

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 165

Q&A 22

July 1, 2017

Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Dr. Heiser answers your questions related to:

- Source material showing Jesus' existence
- When a believer receives the Spirit of God
- Balaam's error related to geography
- Seventy archangels in Jewish studies
- Theosis
- Which events in Genesis 1-11 are literal
- Whether Adam and Eve pooped

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 165: our 22nd Q&A. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing?

MH: Pretty good, pretty good. Been staying busy, as usual.

TS: Yeah. I just want to mention that we talked about how we were going to do our voting for the next book that we're going to cover on the podcast on July 1. We've added another interview, so we're actually going to start the voting on July 15th and run it through August 7th. That's when the voting's going to begin on the what the next book we're going to cover will be.

MH: That's good. So in other words, I have a little more time to contact the Russians to have them influence the outcome of our vote, correct?

TS: No comment on that. (laughter) The Russians or the Vatican, I don't know who you want to reach out to. The aliens? I don't know.

MH: The Rosicrucians, the Templars...

TS: So many people you could reach out to for influence on that. So that's going to start July 15th and run three weeks. That way it'll give Mike a week to prepare for the first episode of our new book. I'm excited to see what people choose.

MH: Maybe I could contact the people at CERN and penetrate the fabric of the cosmos there and look in the future. Then I'll know.

TS: Oh my gosh. You're opening so many cans of worms. I've had to listen to that...

MH: (laughing) I've had a rough email week! What can I say?

TS: I hear that. Well, how about we just get into the questions here. You got some answers up your sleeve?

MH: Yep.

TS: Our first one is from Mike and he has an issue.

Pretty much all literature about Christ was written by Roman scholars and others of a Roman nature, with the exception of later writers that may have taken literature from the Roman authors writing about Christ. If Rome (a.k.a. up until now the Vatican) might be the false prophet, then what other source of material is out there that shows there was a messiah? I need something to grab onto that shows me Jesus really existed.

MH: Boy. I guess I sort of understand the thrust of the question. I think you're being too affected by this notion that Rome is the false prophet. That sort of thing is coloring your perception of history. Romans could very well (and did thousands and thousands of times) record things about people that they didn't like or agree with. So I don't know that there's any reason not to like a Roman historians because we get lots of information from them. I don't buy into the conspiratorial tack of the question. I think it's probably coming from stuff like Hislop's *Two Babylons* or whatever, or maybe some kind of off-the-wall approach to biblical prophecy. But if we just go with the sources, there are a number of good books that you can get with secondary literature that will take you into the primary literature of the period—not just Roman stuff, if that matters.

I'll just recommend a few things and talk about them here. Bart Ehrman has a good book: *Did Jesus Exist: The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth*. I think that's a good book because Bart is basically an atheist, but he's not going to say something stupid like Jesus didn't exist. He knows better! It's actually a really good book. It got Bart into some hot water with his own constituency because he has people in that constituency that are going to be Jesus-Mythers (they want to argue that Jesus never existed) and Bart certainly is no friend to evangelical

Christianity. But Bart's book basically says that this idea that Jesus never existed is nonsense. So I think it's a book you could really benefit from.

5:00

Or Peter Schaffer's book: *Jesus in the Talmud*. This certainly isn't Roman. I'm not saying that matters, but for the sake of the questioner. The references to Jesus in the Talmud are interesting because on the one hand they don't say very nice things about Jesus. They say really insulting things about Jesus. They refer to him as a sorcerer, a conjurer, an occultist. Again, that's because of the miraculous stuff that Jesus does. That's interesting in and of itself because here you have an audience, a writer (writers when it comes to Jewish material in the rabbinic period) living a century or so after Jesus (or in late antiquity just generally). And it would have been really easy for them to say, "What's all this Jesus talk? The guy never existed. Who cares? Don't pay any attention to this. This is nonsense." But they don't do that, again, because they're not idiots. What they do is they say they don't want you following Jesus because he's all these bad things (to the Jewish community). And when they reference him as a sorcerer, it tells you that they took these stories about what Jesus did pretty seriously because they have to attribute them to a source—and a bad one, of course, because they don't want people following Jesus. So *Jesus in the Talmud*, I think, is worth having.

Pitre's book, *The Case for Jesus: The Biblical and Historical Evidence for Christ*, is a good one. We've mentioned Pitre's work before here on the podcast. He's a New Testament scholar—and a good one. He's a Catholic, so I don't agree with his theological predilections on certain things, but he's a really good scholar and has done really important work in the Gospels. He has a very readable, short book on the evidence for Jesus.

