the theological climate including the pseudepigrapha. That's always my advice to people. Don't worry about what's canon or not. Read it because it informed biblical writers. It was part of the way they thought. It helped him articulate certain things. Books like Enoch, for instance, which I don't consider canonical but I think is really important. Why, because it was in Peter and Jude's head. It was in Paul's head frankly in certain passages.

And it pops up here and there in some gospel material, too. So read it and you'll understand why you run into certain things in the New Testament. It will help you understand those things so just read it. But anyway, going back to the question, I'm trying to illustrate why people would not take this proposition seriously. The number of years can be argued about a lot. The neatness of the 400 number and even if you could arrive at that, the whole assumption about what's going on when books were written, there are books that we just don't know when they were written or even when they got into their final form, like Ezra and Nehemiah. It was part of that written at one time then 100 years later you have the first six chapters added. Scholars have made a good case for that. There are things that make sense if that's true but ultimately do we know for sure? No, but since we don't know for sure, nobody's going to be treating oppositions like this very seriously because they just require omniscience. They require certainty on things that we cannot be certain about.

TS: The next one's from Todd in Houston. In Genesis 2:2, did God or the serpent lie the garden with regard to dying and knowing good and evil after eating the fruit and what does live forever mean in this context?

MSH: I would say the grammar has God saying, obviously, you will die sometime in the future subsequent to if you sin. It doesn't say he'll drop dead. I don't think God lied in Genesis 2. Adam and Eve were driven from his presence and, of course, the tree of life, whether you take that metaphorically or literally. It telegraphs the same idea. If you're separated from God's presence and the tree of life, you are no longer going to go on living indefinitely. Where God's home is, there is no death. Same for the tree of life idea because that's where God's home was. So when God says look, if you sin, you will surely die. It doesn't have to mean drop dead. It means you're going to be separated from me and the tree of life and guess what, if that happens, you're going to die. You will not go on living forever. For the good and evil idea, I would say read Unseen Realm. I spend three or four chapters on this, the whole thing about what that means. All I can say here is that it refers to understanding what it means to act out of self will, that is, rebellion against a higher authority and the accountability that results from that sort of decision. God also never said that they wouldn't know good and evil if they ate. He didn't lie. They did know that. They did learn that.

The serpent's warning, I would say, is a lie. God says you're going to die if you eat. It doesn't mean that you are going to drop dead but the serpent says you will not surely die. He sort of denies it totally, so I think what we have here is the serpent is the one that we should be wary of and what he's saying because he's denying that they're going to die at all whereas what's

going on in the passage is God is saying if you sin, you are going to be driven from my presence and the tree of life and you will in fact die. To illustrate this, I can warn somebody not to shoot themselves in the head because they're die, very simple statement. Don't shoot yourself in the head. You're going to die. Don't shoot yourself in the head. You'll die. Well, if somebody does that and doesn't die immediately on the spot but only dies hours, days, or weeks later, I wasn't wrong nor did I lie. The hearer would know I wasn't necessarily claiming instantaneous death. There's no reason to conclude that my words had only that end in mind, same thing for the wording in Genesis. But for the serpent to say you won't die, just categorically, denies all those possibilities and that was a lie.

TS: Our next question's from Travis. Mike, what do you make of the Transfiguration? Does the story have parallels in Jewish literature and do you have an opinion on why John did not include such an incredible event in his gospel.

MSH: My thoughts about the Transfiguration are in Unseen Realm, but I'll say this about the question. John, of course, wasn't under any obligation to include it so I don't think there's anything shocking about him not including it. Only two Gospels, for instance, include the birth account of Jesus. Why wouldn't all four of them have it? I would think that's important, too, and pretty incredible, but they don't. Only two are concerned with Jesus' genealogy. If you're talking about the Messiah, descendants from David, that's going to be pretty important but only two have that. The fact is every gospel writer has his own agenda and that's not a negative word by the way. He has his own agenda, his own purpose for writing, and they all have their own audience, their own specific audience in view. Those things dictate what they include or don't include.

That said, many scholars think John actually does allude to the Transfiguration in John 1:14 when he says, 'We have seen his glory and the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.' Well, if John is using the editorial 'we' there, which I would think he probably is, when did he get to see His glory? Well, at the Transfiguration. So a lot of people think it's at least an allusion even though the account is not actually included in the gospel of John. As far as parallels, there's no specific parallel to the Transfiguration although there are conceptual parallels, in other words, stories about the glorification of certain individuals with the exultation to divine status, the Osis. I talk about this in Unseen Realm as well. You get those kinds of stories in Second Temple Jewish literature but there's no specific parallel to the Transfiguration.

TS: Last two questions are from Randy and he says he's an old man and he's only been a Christian for a few years and he's playing a game of catch up. So, welcome to the club Randy. The first question is Dr. Heiser mentions Paul's Damascus event where Paul was thrown from his horse. I would like to ask if there is some extra biblical text that mentions a horse because it isn't in my Bible.

