

The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0

Number 90

“Lake of Fire”

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With

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March 6, 2015

Lake of Fire

This episode discusses why hellfire in the New Testament is associated with “the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41). Where does that idea come from? There are in fact earlier books that are the basis for this language—inside and outside the Old Testament.

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 90, Lake of Fire. I'm your layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey Mike, how are you doing?

MSH: Very good. Well, we're finally at this topic you had really warmed up to last time.

TS: I got my suntan lotion.

MSH: Got your bad puns ready.

TS: I'm ready for this.

MSH: This is not an episode on the concept of hell, per se, but it's obviously going to be related. What I want to deal with specifically here is where does the concept come from that really I think is best expressed in Matthew 25:41. Let me just read that that verse here then say a little bit more about why I wanted to do this topic. But Matthew 25:41 says.

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’

MSH: Now this is going to dovetail with some other references in the book of Revelation, for instance, Revelation 20:10,

¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

MSH: So this lake of fire idea is pretty prominent there in Revelation 20. But when you go back to Matthew, there's this phrase, ‘that this was prepared for the devil and his angels’. The reason I wanted to do this topic was because if you ask where does that idea come from? Where are the relevant antecedents prior to the New Testament to this idea because there are some? And what we'll find is that this is a specific instance where an idea in the New Testament really can only sort of derive from in specific terms from the Book of Enoch. This is a good example where the Book of Enoch, what the content of Enoch, I'm not saying that Matthew was quoting the Book of Enoch. I think that says too much. What I can say is that the idea that's floating around in Matthew's head and many other Jews in first century certainly has deep precedent in the Book of Enoch. So we have here an instance where the content of that book, even though it is not canonical, as I like to say, a book doesn't have to be canonical to be useful.

But here we have a concept that very clearly goes back to Enoch. And I should tell people as we jump into this, one of the things I'm working on terms of a book has to do with this. If we remember at the end of the episode, I can say a little bit more about that. But there are a number of these instances where the New Testament very clearly goes back conceptually, if not in terms of something more like a quotation, to the Book of Enoch. New Testament writers were very

familiar with this. It informs them. The best example is the stuff associated with the Genesis 6:1-4 episode, sons of God, daughters of men, Nephilim, all that stuff. But here we have one that, this is probably familiar to a lot of people, a lot of listeners, the lake of fire, but that this concept is not going to be articulated the way it is articulated in the New Testament without the influence of the content of the Book of Enoch.

So that's why I wanted to camp on this because I think it is really worth picking one of these topics out and saying something about it. Now, I guess the way to start here is with, let's just start with the devil. We know who this figure is. We know that Revelation 12 associates the devil, that term, with Satan and with the serpent, *nacash* in Hebrew. Revelation 12 connects all these terms. It's the only time we get in the Bible where all three terms are actually aligned with each other there in Revelation 12. And if we go back to Genesis 3, we certainly have the *nacash*, the serpent in rebellion. In Genesis 3, he is cast down to either the ground in some text or the *erets*, the earth, in others.

We factor in Isaiah 14 to this with Genesis 3 where you get the rebel, a very clear divine rebel in Isaiah 14 cut down to the ground and quote, "brought down to Sheol." That's Isaiah 14:12 and 14:15. So it's very clear that the divine rebel here is punished. He's put into in the underworld which is not a good place. We don't necessarily get a fiery description of it in the Old Testament. We do get a hint that there are other bad guys in that place along with the original rebel, the *nacash*, the serpent who was called the devil and Satan in Revelation 12. And I've discussed this in Unseen Realm but I'll just mention it here. There are passages in the Old Testament that have the Rephaim, the disembodied spirits of the Rephaim, are in the underworld. And they're not wonderful guys. This is not a place you want to stay. It's always the hope of the righteous to be extracted from the underworld to be with the Lord. We've talked about these things before, both on my blog and podcast a bit, certainly in Unseen Realm.