Greg Boyd and Paul Eddy have a book. It's a little older than some of these other ones. It's called *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*. I think that's an important book because both of them interact with Jesus-Myther stuff pretty extensively (the idea that Jesus didn't exist or the *Zeitgeist* nonsense). They interact with that a good bit on a scholarly, academic level. And in the same vein, Maurice Casey... he might be an atheist, too, or an agnostic or something. He's certainly not an evangelical Christian. Casey's book is called *Jesus: Evidence and Argument or Mythicist Myths?* He's kind of like a Bart Ehrman guy, but I think he's a little more blunt than Bart. He has some really unfavorable things to say about sources out there on the internet. He's actually spent a good deal of time doing research on internet writers like Acharya S and the people who peddle this Jesus Mythicist idea. Casey is a New Testament scholar of high repute, an Aramaic specialist, even more specifically. His book is very useful, again, for making the point that the idea that Jesus didn't exist is pretty much nonsense.

There are good sources and good reasons to think basically what the world has thought up until quite recently. Maybe in the 19th century you get a few people

that sort of go out on a limb and try to make these really odd sorts of arguments and, frankly, abuse primary sources to do that task. But these are all good scholars that are going to respond to that kind of thing.

10:00 If you wanted something more fun, you could go to my website (drmsb.com) and go up to the Resources tab, where I have the link for recommended reading. If you land on that page, click on the part of the sources about Jesus Myth or Jesus mythicists—those sorts of resources. I have links there to some interaction with the Bayes' Theorem argument. This is an argument from math—basically, statistics about Jesus' existence or nonexistence. It's something that gets discussed on the internet. "We applied the Bayes' Theorem to Jesus and found out the statistical likelihood that he didn't exist..." What's fun about some of the references I have here is there are people who apply Bayes' Theorem to the people who write the other posts, asking if the authors who wrote the other internet stuff actually exist according to the Bayes' Theorem. In other words, they turn the whole thing on its head and it's actually quite funny. Again, just showing how the Bayes' Theorem approach really isn't that helpful because you have to presume certain things along the way and plug certain assumptions... basically, come up with numbers to plug into the equation at certain points and you can more or less manipulate it to find, discover, that—lo and behold!—the person who wrote this post over here on the internet about Jesus not existing, he doesn't exist, either, according to the Bayes' Theorem. So it's kind of fun. But I would say that in the short list of academic sources I just gave you, they don't have a particular bias. Boyd and Eddy are the only evangelicals in the bunch. Everybody else is something else—Jewish, agnostic, atheist. And they're all saying the same thing: Jesus certainly existed.

TS: Our next question is from Larry and his Bible study group (shout-out!). Also, Mark and a few others have sent me some emails tracking on the same question, so we're going to kill a bunch of birds with one stone here. Larry and his Bible study group have spent a couple of hours discussing God's Spirit.

We all agree that God's Spirit is within us and that it is unique to each one of us individually. So when do each of us receive God's Spirit? Some of us feel that you only have God's Spirit from repentance forward, while some of us feel it is from baptism forward, and others feel that the Spirit is with us from conception and throughout life.

MH: I'm going to assume that repentance here means conversion (salvation) for the sake of the discussion here. The baptism thing, I think, is probably (I'm not implying any intention here to anybody in the Bible study group) derived from a misreading of the book of Acts. When you get certain people groups, they get baptized and they receive the Spirit. The best thing I can tell you is to go listen to the series on the book of Acts and you'll find out why that pattern exists. The pattern exists for a very specific reason, and it's not something that beyond a certain point... beyond the period of the incarnation and the period of the Early

Church when the reason for the pattern no longer exists, it's not the way to think about either baptism or the reception of the Spirit.

The Spirit's indwelling is ultimately linked to regeneration, new life. So I'm going to link it to someone being placed in Christ because, frankly, that's where Scripture puts it. That's why I said I'm going to define repentance as conversion or coming to Christ, that sort of thing. There's a link between the indwelling reception of the Spirit and the new life. You get this from passages like 2 Corinthians 5:17.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

You've got to be in Christ to be a new creation. That's part of the reason why you're a new creation. This is Old Testament New Covenant language, which is associated with the Holy Spirit. So there's going to be a connection there. In the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3 that we're all familiar with, he says:

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [or "anew" or "from above"]

So it links conversion—alignment with Christ as Messiah—with the enlivening, the reception of the Spirit. Ultimately, you can see where the Spirit (this language about being born of the Spirit, being born from above) is connected to *belief*—to faith—in John chapter 3 (the very same chapter). If you go to verse 9, for instance, Nicodemus is talking to Jesus and says, "How can these things be?" It's this whole thing about new birth and being born from above and all this kind of stuff.

¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

15:00

The point here is that when Jesus says (back in verses 6 and 7), "Hey, don't marvel that I said to you that you must be born anew" and this whole thing about being born of the Spirit, being born anew... Nicodemus gets a little confused and then Jesus goes into this discussion that I just read. Jesus says the whole point of being born anew is that the Son of Man is going to be lifted up and you need to believe in him so that you have eternal life. This is what "God so loved the world"... this is why all this is happening. It's a conceptual link, again, between belief and conversion in that sense—having a change of heart about Jesus, about the messiah, aligning yourself with him as opposed to rejecting him or aligning yourself with something else or nothing at all—the change of heart idea there.

1 Corinthians 12 is sort of the lynch-pin passage to this discussion. Paul writes in verse 12:

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit [or by one Spirit] we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

So here's the question: Would we be placed into the Body of Christ and not have the Spirit? Not according to 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. If you're in Christ, you were put there by the Spirit. Would we have the Spirit and be alienated from Christ—not part of his Body? No! These two things are linked. Just think of it that way. How could you be in the Body of Christ and not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you? And then conversely, if you had the Spirit, how could you not be in the Body of Christ? These two things are related, and this is why Scripture creates this link between having the Holy Spirit (the Holy Spirit has taken up residence and sealed unto the day of redemption, all this stuff that's said about the Spirit) and belief. You're put into the Body of Christ. Explore the metaphor a little bit. The Body of Christ is linked to the person of Christ, and Jesus is-but-isn't the Spirit. Again, if you go back to *Unseen Realm* and read that little section on how Paul in four or five places parallels the Spirit of God with the Spirit of Jesus, and twice he says "the Lord who is the Spirit." The point is not to deny trinitarianism ("Oh, there's no Holy Spirit now! It's all just Jesus and God!" No.) The point is, just as Jesus is-but-isn't the Father, so the Spirit is-but-isn't Jesus and Jesus is-but-isn't the Spirit. They're linked and related and there are three characters there: God, Jesus, and the Spirit. That's actually where trinitarianism comes from, but the point is that the three are inseparable.

So if you are in Christ, you are—by definition—united with the Spirit, as well. And the Spirit is in you, as well. There's no chronology of this kind of thing. So being put into the Body of Christ is union with Christ, and union with Christ is salvation. Baptism of the Spirit into the Body of Christ is closely related to salvation—they're really inseparable. I'll just read another little passage here about the interchangeability of Christ and the Spirit. This is from Romans 8.

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

In other words, if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you're not in the flesh. You're in the Spirit, and you're also in the Body of Christ—the Lord, who is the Spirit.

¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

To be resurrected, you have to be in Christ. And if you're in Christ, you have the Spirit. All these ideas are interconnected, and that's how I would answer the question. You get the Spirit, you're united to Christ, you're part of the Body of Christ, and it's union with Christ and with the Spirit. The Spirit is in you. The Spirit is unified with Christ; they're not separate. He doesn't show up later and leave at some other time. It's all one package. And that is linked by Jesus to believing in the one that God has sent and being born from above, which in our parlance would be at conversion.

TS: Our next one is from Fern S. (I think that's Fernando, not Fern and Audrey.)

What does Mike think of Balaam's error, especially the geographical context?

MH: I'm not quite sure of what either Fern or Fernando means by the geographical context. I'll say a few things, although I don't know if I'll hit the mark here or not.

Just generally, Balaam's error... On one hand, we of course presume that Balaam... If we read the Biblical account of the story, it sounds like he kind of didn't intend to curse Israel. There might be a little bit of ambiguity there, but from what certain passages say, he at least tried to curse Israel. Maybe that's a better way to put it. He's asked by Balak to go out and curse the Israelites, and Balak hires this prophet (Balaam) and he comes over and says, "I'm only going to speak what the Lord tells me to speak." Then he goes out and he tries to utter a curse, but of course, God doesn't let him do that. He winds up speaking endorsement and blessing. We know the story.

