

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 203

Q&A 24

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Dr. Heiser answers your questions:

- What changed between the Old Testament giving and the New Testament giving? [1:30]
- Was Yahweh's presence absent from the Second Temple because the Ark of the Covenant was no longer present? [10:15]
- If the third heaven (also called "Paradise" a couple of lines later) is what we commonly think of as heaven, what are the first and second heavens? [16:40]
- Does the Sethite worldview imply that one can be children of God by natural lineage? If so, is that the same error the Jews fell into when they boasted that they have Abraham as their father? [22:40]
- Does Mark 16:9-20 deserve to be treated as scripture, or just a footnote? And why is drinking poison and being bitten by snakes listed with things like healing, deliverance, and speaking in tongues as evidence of believers? [32:35]

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 203: our 24thh Q&. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey Mike! How are you doing this week?

MH: Pretty good, pretty good. It's been a good week... productive, interesting. So yep, glad to be here and go through some more questions.

TS: All right, Mike. Well, it's been awhile since we've done a regular Q&A. I apologize for everybody out there if I don't respond to your emails. I get so many emails now that I kind of get behind and it's hard to keep up. But please know I do see y'all's emails, and I do put your questions in the queue. So keep sending me those questions if you have any. I promise you that eventually we'll get to them, hopefully.

MH: Some of the longer ones turn into whole episodes. Some of the episodes that are coming have come from questions, so...

TS: Absolutely. Well, should we just get right into these?

MH: Sure.

TS: We've got five questions today. Our first one is going to be from Rick. He wants to know:

1:30 **What changed between the Old Testament giving and the New Testament giving?**

MH: Boy, that's an important question, and also a pretty variegated question. The short answer is the theocracy went away. I think that's probably the easiest place to start. On my website, I think for anybody who's listening and interested in the subject of giving and tithing, go to www.drms.com and put in the word "tithing." You're going to get to a blog post where I have links to a two-part article series on tithing that I think is really well done. So that would give you the details of what I'm going to say here. The two articles aren't things that I've written (they're written by somebody else). I just think it covers all the bases and does a good job of it.

Once you have the theocracy gone, that affects a lot, because the tithing system of the Old Testament was meant to maintain the priesthood of this whole theocratic system that we think of as "ancient Israel." When the temple burns down, it's gone. Now there's still a priesthood around, but there were certain parts of the tithing system that were linked to certain things you did in the temple. That's going to naturally change things. When the temple was rebuilt, it's not quite what it was in Solomon's day. You don't have political independence or autonomy like you did under the days of David and Solomon. A lot of the Old Testament laws about tithing certain resources just went with a certain lifestyle—a certain way of life—that was geared to having a country, having that country run from a city, having a monarchy, having a temple... All of that gets shuffled and changed with the loss of a temple and the loss of a theocratic way of life.

Now, you still have people in synagogues. Like after the temple is destroyed you have the synagogue system develop. You have people teaching in the synagogues, and they could still expect, both culturally and scripturally, that the idea of supporting those kinds of people (especially if they are still in the role of a priest, even though what they do now is somewhat limited in the absence of the temple or the same kind of system and set-up)... they still have the right to be supported and maintained. This is just generally the way it was in the ancient Near East. This is how priests lived. Their livelihood came from contributions—sacrifices, maybe contributions of land or physical goods, metals, whatever... this is how they lived.

Now, in the New Testament era, when the whole people of God moves away from having an ethnic identity and a theocratic identity, to now we're including

Gentiles in the very fabric of the people of God... In the New Testament era (according to what the New Testament says) everybody is a priest—the priesthood of the believer. By definition, that just doesn't conform to the Old Testament system. This is, in part, why you don't have a carryover in the New Testament of the tithing language or the system of the Old Testament. Paul, though, taught that he had the right to this kind of support as a servant of God. He didn't take it; he decided to do tent-making to support himself. But he does remind readers (like in the epistles to the Corinthians) that as an apostle he could have demanded this sort of thing and he would have had ground to stand on, so to speak. But he doesn't do that. That's in place, even though it's not a priestly model so much like the Israelite culture or system (what we read in the Hebrew Bible). There's just this presupposition that servants of God generally should be supported by the believing community.