So you get hints of this that the devil figure is down there and there are other bad guys with him. You don't really get the fiery description in the Old Testament but at least you get "the devil" and his associates, the Rephaim who were the enemy of the Israelites, descended from the Nephilim because the Rephaim are called Anakim in Deuteronomy 2-3. And the Anakim are specifically linked back to the Nephilim in Numbers 13:32-33. So we would get this idea that this is where all the supernatural rebels hangouts and they're not good guys. So we have the kernel of these this idea in the Old Testament but when it comes to the description that we would think of and that we actually get in Revelation 20 and in Matthew 25 about this is a fiery place, a fiery place of judgment eternal fire, when we look at that description, that doesn't specifically come from the Old Testament. It does specifically come from the Book of Enoch which combines the fiery description with the devil and his angels.

So it's a very clear path that goes back through, it can be traced back through and into the content of the Book of Enoch. And so that's what I want to focus on today without repeating content that's in Unseen Realm about the Nephilim and the Apkallu and the Rephaim and the Anakim and all that stuff. You can go read that, go get that on the blog. I want to focus here on this specific place. So let's go to the Book of Enoch and I want to read you a few passages here. I'm going to read, I think I have three passages that I'll refer to, they're somewhat lengthy, and I want to comment on them as we go through them. And then we'll go back to these passages that we opened up with in Matthew and Revelation, and I think you'll be able to see very transparently the correlation between the content of 1 Enoch and what's going on these New Testament passages. So let's start in 1 Enoch 10. 1 Enoch 10 is part of what scholars have labeled

the Story of the Watchers, the Book of the Watchers, that sort of thing. We have here in 1 Enoch 10 beginning in verse 1, this is what we read. This is in conjunction with the rebellion of the Watchers, the transgression of the Watchers who cohabited with human women and fathered giants in the Genesis 6:24 episode so here we go.

And then the Most High, the Great and Holy One, spoke and sent Arsyalalyur to the son of Lamech, and said to him:

Say to him in my name; hide yourself! And reveal to him the end, which is coming, because the whole earth will be destroyed. A deluge is about to come on all the earth; and all that is in it will be destroyed. And now teach him so that he may escape and his offspring may survive for the whole Earth."

And further the Lord said to Raphael: "Bind Azazel by his hands and his feet and throw him into the darkness. And split open the desert, which is in Dudael, and throw him there.

And throw on him jagged and sharp stones and cover him with darkness.

And let him stay there forever. And cover his face so that he may not see the light.

And so that, on the Great Day of Judgment, he may be hurled into the fire.

And restore the Earth which the Angels have ruined. And announce the restoration of the Earth. For I shall restore the Earth so that not all the sons of men shall be destroyed because of the knowledge which the Watchers made known and taught to their sons.

And the whole Earth has been ruined by the teaching of the works of Azazel; and against him write: ALL SIN."

And the Lord said to Gabriel: "Proceed against the bastards, and the reprobates, and against the sons of the fornicators. And destroy the sons of the fornicators, and the sons of the Watchers, from amongst men. And send them out, and send them against one another, and let them destroy themselves in battle; for they will not have length of days.

And they will petition you, but the petitioners will gain nothing in respect of them, for they hope for eternal life, and that each of them will live life for five hundred years."

And the Lord said to Michael: "Go, inform Semyaza, and the others with him, who have associated with the women to corrupt themselves with them in all their uncleanness.

When all their sons kill each other, and when they see the destruction of their loved ones, bind them for seventy generations, under the hills of the earth, until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the judgment, which is for all eternity, is accomplished.

And in those days, they will lead them to the Abyss of Fire; in torment, and in prison they will be shut up for all eternity.

And then Semyaza will be burnt, and from then on destroyed with them; together they will be bound until the end of all generations.

And destroy all the souls of lust, and the sons of the Watchers, for they have done injustice to man.