20:00

You read the story, though, and you wonder, well what was Balaam's error, then? Because the outcome of his attempts to curse Israel... He's never allowed to do that, so how does he become a bad guy? Well, in terms of Deuteronomy... Let's

just go to Deuteronomy and pick up some of these thoughts here. You have an explicit charge that Balaam did set out to curse Israel in Deuteronomy 23:5.

...the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you.

This is speaking about Balaam in context there. So apparently Balaam tried and God reversed it. The opinion of Balaam and what did he actually do... The sin he gets blamed for isn't really part of the Number 22-24 story, where he's trying to curse Israel but is prevented from doing so. It actually comes from Numbers 31:15-16. It's pretty self-explanatory. I'll just read the two verses. After Balaam wasn't able to curse Israel, he advised Balak on what to do in the absence of the cursing. That's the context. So verses 15-16 from Numbers 31, which is part of the Baal of Peor incident:

¹⁵ Moses said to them, "Have you let all the women live?"¹⁶ Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD.

This is Numbers 31, not Numbers 22-24, where Balaam is trying to curse the people and he's not allowed to do that by God. At some point after that, Balaam advised the enemies of Israel to come up with a different way to get Israel to act treacherously against the Lord. If you read Numbers 31, it involves the women from Moab and the intermarriage. One of them brings one of the women that they're not supposed to marry (and of course, that means to not have sexual relations with them) right to either the door of the tabernacle, or some would argue that they actually crossed the threshold there. He apparently starts to... do it... with this woman in the presence of everybody there, just to flaunt it. Then Phineas comes over and he impales both of them with a spear, which suggests that one was on top of the other. This is the incident that Moses is commenting on. All of this treachery happened because of a piece of advice that Balaam gave. So that's what Balaam gets blamed for. You don't really pick it up in the primary Balaam story. You have to read a little bit further in the book of Numbers to get it. It's kind of interesting, though, that the view of Balaam in the Old Testament isn't entirely negative. In Micah 6:5 you read this verse:

⁵ O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,

It's kind of a little nod to the fact that Balaam was true to his word. God gave him a message of blessing and he didn't chicken out. He blessed the people of Israel when Balak was right there. He took some risk there. Balaam could have just taken his head off or something. It's acknowledging that Balaam did speak what

God gave him to speak, even though he tried to do what he was hired to do and curse Israel and couldn't. But obviously, he gets blamed for what happens in Numbers 31.

Beyond that, I'd need to know what the question really means by the geography. This is connected with Moab, so maybe that's the issue. Again, we get the Moabite women in Numbers 31. Moab, of course, was on the other side of the Jordan (the Transjordan), so is the questioner referring to where it happened in connection with Moab generally, the order of events? I don't know. I can't tell from the question.

I could throw this in. When this stuff happens, the Israelites are camped on the borders of Moab. If the reconstructed Deir Allah inscription (a famous inscription that dates from roughly 900 to 600 B.C. that was found in the Jordan Valley) is reliable, there was El worship in Moab. El is one of the words for the God of Israel. So do we have aberrant El worship going on in Moab? Is that a possibility? Well, maybe. If you actually read the Deir Allah inscription, there is mention of El by name. There is mention of the Divine Council (the Council of El). There's also mention of the *shaddayin*, who are called *elahin* (this is probably an Aramaic dialect), which would be the word for elohim in Aramaic. So you have a group of gods, the council, the *shaddayin*, who appear as part of the Council of El. In this inscription, they decide to send a drought on the land. They do things that are going to hurt the people here. So that term (*shaddayin*) occurs only in this inscription at this site. It might be related to the divine name found in Genesis—*El Shaddai*. Nobody really knows if that's the case or not.

25:00

So the picture here, if we want to take this inscription with the biblical material (Balaam didn't write this inscription, but Balaam is actually mentioned in this inscription—"son of Beor")... Maybe there was aberrant El worship going on in Moab in the Transjordan. The inscription and Balaam himself, according to the biblical text, is familiar with El. Balaam actually uses the divine name (Yahweh). He refers to God as elohim and he refers to God as El four or five times in Numbers 23-24. He also uses the word *shaddai* in that section. So Balaam was either sort of a prophet of God that goes astray and becomes a prophet for hire... According to this inscription, maybe his theology wasn't quite what you would consider the orthodox theology of one of the biblical writers. Who knows? It's all guesswork at this point. But Balaam apparently knows of Israel's God—that much is sure. He might even have worshipped him. Did he worship him correctly or not... who knows? Even people in Canaan proper didn't do that well all the time, or even most of the time. It's hard to tell either way, but his sin against Israel would seem to indicate that he might have had divided loyalty. Was he wholehearted with the Lord or did he just say, "I'm going to speak what the Lord tells me?" And when the Lord showed up, it's like, "I'd better say what this deity says to me or else I'm going to be in big trouble." Was that it, or was Balaam sort of a faithful but theologically aberrant Yahweh worshipper? We just don't know. We don't really know exactly what the context is. So if that's what's lurking behind