If you think about the Old Testament, there is this sort of system of support outside the direct theocratic, monarchical sort of situation—the prophets, for instance. You're not going to read in the Torah about specific tithes going to prophets. The prophets were something different. They were people raised up during the days of the united monarchy and the divided monarchy... God essentially raised up "covenant enforcers." That's what prophets were. They would preach to people about being loyal to God, loyal to the covenant, and all that sort of thing. Those people... just culturally it was assumed that somebody was going to support them. Elijah had the situation with the widow and the room and board and all that kind of stuff. There were people in the community that would contribute to recognized individuals that were considered to speak for God. That's kind of what Paul is drawing on, as well. You had Isaiah, who was sort of a prophet of the royal court. That was a little bit different. He's probably getting some support from the monarchy itself at that point. What I'm pointing to is that there's this assumption in scripture and, by example, the legitimizing of the assumption that servants of God should be supported by the community. Broadly speaking, that's intact, even if the theocratic tithing system is not. Even though that doesn't survive from Old to New Testament, the general idea does.

This gets muddled a little bit in the New Testament because in the New Testament all the passages that pastors like to use to convince people that they should be tithing... If you actually look at those passages.... Let's just use what happens in the book of Acts and Paul. Paul is going around collecting money for the saints in Jerusalem. You don't actually have this weekly giving system for individual churches. Paul doesn't go into a church and start preaching tithing for that church. Wherever he goes, apparently (because he brings it up a lot), there's this notion of, "Hey, you sister churches here that I'm starting and that I started or that I'm in your presence now... The gospel started back with Jesus and the disciples and there's this Jerusalem church that's notoriously poor. They're under persecution all the time, and it's pretty big so that kind of compounds the problem." He takes up collections for *them!* It's for an altogether different church, and that's actually what you see described in the New Testament. You don't have

a new tithing system for individual local churches laid out. You have this general assumption that the laborer is worthy of his hire, but then the actual giving passages are actually for this one church back in Jerusalem.

10:00

So you don't have a whole lot of scriptural structure for this, but what happens is, "Well, the Old Testament is in our Bible and so we're going to preach tithing, even though that was Israel and the theocracy and the priesthood, even though we don't have that. I understand that, but I think we're better off (and I think this is what the New Testament actually does) is it teaches the *principle* of giving. It teaches that the laborer is worthy of his hire and you should give cheerfully and sacrificially. It's not about a certain percentage. You should contribute and give what you can. And you know what you can. You know what sacrificial is. You know whether you're sort of not doing your part or whether you are. The New Testament leaves that up to the individual, but it lays down the principle of cheerful giving, sacrificial giving, and the laborer being worthy of his hire. It doesn't worry about strict percentages like we had in the theocratic system. So there really are no New Testament rules about tithing, but there are very clear principles about the Lord's servants being supported. It's just that we don't have this strict percentage system layout like we do in the Old Testament.

TS: Martin in Enid, Oklahoma, asks:

10:15

Was Yahweh's presence absent from the Second Temple because the Ark of the Covenant was no longer present?

MH: Yeah, I think that is the conclusion we're supposed to draw. Ezekiel has the glory—the presence of God—departing before Jerusalem and its temple are destroyed. We covered that in our series on Ezekiel. There's no evidence that anybody thereafter in the Second Temple period (when they rebuild the temple or actually build a second temple)... There's no evidence that anybody thought that the glory had returned. There's no passage that gives that indication. Interestingly enough, though (even though the question presupposes something that's correct), God's presence is gone from the temple. It's not just the ark, it's because of the apostasy. But the ark is gone and so on and so forth. The glory departs before Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. That's pretty self-evident. But what's really interesting is that the New Testament takes this idea about the return of the glory... It actually takes certain passages that talk about the return of the glory—seeing God in Jerusalem again—and applies them to Jesus. I'll just give you a few "for instances" here. In Ephesians 5:14, we read:

¹⁴ **for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,
"Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."**

You say, "What does that have to do with the temple?" Well, it's actually a use—a repurposing—of Isaiah 60:1-2. Now, listen to that:

**Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.**

This is Isaiah 60. This is set in an exilic and a post-exilic era. So here you have a situation where the future glory of God is going to be shining upon Jerusalem—upon Israel—again. And Paul takes that and applies it to Jesus. "Arise, Christ will shine on you." You have John the Baptist, who is the herald of the coming of the Messiah, but there's actually glory-language connected to the passages that the gospel uses to talk about the message that comes before the messiah. Isaiah 40:5 has an explicit reference to the glory.

**⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

If you go out to Isaiah 40, this is the "crooked places will be made straight." This is this messianic language. Mark and other Gospel writers quote Isaiah 40:5 and other parts of Isaiah 40 to give context to John the Baptist being the herald from Isaiah 40, who is announcing the coming/return of the Lord—the return of the glory. That turns out to be Jesus in the gospels. You get a passage like Isaiah 66:18-19 that has sort of a similar feel.

¹⁸"For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations.

Now, look at the elements in that.

The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory.

Then: "I'm going to set this sign among them and they're going to go from here and they're going to spread all over to these different nations." Tarshish, of course, ought to draw the interest of this audience. Tubal, Javan... these are places mentioned in the Table of Nations.

... to the coastlands far away.

15:00 Why am I sending them out? Because they have not heard my fame or seen my glory, and I'm going to make sure that it's declared among the nations.

If you look at that and Paul, in a few of his epistles he draws on Isaiah 66 (this passage) to talk about his own ministry. And then you look at what happens in Acts 2 with the coming of the Spirit, when people from the nations are gathered and they see this miracle of Pentecost and then they go back to their nations and start spreading the word about the messiah. You could actually make a good argument that the pouring out of the Spirit in Acts chapter 2 is the return of the glory. It's different, but it's the same as Jesus—this whole "Jesus is but isn't the Spirit" kind of thing... that these events (let's just speak broadly)... the coming of messiah—God incarnate—and then following his resurrection and ascension, the coming of the Spirit in his place... This is the return of the glory. It's very easy to draw that conclusion in the New Testament. So you don't need an ark. You don't even need a temple. Because in the New Testament, what's up with that? Well, we're the temple. We've had the full episode we had on Ezekiel 40-48, Part 2. We got into all this New Testament temple language. This where the glory is now. All this language about the glory in the temple is applied to believers in Jesus. Why is that consistent? Because we are the Body of Christ. These terms and these metaphors are used to point to these spiritual items—these theological items—deliberately. This is all theological messaging, repurposing the Old Testament.

TS: Dan wants to know:

16:40 **If the third heaven (also called "Paradise" a couple of lines later) is what we commonly think of as heaven, what are the first and second heavens?**

MH: Yeah, it's actually all of the above. We have to remember when we get into this that heaven doesn't have literal geography. There's no latitude and longitude. There's no literal levels or stages, as though when you were in one, you could measure their size or their distance from each other. So we have to be careful that we don't overly literalize the language when it talks about heaven or these levels of heaven and so on and so forth. They're all this other place, and they're spoken of in these ways to distinguish parts of them. We are forced to use the language of space. We are forced to use spatial language—the language of embodiment and physicality—to talk about a spiritual realm that doesn't actually have those things because it's not the world of our experience and our

embodiment. The only way we can talk about those other things is to use the language of our experience and of our embodiment. This is just always the way it is in scripture and in our own discussion.