MSH: That's the end of the section in 1 Enoch 10:1-15. It's pretty obvious some of the things that we read in those New Testament passages are obviously here. You get the reference very clearly to the Watchers. You get a reference very clearly to their crime and their leader, Azazel, and the other one that is named is Semyaza, are sent to the pit. They are buried. The pit is described as fiery. You get this language. It's kind of curious. You get language that both sounds eternal and some that doesn't. It sounds like they are done away with in an ending or permanent sense, not that their torment is eternal. But then you get the language of the eternal torment as well. You get actually both kinds of descriptions. We're going to see that in some other passages as well. But it's very clear that this place, this hole, this abyss, that is a fiery existence, was initiated, was created, was carved out, to use the language of the passage, this hole in the desert that Raphael is commanded to create, this was all originated and created for the Watchers because of what they did.

Now, other texts are going to have this place sort of as a part of or within or adjacent to the larger underworld. And so that's where you're going to obviously find the *nachash*, the serpent, the original rebel, and biblical languages like this, too. Is the hell abyss, are hades and hell synonyms? Are Sheol and the abyss synonyms, because in some cases, it seems like one is sort of a subdivision of another, like one's the apartment complex, the other one is an individual apartment. You get this language. I've talked before about how all this language of place is designed, well let me put it this way. It's necessary because of how we have to talk about places. It's actually designating the afterlife and afterlife existence or nonexistence, depending on how you parse certain terms. There is no latitude and longitude to hell. There is no latitude and longitude for heaven. Ultimately when you get the new heaven and the new earth, the new earth is basically the new heaven because heaven comes back to earth in Eden, then you can sort of talk about geography there because the globe is now entirely Eden. But prior to that, we're forced to use the language of place because we are embodied. We can't really talk about the afterlife in any other way.

It has to be a place. And in their thinking, because of the concept of cosmic geography that we see in the Old Testament where the presence of Yahweh is on Earth, that's the good place, that's Yahweh's dominion. That's His turf and everything outside, the book of Leviticus we got into this a lot when it came to sacred space and non-sacred space. The idea was that where

the presence of God is, if you're not there, then by definition you're in the presence of some other god, some part of the spiritual world that has now come to earth and is hostile to us and hostile to the God of Israel. You have this cosmic geographical linkage, cosmic geographical idea going on with respect to earthly geography but it's really designed to telegraph a larger presence or larger idea, the presence of God versus the non-presence of God. And it's the same thing here when you get into afterlife talk where the presence of God is, where God is, there his life and is eternal life.

This is why we want to be with the Lord. This is why eternal life is always described as being with the Lord, being in the presence of the Lord, being in God's house, being in heaven where God lives. The larger ideas, because you can't plot latitude and longitude on this, the larger idea is if you are with the Lord, you will live forever because he has eternal life and he shares it with you. By definition, if you're not with the Lord, you will not live forever. You are the polar opposite. Is that in eternal death? Is that annihilation which is also eternal? There are passages in the New Testament that can go either way. This isn't a specific episode on that issue but the idea is always the same. To be absent from the Lord's presence in an afterlife sense is to not have life. By definition, you are dead. You are non-existent in relationship to the life that God has. And all of that though gets tied in with what happens in Genesis 6 and Enoch is very plain with that. Let's read another passage, 1 Enoch 21, we read in verse 1 starting in verse 1 reading the first 10 verses,

And I came to an empty place. 2 And I saw (there) neither a heaven above nor an earth below, but a chaotic and terrible place. 3 And there I saw seven stars of heaven bound together in it, like great mountains, and burning with fire. 4 At that moment I said, "For which sin are they bound, **[MSH: I'm going to stop here. The stars of heaven, this is a way angelic or divine beings are described, just like in Job 38, sons of God, stars of God. You get this in Enoch as well. We've talked about astral language for divine beings before on the podcast. That should be familiar. But here Enoch sees seven of these guys, seven of these stars of heaven which turns out are actually divine beings. They're bound together in this terrible chaotic place and he says,]** and for what reason were they cast in here." 5 Then one of the holy angels, Uriel, who was with me, guiding me, spoke to me and said to me, "Enoch, for what reason are you asking and for what reason do you question and exhibit eagerness?" 6 These are among the stars of heaven which have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and are bound in this place until the completion of ten myriads of years, (according) to the number of their sins." 7 I then proceeded from that area to another place which is even more terrible and saw a terrible thing: a great fire that was burning and flaming; the place had a cleavage (that extended) to the last sea, pouring out great pillars of fire; neither its extent nor its magnitude could I see nor was I able to estimate. 8 At that moment, what a terrible opening is this place and a pain to look at! 9 Then Ura'el, (one) of the holy angels who was with me, responded and said to me, "Enoch, why are you afraid like this?" (I answered and said), 10 "I am frightened because of this terrible