the question, that gives you a little bit of an introduction to that particular inscription, which is known because it does mention Balaam by name. Beyond that, I can't be more specific because I'd have to know exactly what the trajectory of the question was.

TS: Aaron's got a couple of questions. His first one is:

I've been doing a study on the archangels and I've found Jewish studies that claim that there were seventy archangels, which would correspond to the seventy sons of God. What do you think of this?

MH: Again, I'd have to know what the studies are. Is this rabbinic material, is it something else? There's a chronological issue there. In other words, was it written after the biblical material or is it contemporaneous with it, or before. What exactly are we talking about? There's no biblical teaching on there being seventy archangels. The number is quite a bit less. So without knowing what text he's thinking of, I can't really be that helpful, other than to say it's certainly not a biblical idea.

TS: Aaron also wants to know:

What are your thoughts on theosis?

MH: I would refer listeners (and maybe even Aaron here) to the podcast episode we did on this. We got into it in the recent one on the relationship of Genesis 15 with the stars (David Burnett's previous podcast about the way Paul works with Genesis 15 about the seed of Abraham being as the stars in the sky). Since stars were conceived of as divinities or divine beings, there was some connection there. The opinion actually varied. There was a spectrum of opinion, in other words. But since that's the case, it suggests that part of the covenantal promise was to have the seed of Abraham made divine. That's theosis. Evangelicals typically use the word "glorification" instead of theosis. Theosis tends to be a term that's associated with Eastern Orthodoxy. Generally, the subject matter is about the same thing—it's about the believer's destiny to be made like Christ and what that actually means. It's not like we're going to become little Yahwehs, but we're going to become as much like Jesus as we can and still be human. We'll still be contingent beings. What does that all involve?

30:00

We did an episode about the resurrection body with David Burnett. There was a five (or might have been six) part series on my blog where David basically condensed his thesis material into a series of blog posts for the Naked Bible Blog. It's specifically about theosis, about deification traditions. So I would invite Aaron to read that, as well.

Generally, theosis is a biblical idea—being made divine. According to Peter, we're already partakers of the divine nature. That's a process of sanctification that will result in glorification, or deification, or theosis (it doesn't really matter what term you use). So it's a biblical idea. I think the discussion of it needs to be biblically rooted, as opposed to being rooted in other texts. It's certainly true that other texts helps us to understand the concepts and some of the biblical language in a pretty transparent way.

TS: Our next one is from Evan. His question is:

I'm on board with Genesis 1-11 being polemic. I've heard you talk about how the Creation account does not need to be a literal six-day event because it is polemic. However, you discuss the Genesis 6 Watchers account as a literal event. How do you parse which polemic stories in Genesis 1-11 are literal events and which ones are not?

MH: Well, I wouldn't say that I don't believe Genesis 1 and 2 are teaching science because of polemic. I think polemic is one reason for that. Basically, when the Old Testament (or the New Testament) makes non-scientific statements in other places, that tells me that God didn't intend to give us science in these texts because if that was his intention, that's what he would have accomplished because God does know science pretty well. So if God wanted a writer to give us that information—science that would satisfy a 21st century person and beyond—he could have picked somebody to do that, dropped it in their heads, and it would have come out on paper, as it were. That is not what we get. So that tells me that wasn't what God was up to. It's a lot simpler than polemic for me, but polemic is part of the picture.

I've actually answered this question many times. I've added it to my FAQ page. If you go up to drms.com and you look at "About" and then at FAQ, it's on the bottom (I think) because it was recently added. That will give you more detail than what I'll summarize here. <http://drms.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

Briefly, I would say in this whole thing about creation and "what about these stories about Watchers and supernatural beings" and what-not, one issue falls under the province of what is discoverable by human experience and human interaction—basically with our five senses and our experience of the natural world. So one of these things (namely, the creation stuff) is testable and knowable and experience-able (if that's even a word) by virtue of our knowledge of the natural world, which we acquire through our five senses and our own discovery because it's the world we live in. It's the natural world. The other issue is what goes on in the supernatural world, and it does not fall in that category. It can't, by definition. It's a different world. So you can have divine actions that occur in our world, and we get stories to that effect. But when it comes to parsing or working with or judging or assessing information about the divine world, we have no way to judge that. The tools of science, by definition, do not apply. They

don't work. They're no good. When it comes to claims about creation, they're very good because that's what science is—we discover how the natural world ticks.