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With that in mind, the levels language is trying to communicate that the presence of God himself (like where The Presence is in the spiritual world)... that that spot, as it were... Realize we can't even speak of God in that way correctly because that makes God a spatial being. But God is omnipresent. You see the problem we have of even using this language. But I'm just going to try to wade through it because that's what we have to do. The levels language is trying to communicate that the presence of God is the holiest place in the spiritual world. God occupies (in Paul's language) the third level. There are some ancient texts from the Second Temple period that have three levels of heaven. 2 Corinthians 12:2 is what the question is really deriving from. Other texts have seven levels. You say, "Why is it different?" Well, they're all trying to communicate the same idea: That the highest level (the seventh level or the third level)... The place where God is at is the holiest spot—the holiest place. The language tries to parse out where we are in the spiritual realm, where other objects are in the spiritual realm, and then where God himself is in the spiritual realm. And so it has to use this level-language to do that, to make sure that God is given the preeminent place. He is the preeminent being in this plane of reality—the spiritual world. Again, it's just a way of establishing (to use a Levitical way of expressing it) gradations of holiness. If you think about the temple and the tabernacle, the more inward you went, the greater the sanctity. You couldn't have non-priests occupy the first level of sacred space. They could bring a sacrifice up to the gate or the door of the tabernacle and it would be sacrificed, but they couldn't go beyond a certain point. Priests could go there. But there was a subset of those priests who could go into the holy place. And then there's only *one* priest that could actually go into the *most* holy place—the Holy of Holies, once a year. This was designed to teach and to reinforce the idea that the ground gets holier the closer to God that you are. It's these gradations of holiness. We talked about this in Leviticus—about what's done with the blood and all this kind of stuff, and who can go where. It's the same idea sort of transferred into the spiritual realm when you get these levels of heaven. There's a lot of speculation in Second Temple period literature, where you get all these heavenly visions and journeys of individuals like Enoch and Abraham and Baruch and so on and so forth. There's a number of Old Testament characters that have these journeys. You get this language that as they're on their "trip," so to speak, to see the presence of God, you pass through certain levels—these heavenly levels. It's designed, again, to teach the idea that the closer to God you get, the more sanctified or holy the space is.

I personally think the three-level approach is probably modeled after the temple. You have the court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. You've got three levels there. The seven levels... My suspicion is that it has something to do with the number seven being perceived or thought about as perfection. You say, "Well, how do you get seven and perfection?" It's modeled after the creation

week. Everything is created in six days and then on the seventh day God rests in his temple, which in Genesis is Eden on Earth. It completes the activity. What God wanted to do, he did, and he did it exactly the way he wanted to do it. So you've got this perception—this numerical tag, as it were (number seven)—that speaks of completeness and, in that sense, of perfection. So I tend to think that number is used to convey the same idea. I think the number three (we're speaking of levels) is really drawn more from sacred space on the ground ("boots on the ground," so to speak) that we read about in the Old Testament.

TS: Our next question is from Daniel in Nicholasville, Kentucky. He asks:

22:40

Does the Sethite worldview imply that one can be children of God by natural lineage? If so, is that the same error the Jews fell into when they boasted that they have Abraham as their father? Or as a negative example, Seth being the good seed and Cain being the bad seed, could we liken that to the extreme fundamentalist idea that a certain ethnic group having the "mark of Cain" are unredeemable?

MH: Yeah, it's kind of akin to all that. The Jews in the Gospels are basically claiming election by virtue of Abraham. If you believed that Genesis 6 was another manifestation of an elect line back to Adam... If you take the Sethite/human view only, and if you believe that this is about an elect line back to Adam, then you'd fall into the same kind of thinking. Of course, nothing says that any line was elect prior to God's creation of Israel by virtue of Abraham and Sarah. You get this election language in the Torah and it's always about Abraham and Sarah's descendants—Israel. That kind of thinking, though, can get transferred to other passages and, of course, it does.

25:00

Those who would say that the Jews descended from Cain (to track on the negative example for a moment here)... People who are going to say that kind of stuff—the Jews are descended from Cain and they're Satan's spawn... Those kinds of people (who are just whacked) are going to be saying things like "the line of Cain is unredeemable" because they're linking it to this Satanic idea—the Satanic genesis, in their case, of specifically Jews. I don't know any fundamentalism... This isn't to say that there isn't one, but I haven't run into one that would have said blacks were unredeemable. I have certainly run into a few people where the "mark of Cain" was interpreted as skin color. That you'll see, and you'll read a lot about that. But even with people who thought that, you couldn't say that all of those people thought that the negro race or (to use our modern terminology) "African Americans" were unredeemable. Some did, but it really depended on whether those people thought... and this is actually 19th century kind of stuff—even earlier. Let's just say 18th/19th century kind of dialogue—wondering if the black race descended from Adam or from some other co-Adamic or pre-Adamic human.