place and the spectacle of this painful thing.” And he said unto me, “This place is the prison house of the angels; they are detained here forever.”

MSH: That's the end of the section 1 to 10. This is even more clear than the previous passage. Very specifically, we've got here a fiery place that is here for the angels, the angels who are bound because they have committed the various transgressions we know from the previous passage, specifically, the Genesis 6 incident. Look at the language here. This is the prison house. This is the prison of the angels. They're bound together. If this sounds suspiciously like 2 Peter 2 and Jude 6, it's not a coincidence because this is what is floating around in their head that informs those two New Testament writers as they write what they write. 2 Peter 2:4 refers to, let's just go back and look at it. 2 Peter 2:4,

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

MSH: If God didn't spare the angels, he's not going to spare these false teachers. It's very clearly harkening back, not to the Old Testament because there is no passage in the Old Testament, even when you get references to Sheol with the Rephaim there and the nachash, the serpent, the devil there. Even when you get afterlife depictions of the bad place with the bad guys in there, you don't get the fire, the awesome fiery destruction, and you don't get this language of being bound, of being in prison, being in torment. That language that shows up crystal clear in the New Testament comes from Enoch. It comes right from these passages that we're reading. So we can see how it informs what's going on. But have you ever considered, have ever thought about when you're reading the book of Revelation or when you're reading Matthew 25 that you get this reference to hellfire prepared for the devil and his angels?

Chances are if you're a modern Christian, you never read that and think of 2 Peter 2:4. You never read that and really think of anything because you have not been taught. You've not been exposed to the fact that this language does come from somewhere and actually would make sense to New Testament readers because they are familiar with this material. They know that the false teachers are going to end up exactly where the watchers are. If we do not embrace the Gospels, if we reject Christ, that's where we're going to be. We're going to be with them. We're going to have the same fate as them. And this place was originally prepared for, there is a realm of the dead. There is a bad underworld, a bad afterlife place because of what the nachash did and because of what the Watchers did. Basically, hell needed to be expanded after Genesis 6:1-4 or that's the time we need to build the special compartment, the special place, this abyss thing that's even worse than the normal hub. Let's look at what we just read in 1 Enoch 21. Enoch does see a place, this fiery place.

He sees a great chaotic and terrible place, seven stars of heaven bound together in it like great mountains burning with fire. And he asks why are they bound like this? Then he proceeds and he goes to another place, verse 7, which is even worse, even more terrible, and saw terrible thing, a great fire that was burning and flaming. And this one is huge, great pillars of fire. It's just awful. So you have this sense there's this place and there's this place within a place that's even worse. And it turns out that that's the place that the Watchers are associated with

specifically. Let's look at one more. This comes from 2 Enoch. This is the Slavonic version of the book of Enoch called 2 Enoch by scholars and we read this, again, Enoch being shown certain things. We read in 2 Enoch 10 starting with the first verse,

“And those men carried me to the northern region; and they showed me there a very frightful place; and all kinds of torture and torment are in that place, cruel darkness and lightless gloom. And there is no light there, and a black fire blazes up perpetually, with a river of fire that comes out over the whole place, fire here, freezing ice there, and it dries up and it freezes; and very cruel places of detention and dark and merciless angels, carrying instruments of atrocities torturing without pity.