I'm going to leave that part of the discussion right there. I would just add this, for the sake of the podcast (again, people can go up to the FAQ and get a much longer answer with a lot more detail). I would say a non-literal view of how to read the Genesis 1 and 2 account of creation is not a non-literal view of creation. Let me say that again: *a non-literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2 is not a non-literal view of creation*. God created. Period. Punctuate the sentence. How he did it is the issue of disagreement. His creative acts are, therefore, literal. They happened in real time. They occurred. The Genesis 1 and 2 descriptions of those acts is something different. That's describing God's creative acts in a certain way, and in lots of different ways. Do we realize, for instance, that the Old Testament creation accounts aren't just in Genesis? We get one in Psalm 74, and it doesn't look a whole lot like Genesis 1. It looks a little bit like it, but there are other things like slaying a dragon and bringing order out of chaos. It's quite different. Creation *texts* (with an "s" on the end) exist in the Bible; it's not just Genesis 1 and 2. We have to come to grips with that. We have to recognize it and understand it.

35:00

So creation (how God did something) and the thing that he did (create) occurred in real time, to me. It's a literal event. We're here. The world's here. Everything's here. So that's not non-literal. But how it's described in the Bible is a different thing. We have to look at the way things are described and ask ourselves, "Well, if God was trying to communicate science, why did God mess up here and there and other places?" That kind of thing. How do we deal with that? People try to reconcile the findings of science that satisfy a 21st century audience with the language of Genesis. I think that effort, though admirable, is pointless. I think if God wanted to give us that information, we wouldn't have had to guess and make passages stand on their heads to get there. I think it would have been much clearer. Frankly, this is the wisdom of God. I would argue that God prompted the writer to inform readers that he was the Creator (which is a literal truth), the means to that end (how the writer conveyed the reality of God's creative work) shouldn't be conflated with the end itself—the fact of creation. God let the writers write according to their knowledge, using whatever literary devices or techniques that *their readers* would understand. Why did he do that? Well, because God wanted the original readers to grasp the truth of who the creator was. We modern people undermine that and we make the Bible vulnerable to criticism when we impose modern questions and modern science on Genesis 1 and 2. We set the Bible up for a fall, to be blunt about it. We make the text contain thoughts that the original writer and the original readers would never have had in their heads. We change the enterprise because we think we have to protect Genesis 1 and 2 from science.

Why is it wise for God to not prompt the biblical writers to try to make scientific statements in Genesis 1 and 2? Because if God prompted someone *today* to write Genesis 1 and 2, a thousand years from now people would be looking at

40:00

what the person today wrote and they'd snicker at it. They'd say, "Can you believe that they believed this stuff back a thousand years ago? This is really bad science! We know so much more now, and this just isn't accurate!" If the enterprise is not to produce science content from the beginning—if it's just designed to teach us about who we are, who created us, who created everything... If that's the goal, you don't need to be talking science. And it's very wise, because when you don't talk science in Genesis 1 and 2, you produce something that transcends science. You produce something that is not subject to criticism today or a thousand years from now. Because to defeat that enterprise, you would have to prove that there is no creator—that creation never happened. That's the only way you can overturn and undermine—do away with—Genesis 1 and 2. You have to show that it really was spontaneous generation of matter. There really was no Big Bang. There really was no beginning. It was always just here. There is no need for a creator. You have to dispense with the need for a creator, and you have to dispense with the creation *event*. That's the only way you can actually undermine Genesis 1 and 2. But if you want to argue that it actually teaches us science, you set it up for criticism. You make it vulnerable. If you divorce it from science-talk, it is not subject to those criticisms. It transcends science. That's why I think God was very wise to essentially prompt the original writers, "Look, here's what we want to do. We want to make sure that anybody who reads this knows who the true God is, who the creator God is. It's me, it's not some flunky. It's not one of these gods of Egypt. It's not one of these gods of the Sumerians or the Mesopotamians. We want to show who the true God is. We want credit for the existence of humanity and the existence of everything. That means that God is Lord over those things, which means those things are accountable to their creator and God has a specific reason for creating them. He has a destiny in mind. We want those thoughts communicated, and you poor piddly person living in the second millennium B.C., you are perfectly capable of communicating those ideas. Now go get that done, and use whatever language you have at your disposal—whatever knowledge is rattling around in your pointy little head, however you're able to communicate those ideas so that your readers understand them—go get it done." He doesn't say, "Hold still because I'm going to dump Einstein's Theory of Relativity and add some quantum stuff in there that will make Einstein uncomfortable, and then we're going to add this, that, and the other thing so that people reading this ten thousand years from now will think it's good science." That's just ridiculous. It's not what we see in the text. It just isn't. And I think God was very wise to do it the way he did it.