This kind of biblical nonsense (and, of course, biological nonsense) arises from this crisis in these centuries of having to explain "from the Bible" where these other races/humans that explorers are encountering come from. Things like skin color get drawn into this conversation. Obviously, people could visually observe differences in skin color and other physiological differences. But all of that gets sort of drawn into the same odd and, in some cases, repugnant conversation in these centuries. There were certain people who would have landed on this idea that "oh, this race bears the mark of Cain and then they're unredeemable" or "oh, this race bears the mark of Cain but who cares... we're not going to evangelize them or whatever; they might be redeemable but we're not going to waste our time." They weren't all like that, though. Some came up with really goofy explanations for race, but they still were viewed ultimately as descending from Adam in some way. And so it didn't deter evangelistic efforts. So it really depended on whether your "biblical-racial theory" had these alternate people groups linked to Adam in some way or not. If you thought they were not of the Adamic line, then by definition there would be groups that would say they're non-elect. "They're just going to go to hell; they're unredeemable." Or, "We shouldn't give a rip." You had that kind of thinking.

This question prompts me... I have this in digital form here so it's real convenient: a little part of *Adam's Ancestors*. This question just reminded me of it. I've referenced this book before on the podcast. If any of you are interested in the harm that bad thinking about the Bible can do... [laughs]... this is a must-read. In my library, I've collected most of the scholarly books on bad exegesis that led to racial theory, and this is one of the more important books. It's informative, but obviously when you think about the content, it can be tragic, too. This is from page 65 of *Adam's Ancestors*. It's on the section of that particular chapter that's sub-headed "Human Origins and the Politics of Slavery." So here's a short excerpt:

As early as 1680, the Church of England clergyman and missionary, first to Virginia and later Barbados, Morgan Godwyn, wrote at length in support of the right of African slaves and native Americans to be admitted to church membership in a tract for the times addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury. Rather sanguine about the practice of slavery itself, he vigorously argued their case in his lengthy 1680 plea on *The Negro's and Indians Advocate, Suing for Their Admission into the Church*. Godwyn was fully aware that what he called the "Pre-adamites whimsey" was being deployed first to "derive our Negro's from a stock different from Adam's" and then to "Brutifie" them. His intention, by contrast, was "to prove the Negro's Humanity." It was a strategy diametrically opposed to those Spaniards—he seems to have had Sepulveda in mind—who had concluded that certain races were not human in order to "justifie their murthring the Americans."70 For all that, he acknowledged that fantastic, "false," "empty and silly," though the "foul Heresie" of pre-adamism was, its original author himself had never used it to dehumanize

any racial group but, rather, had acknowledged the full humanity of the pre-adamites.

So you have Godwin (the guy who wrote this) who acknowledged that there's this view out here of pre-adamic races, and he was determined not to use it to dehumanize any group ("negroes" and "the Americans," in his terms, by which we mean the Native Americans in the latter reference there). So this is the kind of thinking in the 17th century. You're going to get it in the 18th century, and it's going to live into the 19th century, and frankly, for those of us who are old enough, the 20th century. But the use of the Bible to classify certain races in a certain way as being less than Adam or peripheral to Adam... One of the strategies for doing that was this "mark of Cain" idea. That does go pretty well hand-in-hand with the Sethite theory. Of course, people who take the Sethite interpretation of Genesis 6 aren't doing it so that they go to these whacky racial theories. Even back then, they weren't necessarily doing it. But you could take the Sethite view, and once you took the Sethite view of Genesis 6, you would go backward and then you would (quite literally) demonize the Cainite line and you would insert the Sethite and Cainite dichotomy into Genesis 6. Again, this is part of the Sethite view thinking. All of that was (and it became) fodder for racial theory. You could get there from the Sethite view. But let's be clear, people who take the Sethite view over against the supernaturalist view of Genesis 6 aren't doing it 99.99% of the time to justify racism. But in the old days (centuries ago), this is where a lot of that groundwork was laid. So I think this is an interesting observation that the questioner (Daniel) has here. It's akin to these other things, but we don't want to necessarily see a cause-and-effect link to some of this awful stuff that can really be laid at the feet of bad Bible interpretation.