And I said, “Woe, woe! How very frightful this place is!” And those men said to me, “This place, Enoch, has been prepared for those who do not glorify God, who practice on the earth the sin [which is against nature, which is child corruption in the anus in the manner of Sodom], of witchcraft, enchantments, divinations, trafficking with demons, who boast about their evil deeds – [stealing, lying, insulting, coveting, resentment, fornication, murder] – •and who steal the souls of men secretly, seizing the poor by the throat, taking away their possessions, enriching themselves from the possessions of others, defrauding them; who, when they are able to provide sustenance, bring about the death of the hungry by starvation; and, when they are able to provide clothing, take away the last garment of the naked; [**MSH: basically all this horrible stuff that people do. If you don't have, like we talked about last week on the podcast about this record that God has. If the record of your sin stands, if it has not been covered by the Gospel then these things, your sins, are the basis of why you wind up divorced, estranged from God in this place. And here we get sort of a grocery list of all this in 2 Enoch]•who do not acknowledge their Creator, but bow down to idols which have no souls, which can neither see nor hear, vain gods; constructing images, and bowing down to vile things made by hands – for all these this place has been prepared as an eternal reward.”**

MSH: So this gives you a bit more of a description. The reason I wanted to mention this is because that among this list are all of the specific elements of the things that the Watchers taught to people according to the book of 1 Enoch, the Aramaic and Greek version, what we call 1 Enoch, this is the Slavonic version 2 Enoch. Among these things that are listed here are the sins of the Watchers. So I wanted to throw this in because the basis of the condemnation is not only as we read in the previous passage, 1 Enoch 21, it's not only the fact that the Watchers sinned and taught humanity certain things that God didn't want them to teach humanity, certain things that corrupted them and corrupted the whole earth. That's why the Watchers are in there. But the people who trafficked in these things and were corrupted by them and gloried in them and practiced them and imitated them and passed them on and transmitted them and amplified the wickedness, that's why this list is there.

And so it links humanity, it links human beings who still have these things on their account because every human sins and the solution for that is the Gospel and the cross in the New Testament, and, it's fair to say, some of the pseudopigraphy because some of it has Christian elements in it, too, even to the point of messianic talk, Christology talk. But it links all of that. It links the ubiquitous iniquity of humanity back to the Watchers. And so everybody, the people who engage in these things and those who brought these things to earth and spread them among men, all of them deserve the same destiny. So you take these three passages sort of in tandem and you have an afterlife idea, you have this place that's bad, the realm of the dead, this is where the dead go. I didn't read it to you but in 1 Enoch 22, after Enoch sees the terrible abyss within the not so terrible but really awful fiery place, the next chapter deals with something called the mountain of the dead.

This is where the dead gather. This is the realm of the dead and you have the lord of the dead there who is Satan, the devil. You have all of these things, they're all part of the same complex of ideas and they're condensed into some of these passages we read when we started our episode, this whole thing about hellfire being created for "the devil and his angels" and ultimately humans who are unredeemed, who do not have their sin taken care of by the Gospel. They wind up in the same place but that place exists because of divine rebellion. It exists because of the devil. It exists because of the *nachash*, what he did. And it exists because what the Watchers did. So this language has very clear antecedents, very clear reference points back into this literature that few Christians are ever exposed to, and frankly, let's be honest, in most churches you would be discouraged from reading books like Enoch.

But these books informed the New Testament writers and specifically when it comes to something like this doctrine, if you want to call it a doctrine, this doctrine of hellfire and the god-less afterlife, has very clear precedents. And so what I wanted to do here was show a very clear example of how Enochian material takes a little bit from the Old Testament, the divine rebellion, Genesis 3, Genesis 6:1-4, and the reference to the Rephaim being in Sheol and all that, Enoch of course expands a lot of that but that is the material the New Testament writers have also read. The New Testament writers are familiar with their Old Testament and they're familiar with this stuff, too. And it helps them in certain passages like 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 where we have the angels that sinned, and there is no other candidate for an angelic sin other than Genesis 6:1-4. There is no passage that puts an angelic rebellion prior to creation or anything like that even though lots of Christians believe that. That basically comes from Paradise Lost, not your Bible.