So creation is literal, for me. How it gets communicated is a different story. And how the writers tell the story, they want to accomplish certain things. And *one* of them is polemic. There are other reasons, but one of them is polemic.

TS: Our last question is from Slash, and he wants to know:

Did Adam and Eve produce fecal matter while in the Garden of Eden? He asks this because in church a few weeks ago, they were teaching that out

of every transaction of energy, there is waste, and we have to articulate that waste—understand it and deal with it. What that means is that in the garden when Adam was originally living in the presence of God before he sinned, he could eat anything in the garden and 100% of what he ate would be transferred into energy with no waste. Since the Fall, there is waste, and we have a world full of it. We have to constantly account for it. So to sum up, Mike: Did Adam and Eve poop?

MH: You know, this now has risen to the top (or maybe I should say the bottom) of the strangest questions I've ever gotten (laughter). Oh, boy, does this take my mind in some other places. I don't know if I should mention it or not. I'm going to do that. I'm going to entertain the audience here for a little bit!

TS: Please do.

MH: I'm not going to name the place, but I remember teaching at a Bible college one time and we had a music professor at this place. He actually taught people... Now, this is a fundamentalist context, okay? I taught at a fundamentalist school one time. I was hired because they were trying to take the school more mainstream and get accredited and just, honestly, be more reasonable. But we had a guy in the music faculty that taught his class (because he wanted to teach against rock & roll—anything with a beat in it) that the tones of... I don't even know anything about music, so I'm probably going to get this wrong. But that the vibrations that go with the tones of rock & roll were the same set of vibrations that happen when people have sex, and that's why we should avoid rock & roll. So somebody came into my Bible class and told me that and asked me what I thought. I looked at him and I said, "I just have one question. I want to know who held the microphone for that study." Of course, everybody cracks up. Like people are holding microphones when people are having sex to establish this relationship. It's *ridiculous*.

So now this question has probably moved into the stratosphere of ridiculous things I've heard. Did Adam and Eve poop? Of course they pooped. Their bodies would have worked the way they were created to work. Everything functioned the way it should have functioned. I don't want you to read it again (laughing), as I'm trying to expunge it from my head. What you read sounds to me like something I'd hear in New Age circles or Theosophy—this whole thing about energy and perfect energy at the beginning and you could eat anything and there was no waste. That's just ridiculous. I don't know how you could *ever* get that from the biblical text. So wherever this comes from, I'd say the source for that is he's sucking it out of his thumb. If it's something to do with death because of waste (maybe it's linked to Romans 5 or something or maybe he's equating death of plants with waste, because they're only eating plants in the beginning). Why would you do that? Why would you equate death of plants with waste and say it's bad? What else are they supposed to eat? And how would you get from Romans

5 this idea that you don't need to expel anything? Isn't that the way the body is supposed to work?