TS: Neal has a two-part question:

32:35

Does Mark 16:9-20 deserve to be treated as scripture, or just a footnote? And why is drinking poison and being bitten by snakes listed with things like healing, deliverance, and speaking in tongues as evidence of believers?

MH: To be clear, I'm not a textual critic, so I'm going to have to look up some things to introduce here as far as an answer to this question. I'm not a textual critic. I'll say that, but I'll also say this: I've never seen a good defense of the longer ending of Mark (verses 9-20). For that reason, I'm in the camp that most (not all) textual critics would be in, which does not think verses 9-20 are authentic. The only reason it really matters is because of what the question alluded to: that you have snake-handling preachers living in different parts of the world and different parts of the country. They've made use of this material and they've died or been responsible for somebody else's death. So yeah—it does matter in that respect. But again, I'm in the camp that really can't find a good defense of the authenticity of verses 9-20, when it comes to Mark 16.

By way of textual evidence for the longer ending of Mark (verses 9-20), which is pretty weak, I'm going to read a little excerpt from Omanson's book. This is from Omanson and Bruce Metzger: *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament*. This is an adaptation of Metzger's textual commentary on the Greek New Testament. So they write this:

Several manuscripts, including four Greek uncial manuscripts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, continue after v. 8 as follows (with a few small variations):

But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after these things Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.

35:00

What this amounts to is that you have four manuscripts from the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. So this is 700-900 years after the days of the apostles. After verse 8, they add that little statement that I just read. And that's where Mark ends in those manuscripts. It ends with what we have as verse 8, and then this little addendum. All of the manuscripts that have this reading, except for one old Latin manuscript, continue with verses 9-20. What that means is that the longer ending of Mark (verses 9-20)... this is the best manuscript support for it (seventh, eighth, ninth century A.D.). Stuff that's older is not going to have the verses in it. So here you are in the New Testament text critical debate about priority manuscripts. If they're older, should they be counted as better? We did a whole episode on this kind of stuff. But you don't really have very strong evidence for the longer ending of Mark. It's centuries... the seventh century is what you're dealing with here.

A second source... R.T. France, in his commentary on Mark, says this. This is a little bit longer. I like France's commentaries. He's done a couple of them. I just like them. He's pretty good. He writes:

A number of later minuscule MSS (f^1 22 etc.) [medieval and beyond] give the Longer Ending but mark it off with marginal signs or comments to indicate that its textual status is doubtful...

So even the scribes themselves are making little notes in what they're copying. They're faithfully copying the longer ending, but they're putting these little marks in there.

The fifth-century codex W, one of the earliest MSS to have the Longer Ending, [now you're moving back to the fifth century—it's one of the earliest] has a substantial addition of eighty-nine words (the 'Freer logion') at the beginning of v. 15, [so it's even different from what we have in verses 9-20] described by B. M. Metzger as having an 'obvious and pervasive apocryphal flavour', which consists of a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples concerning the ending of the period of Satan's power and the truth and righteousness now made available through Christ's death. Jerome records the same additional words and says they were found in some Greek MSS.

So that's fifth century. France moves on to a little section on Literary Considerations. He writes:

Most of the content of the Longer Ending (vv. 9–20) echoes, usually in abbreviated form, elements in the resurrection stories of Matthew, Luke, and John, as follows...

And then he goes on and starts commenting on this or that. I'm going to skip to another section of France.