There's only one candidate and it goes back to Genesis 6:1-4. And so that and the whole concept of what this place, the awful place, the awful afterlife place is like, comes from this material. And so it would be a good idea if we're familiar with this so that we can understand what's going into all this thinking. It's why, to expand a little bit more, it's why 2 Peter and Jude, not coincidentally same two books, 2 Peter and Jude, and even a little bit of 1 Peter so same writers, it's why they also compare false teachers to the angels that sinned, because the angels through their teaching corrupted humanity. And so for Peter and Jude, what false teachers in their own day are doing is a mimicking of what the Watchers did. They're corrupting people. They're misleading people. So that's why their destiny is described in these terms. That's why Peter and Jude used the Genesis 6 event articulated as it is through the material of 1 Enoch. It's why they make the comparison.

It's the whole basis of the comparison to portray these teachers as the Watchers. So the rhetoric is quite effective. If you're a person living in the first century, Peter and Jude are telling you don't listen to these guys. When Peter and Jude come along and say hey, if you want to align yourself with the Watchers, because that's essentially what these guys are, they're just like the Watchers, then you're going to wind up where they did. It's really some scary theological rhetoric but it comes from a little bit in the Old Testament but also these books in between, 1 Enoch. So I think it's a good example to get us into some of this material because it does help inform our thinking, helps us to read some of these passages a little bit better and see a little bit more of what the writers were thinking when they struck these analogies and when they drew on this imagery.

TS: That's interested going into Enoch. I enjoy going into that.

MSH: It's a lot of interesting stuff and the more you read of it, the more you see where little bits of it bleed into it, especially New Testament passages or are drawn from Old Testament stuff but it really bleeds into the New Testament in certain places. As I alluded to at the beginning, there's something I'm actually working on that relates to this week and we can talk about that or not. I think I can say this much. I'm working on a manuscript, a book manuscript that I'm tentatively calling *Subduing Hermon*, and the subtitle is *The Importance of the Watchers' Story for New Testament Theology*. And so I what I'm basically going to do is I'm going to take a bunch of things that are found in Enoch and show how, just like this one, how they are sort of the back story for certain things we read in the New Testament. And some of it, maybe half but probably less of that material showed up in *Unseen Realm*. But there's a lot that I didn't put in *Unseen Realm* that is going to go in this book. But this is just an illustration of the kind of thing that the more familiar you are with this material, the more sense you can make, the more connections you can make when you get into the New Testament.

TS: So this isn't the sequel to the *Unseen Realm*?

MSH: No, *Subduing Hermon* is going to be a stand-alone book and is focused entirely on why 1 Enoch, specifically the watchers' story, why that's important for understanding the New Testament.

TS: We got some time here Mike. Would you like to give real briefly a little back story on why Enoch is not included in the canon?

MSH: Enoch was defended by a few early Church fathers, early church figures, Tertullian, Irenaeus. They went back and forth. Do we think it should be in? Do we think not? It had some defenders among that sort of core group of early Church fathers but I've alluded to this before in lectures. I'm trying to remember which one it is. Is it Irenaeus or Tertullian? I can't remember exactly. It might be Tertullian but he gets to the end of his life and he's been defending Enoch. And the people he's writing to knows how he feels about the book of Enoch, that he thinks it should be assigned a canonical or sacred status to the community. He actually says, this is me paraphrasing, this is something I'm going to be putting in the book and actually quote the passage and passages like it.