MSH: No. There's no horse. That's poetic license on my part. It assumes that they wouldn't walk the whole way, to take the journey that they wouldn't have been going on foot for the whole way to Damascus. Maybe they did. Maybe they didn't. We aren't really told. Falling to the ground, which is the language in the account, can imply either a foot fall or fall from something

else like a camel, common transportation of the day or horse. We aren't told either way but there's no necessity for a horse. I wasn't making an exegetical statement. I think we all know that.

TS: His other question is, in one of the Q&A episodes, Dr. Heiser defends the old Earth theory and evolution. A question is, does Dr. Heiser believe there was a literal Adam or was this just another story that was a way for God to communicate theology to the people he revealed himself to? If so, was Adam a direct creation of God or did man evolve to a point and God said, that one is Adam. I will use him. I am curious if this affects his thoughts on federal headship in Romans 5:12.

MSH: The easiest answer to this, at least for me, not really for the questioner, is read the Naked Bible Blog. I did a whole series on Romans 5:12, including these actual specific questions, how the passage is to be read, with or without a historical Adam. And I actually did a series on that, too, the whole historical Adam debate. So I can't obviously reproduce that in a Q&A. I should also add I don't believe in either the federal or the seminal headship view since Romans 5:12 says nothing about the transmission of guilt. It only talks about death. Guilt is nowhere mentioned anywhere. So I would say please read both series. For my part, I think there was an original couple. I don't see anything that forces us to deny that. This all got started at least a Christian circles recently with the work of a guy named Dennis Venema, who teaches at Trinity Western University up here in British Columbia, actually near 20 minutes from where I live. He's a geneticist and his field is statistical genetics, which is not a brand-new field but I think it's fair to say it's kind of in its infancy because of the recency of mapping the genome and all that sort of thing.

He argued that you couldn't, based on the genetic information that we have today, the human race goes back to multiple couples for Homo sapiens, not just one. It would be easy to say isn't this kind of situation right after the flood? Wouldn't we expect that sort of thing? But I don't view these sorts of debates really the same way that a typical creationist would. If you read the Romans 5:12 series and the historical Adam series, I talk about how Romans 5:12 could make sense in either paradigm. So on that level, I don't really care about it, and since I don't view the Bible as teaching science to us, I don't think its legitimate hermeneutics to make the Bible say scientific things or comment on science. So for the record, I don't think any of the creationist positions demand my allegiance since I don't think the point of the Bible in its creation stories is to teach us science. I don't think old Earth creationism use of Scripture to do science is anymore hermetically coherent than that of a young earth creationist's use of the Bible to do science.

I don't think either of them are coherent because that isn't what Scripture is about. So I think it's a misguided effort sort of across the board. I think the Earth is quite old not because of anything in the Bible, although if you go back and watch the video Genesis 1:1-3, you'll know that the grammar of Genesis 1:1-3 allows for a very ancient planet, a very ancient Earth that has nothing to do with science. That's just grammar. So if there's any "Scriptural" reason to believe that, that's where I would land, the grammar Genesis 1:1-3. I also don't defend evolution if you mean Darwinism. I reject Darwinism. That's evolution without God for people who would wonder what the distinction is. I would say if evolution is real, I'm not a biologist or geneticist or anybody that would call their discipline somehow relevant to an intimate knowledge of

evolution. But if it's real, then God is behind it. That would be where I land. I'm persuaded that evolution should be taken seriously though, in part, by young earthers, believe it or not, like Todd Wood.

I've read his stuff on the podcast before. Todd Wood, he's a biologist by training. His special focus is genetics but he's a young earther, and he says that evolution is not a theory in crisis. It makes a whole lot of sense, but he just doesn't like it. He rejects it and thinks the evidence may have a different explanation. He feels sort of that he has to choose the biblical narrative over what science actually tells him, which I think he's needlessly conflicted about. If we ever meet face-to-face we'll have that conversation with Todd. He's very honest. He's not dismissing what he knows is coherent science just because he doesn't like the fact that it flies against a literalist reading of Genesis. As a Christian he just takes Genesis and says I don't really know what to do with this, but it's not a phantom. It's not fakery. It's real and it is a coherent theory and it's not in crisis.

So I respect people like Todd Wood just because of their point blank honesty. And so if I hear that from him, I think to myself, and I've done a fair amount of reading about evolution, that there's something to this. It really does have explanatory power in a number of regards. So I shouldn't just throw it out and pretend it's not real. So that's just the way I look at things. But since I don't think the Bible is here to teach us science, I think it's here to teach us about the Creator, the person who gives us, that gave us the natural world out of which we do science, then I don't really feel that I have to align myself with any of these views, and I can equally object to the way old earthers or young earthers use the Bible to try to do science from Scripture. So I'm not planting my flag in any of these territories. I think the whole enterprise is a bit misguided.