45:00 Let me go at it this way. Here's why I'm on this trajectory. It is New Age, Theosophical, occult mythology to think that Adam was more than human. He's *human*. If Adam's in the garden and him and Eve are making breakfast and an elephant starts trotting through the camp and he trips and he falls on Adam, when he rolls over, Adam isn't going to get up and say, "Boy, I'm glad that's over. That tickled!" No, he's crushed! He's a normal human being. The fact that he hasn't fallen yet is not going to prevent him from being crushed by an elephant that falls on him. If he cuts himself, guess what's going to happen. He'll *bleed*. If he cuts himself badly enough, guess what's going to happen? He'll lose enough blood that he'll *die*. Adam is not an ubermensch. He's not this superman that is impervious to pain or harm or anything like that. Now, we know that didn't happen because of the circumstances of the garden. But the point is that we turn Adam into some sort of alien, some sort of non-human or more-than-human thing. He's just human. This is the way occultists talk about biblical characters. Honestly, they do! If this comes from some "famous or reliable source" or whatever, that's exactly the way that Adam gets talked about—these bizarre theories about Adam and Eve and what-not, that they were human but they really weren't human. No, I'm sorry. They were human. That's what they were. Adam was no more transcendent of humanity than Jesus was. Jesus was 100-percent man. Not 100-percent man and another 50-percent of something else added onto it, plus God. He's human. He's the Second Adam. He could die. He could bleed. Adam was not superior to Christ in his humanity. I'm sorry, but he wasn't. It's this kind of talk that I think really potentially can mislead people into mixing these kinds of (I'll use the word again) occult ideas in their theology.

So that's what I think of it. (laughter) I think it's nonsense.

TS: Mike, the real question is, did Adam use toilet paper? Let's get serious, here. We need to know the details if you don't mind.

MH: Oh, I'm sure he didn't need it. (laughs) Right. I'm sure he never had to clean himself.

TS: There's so many jokes in there. It's very hard for me to refrain right now.

MH: He probably never perspired. And even if he did, he wouldn't have needed deodorant because he would have smelled like roses. This is the kind of stupidity that passes for deep thinking in these areas. I just see it all the time, again, in this New Age, Theosophical, occult kind of literature. It just doesn't have any place in biblical thinking. Adam and Eve were human beings. Their bodies functioned optimally the way they were supposed to function. It's not a complicated thing. They could have died. They didn't. God prevented them from having any kind of circumstance that they would have died from. They're not eternal. They have

contingent immortality. Their immortality depends on two things: they don't sin (so they're not cast out of the garden so they begin to age and die, they'll be divorced from the Tree of Life and the presence of God, and all this stuff) and they don't do anything dumb. Like getting in the way of an elephant, or cutting their wrist with a knife, or falling in a creek and hitting their head on a rock. Adam doesn't wake up an hour later and say, "Well, that was refreshing!" No, he's *dead* because he needs oxygen. See, there's another one! "If Adam and Eve didn't poop, maybe they didn't need oxygen, either. Isn't that energy? Isn't the act of breathing using energy... It's just ridiculous. It's utter nonsense. But again, it's the kind of stupidity that passes for deep thinking in these sorts of circles. It just doesn't have any place in biblical theology.

TS: Still not going to stop me from creating a Nekked Bible Poop Spray. So be looking forward to ordering that online soon.

MH: I don't really look forward to any of your ideas! (laughs)

50:00

TS: WHAT?? That is a lie, folks, that is a lie.

MH: Aw, come on... (laughing)

TS: All right, Mike. We're done. Just like that.

MH: Any of your *public* ideas (still laughing)...

TS: Behind closed doors, he loves it. He *loves* it.

MH: Oh, yeah.

TS: You know you're going to be getting a 12-pack of the poop spray.

MH: I'm signing up for that one!

TS: Exactly.

MH: Let's make that, put the label on, and send it to whatever the source of that material was. Let's do that.

TS: All right, Mike. Well, the good thing is I don't need any poop spray because I'm just like Adam. So take that for what you will. (more laughter) There's lots of jokes in there. I hear ya. That's perfect. Not too many poop questions, so we've gotta take it when we can get it, right?

MH: I guess so.

TS: All right, listen. Next week. Let's get to the next week. Melchizedek. We've got a three-part series of Melchizedek coming up.

MH: I'll bet Melchizedek never pooped because he had no beginning or end. There you go. See how I did that?

TS: I see! That's a nice transition. So tell us what we're going to be talking about over the next three weeks.

MH: We're going to break Melchizedek up into three episodes. One's going to be Old Testament, then we're going to have Second Temple period material, and lastly, New Testament. This is like one of the gnarliest topics that you get in biblical studies. There will be things about the topic that you can say with a high degree of certainty as far as this or that passage, and there will be other things that you just can't. But this is the easiest way to break up the topic. Rather than sort of "cheat" in any one of these three areas and really not give it the level of detail it deserves, we're just going to go full-bore here and do three episodes.

TS: Really looking forward to that series. That's going to be fun. Don't forget that the voting begins July 15 for the next book that we're going to cover on the podcast. If you haven't done so, please go rate us and leave us a review wherever you consume our show, if you can (if it allows you). I guess with that, Mike, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.