But he basically says I'm the only one sitting around here still defending this thing and I guess I was wrong. And the way he concludes he's wrong is that he attributes the consensus to the work of the Holy Spirit. he says look we're all believers here and the Spirit of God, we have to believe that he would lead his family, his children en masse to the right conclusion about which books can be traced apostolic authority and ought to be embraced as sacred to us. And basically I'm the only one sitting here still arguing this point so I have to conclude that I was wrong and I'm going to let it go. Enoch never won the day. It never garnered a lot of support. But the reason that it got any support was because people knew and understood that it informed certain things in the New Testament. Irenaeus actually references it a good bit when he talks about Antichrist, when he talks about certain things in the book of Revelation.

And he goes right back to the book of Enoch as his proof text for some of the things he's preaching. So they were willing to use it and they didn't feel any qualm about that because hey, we can use it because Peter and Jude used it. It didn't mean for them that it had to be inspired because the New Testament quotes lots of books. Paul quotes Greek secular poets five or six times. The Old Testament quotes the Baal Cycle. It doesn't mean the Baal Cycle's inspired. It just means that it is useful to make some either theological point or polemic point or useful to make some argument in whatever direction. And it's the same thing with Enoch. It's useful for talking about false teachers in this case, what happened to the angels that sinned because the New Testament writers knew that people were familiar with this material. And so by using it, they can communicate their ideas much more clearly.

Let's put it this way. It's better to quote something or use something that you know your readers are familiar with as opposed to quoting or using something that nobody's ever heard of before. That doesn't make any sense to do that. It makes perfect sense to borrow something, to use something that has illustrative power to create that connection in the minds of your readers so that they get the point you're trying to argue. But that was where Enoch stood. It never got acceptance. There was never a big fight over it. It had a few defenders. I don't think it should be canonical, but frankly I don't care. I've told congregations this or places where I've lectured, look, I understand why the question's asked but I don't care about the question because the book does not have to be canonical to be useful and to be used by a biblical writer. They're not restricted to canonical material to make their point.

We could go through real carefully all the New Testament and come up with dozens of citations of sources that people who love Enoch and try to argue that it should be in the canon, trust me, you don't want the Baal Cycle there and you'd never argue for it. You don't want some Egyptian text in there. You don't want some Canaanite text in there. It is just that people who try to make this argument or make it a big issue are not aware that both Testaments quote lots of other stuff that they would never in their wildest dreams think should be part of the Bible and in Enoch falls into that as well. Just because it's useful, just because they quote it doesn't mean it has to be assigned the same status. It wasn't but they valued it anyway.

TS: I think that's the most important part. People just do not think or take the time to think that the writers of the Bible drew upon or read other things in their time. They think if it's not in the Bible, that's it. They don't even take the time to consider other material outside of the Bible and that such a shame. It's such a disservice to learning all that you can.

MSH: I've said before and it's worth repeating I think. Some things I say aren't worth repeating but this one I think really is important. What you're doing when you do that is you're unconsciously sort of opting for this paranormal view of inspiration. When you strip the Bible of its humanity, they read things and those things help them write, when you strip the Bible of its humanity you actually undermine the doctrine of inspiration because then you reduce it to the writers who have blank minds and their hands and arms are waving around like automatic writing. And they don't even know what they're producing. They don't even understand a good bit of it. It just sort of comes out of the ether through their arms and their fingers. It just makes them like vegetables, like functioning vegetables in this process we call inspiration. And that is not the picture that you get in the Bible for this activity and it certainly doesn't reflect the result, what we actually read in Scripture. And it really is a disservice, I agree completely.

TS: You don't take away the divinity of the Bible by doing that.

MSH: God was either in the process or he wasn't. God either prepared these people for the moment, the place, and the time that he wanted them to be and to produce this this book, whatever it is, book of Romans, book of whatever. God prepared them at every point in their lives for that moment. He is the unseen hand behind it all. So there either is an unseen hand or there ain't. So you don't need dictation. You don't need this X-Files paranormal-ish view of inspiration to have an active crucial unseen hand behind the whole thing. But if you divorce the humanity from the process, you've got a cartoonish view of what happens with Scripture and good luck with that, just good luck with that. It will never stand up under scrutiny in terms of the content that's actually in the thing.