The parts of the Longer Ending not accounted for in this list are those which go beyond the resurrection appearances as such to describe the subsequent preaching and activity of the church. Thus in v. 16 we have a summary of a basic baptismal soteriology, which has the flavour of Johannine dualism (and possibly draws on the baptism element in Mt. 28:19–20), in vv. 17–18 some of the 'signs' which are related in Acts are summarised, and v. 20 is virtually a summary of the whole book of Acts in a nutshell. In the whole of the Longer Ending the only element which is not easily accounted for on the basis of familiarity with the other gospels and Acts is the emphasis in v. 18 on handling poisonous snakes and drinking poison: the former perhaps reflects the single instance of (involuntary) snake-handling in Acts 28:3–6, but the expectation of these two activities as regular 'signs' is the one distinctive contribution which the Longer Ending makes. In all other respects vv. 9–20 have something of a 'secondhand' flavour, and look like a pastiche of elements drawn from the other gospels and Acts.

Basically, what he's saying is that in the longer ending (which does not have good textual support), everything except the snake-handling and the poison you can find elsewhere in some other Gospel or the book of Acts. You can find some other sort of example. The only two outliers are the snake-handling thing and then the poison. The snake-handling thing might be an allusion to the episode in Acts 28. Again, it's not clear because the episode in Acts 28 was certainly involuntary, but it might be some allusion to that. But then there's nothing you can find elsewhere in the New Testament for the poison-drinking. For that reason—that the material you have in verses 9-20 reads like somebody else just sort of

40:00

put it in there, drawing it from all these other places... In other words, it has a very second-hand kind of feel to it. That reason, plus the weak textual/manuscript support for verses 9-20, are the reasons why virtually all New Testament textual critics do not consider verses 9-20 as authentic. It's not as bad of a situation as something like 1 John 5:7 or part of the ending of Revelation (like with Erasmus' text and all that), but it's ain't good. It has weak textual support.

I put a link on the episode page for this, too. It's a blog post that I found here from the Evangelical Textual Criticism Blog. You could go up to the Evangelical Textual Criticism Blog, like I did here, and just put in "Mark 16" and you're going to find what that group (and they are just what they sound like: evangelical textual critics) says about the longer ending of Mark. You'll find an essay by Peter Gurry. (<http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2016/10/mark-16-on-roll.html>) We've interviewed Peter before on this podcast. It's pretty good. I recommend it. I'm just skimming through it here. I have read this before. But in this post, he quotes Dan Wallace. Because one of the arguments is that, "Well, the ending of Mark must have been original and it was lost because of the way that scrolls were rolled up, and the end of the roll would have gotten tattered and lost and blah, blah, blah... Well, Wallace is someone who has pretty much spent a career handling these sorts of things. He says it's extremely unlikely that Mark wrote his Gospel in a particular way where this is going to be some sort of explanation. I'll read the excerpt here. This is Wallace now:

However, if Mark's Gospel is earlier than this [end of the first century]—as virtually all scholars acknowledge, regardless of their view of the synoptic problem—then he would have written his Gospel on a roll, and the first generation of copies would also have been on rolls. And if the Gospel was written on a roll, then the most protected section would be the *end*, because when someone rolled the book back up, the end would be on the inside. To be sure, some lazy readers might not rewind the book when finished—of course, they would get fined a denarius at their local Blockbuster for such an infraction! But the reality is that this sort of thing was the rare exception, not the rule. Consequently, if Mark was originally written on a roll, it is hard to imagine how the ending could have gotten lost before any copies were made. (Perspectives on the ending of Mark, **pp. 35–36**)

Again, Wallace is a guy who has lots of experience with scrolls—the way they were wound, and so on and so forth. You have other books as examples, too. If this was a common event, then you'd have problems with the endings of other New Testament books, too. But you don't. It's just this longer ending of Mark.

Just to wrap this up, I'm in the camp with the textual critics (evangelical and otherwise) who just don't really see a good argument for the long ending of Mark being authentic. For that reason, I don't feel like I have to doctrinally defend

drinking poison and snake-handling, because that's the only place you're going to get that stuff and it's highly suspect.

TS: All right, Mike. We want to remind everybody to leave us a review. We're almost at 200. We've got 199 reviews on iTunes, I noticed. Since we just had our 200th episode, maybe we can get one more review to get to 200 even. But we appreciate everybody that's done so this far.

MH: That's important.

TS: Absolutely. And, Mike, we appreciate you answering our questions. And we want to thank everyone else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.