TS: Speaking of Canon, what is going on with your YouTube channels?

MSH: I want to alert people I posted a few videos. I'm actually working on what I'm calling Divine Counsel One on One Class, Divine Council One-on-One series. And I'm trying to chop up the videos 10 minutes or so or less teaching people about the Divine Counsel stuff, essentially Unseen Realm content, but with screen capturing. There's video of me but I'm taking a stab at taking my content and putting it into video form for free on YouTube. So I'm three episodes in at this point and I want people to go watch those. Look them up on YouTube. I posted them on my blog with links. I want people to watch them and get a glimpse, granted it's just me. I don't really know what I'm doing but it is better than what I was doing a year ago.

I want people to watch that and sort of get a little bit of a vision for, if Mike's nonprofit can actually take off, if Mike really had time and resources to hire someone more competent than himself to produce things like this, I can produce a truckload of material, not just written, but also in video. And people can access it for free. You can send it to people that you know need the content for free. So as I've talked before at the end of previous podcast episodes, the nonprofit is about scale. I'm always going to do something, whether I'm funded, whether I have a nonprofit or not. I've been doing this for 10 years. I'm always going to produce something for people in the way of biblical content but if you want more in quantity, if you want better in quality, if you want it to scale, you need to support Miqlat. You need to support the podcast because that's the only way it's going to happen and these are sort of examples of kind of where it begins, just to give you an idea of what could be done. So please go watch those, send them to

other people, just get a little vision for some of the things we might be doing, might be able to do in the future.

TS: And also speaking of scaling Miqlat we've got a Fern and Audrey update I alluded to at last podcast but I think there's some exciting opportunity Mike.

MSH: The Fern and Audrey episode, episode 68, has really, it is our most listened to episode. It's drawn a lot of response from people who need their help. If you are not familiar with what I'm talking about, like who are they, what do they do, go listen to the episode. There will be links on my website to that and also just go to Naked Bible Podcast.com and look up the episode 68. But a lot of people out there need their help. Their schedule is anywhere from full to crossing into overwhelmed. But the real problem is that a lot of people need financial help to get to them, and once they're there Fern and Audrey have to put them up. They do this full time. This is their income as people are able to pay them for service.

So what we have endeavored to do here is to create another crowd sourcing campaign, go fund me campaign, that sort of thing, to raise money not for the operation of the podcast and of Miqlat proper, but this is the kind of thing other than delivering content that we want Miqlat to be able to do. We want to be able to assist people financially who need something like what Fern and Audrey do. People in trauma for any number of reasons, they have a backlog of people who need to go visit them and can't afford to do it. And so we're going to try to raise the money. It's going to come in incrementally and it will be given out incrementally to get people to them for the help they need.

So please support the effort, support the campaign to raise money for that and support the podcast as well but every once in a while we're going to have these sort of special projects. If you're familiar with my novels where the name of the nonprofit comes from, Miqlat, this is actually in the novel story. There's a character in there, Fern, who does this kind of thing and it's real. People need this help, people can get help, but a lot of people are without the resources to do so. So we would ask you to contribute to that so the people can get to them and move on with their life, get some resolution, get some healing.

TS: I'm excited to be able to help people who, I can't imagine there's not too many outlets for help. They are two of probably the most experienced people able to help people in these extreme situations and Miqlat's in the position to help these people with our listeners and everybody out there so I'm personally really excited to be able to help people in this type of need who otherwise probably wouldn't get help.

MSH: That's a good point. We have an audience. You and I have the podcast. There's the website. People know who I am because I've been online for a long time. Fern and Audrey are essentially underground. They don't release their personal information. They don't have a website. They don't have a Facebook thing for fairly obvious reasons. If you go listen to the episode, you'll figure that out pretty quickly. We do have the audience here and so we are in the position to try to get them the resources so that they can get it to the people who need it and can bring them to their location and they don't have to worry, the clients, the people who need help don't have to worry about the expense.