

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 214

Q&A 26

May 4, 2018

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Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions about:

- Ecclesiastes 3:21 and its meaning [2:20]
- Examples of Jesus using Second Temple doctrines that are not OT [17:45]
- The best arguments for Jesus being the promised messiah and effective Scriptures for religious Jews and atheists [25:00]
- The John 3:13 reference to the “son of man who is in heaven” and its relationship to Daniel 7 [35:00]
- Whether the Holy Spirit leaves a person who turns his/her back on God [38:45]

Transcript

Trey Stricklin: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 214: our 26th question-and-answer episode. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how you doing this week?

Dr. Michael Heiser: Pretty good. It's been hectic. But you know, that's better than being bored, I guess.

TS: I hear ya. And also, if you're listening to this... Listeners, we are actually currently in Israel right now, Mike.

MH: Right.

TS: Mike, this is week one of Israel. So, shalom!

MH: I can hardly wait. I know, shalom! (laughter) I can hardly wait for - oh, yeah. You know.

TS: Are you are you prepared? Have you got all your notes and bullet points?

MH: No.

TS: You're just going to wing it.

MH: I just gonna finally got... I got back from the April travel and now I have a few days to scramble, so...

TS: Yeah.

MH: You know, it is what it is. But I'm sure it'll be fun and hopefully not overbearingly hot—and safe, of course. But I told my mom... My mom's like, "Oh, don't go over there. It's just this horrible, this and that." And I said, "Look, I'm going to be with two FBI agents, and Trey's, like, the size of a defensive lineman. (laughter) So I should be okay." Oh, you know.

TS: Well, hopefully we're having a good time there. When we get back, we'll let everyone know how it went and what you said and give a report.

MH: Sure.

TS: So, be looking for that.

MH: We'll give the update.

TS: Yep, that'll happen in three more episodes from now. So what we're going to do is, over the course of the next three weeks we're going to have three Q&A episodes to cover our trip while we're gone. So be expecting three Q&A episodes coming your way, Mike, and here's Q&A number 26. So, I'm ready with the questions if you are.

MH: Sure, shoot.

TS: Our first one's from Ghostman, and he wants to know:

2:20 **What is the meaning of Ecclesiastes 3:21?**

MH: Yeah. And for those of you who don't have your Bible memorized completely, (laughs) Ecclesiastes 3:21 in ESV says:

²¹ Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?

This is a rhetorical question. In a nutshell, I think the point of the verse is that human beings are mortal just like the beasts. If you go back to verses 19 and 20

(the couple of preceding verses), you read something to the effect of, "all of them, both human and animal, all have the same breath. Everything is meaningless," says the writer (Kohelet, Ecclesiastes, the preacher). All go to the same place. In other words, they all go to the grave. Everything dies. All come from dust and to dust all return. Then we get this statement:

²¹ Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?

So the real question here is... The author is wondering if people—if any people—wind up being taken out of the grave (out of Sheol), because everything goes there. Everything dies, which is pretty self-evident. And this verse is part of the whole discussion in the Old Testament about Sheol because everybody dies and everything dies.

On my website years and years ago... Boy, it's I don't know—five, six, seven, years ago, whenever it was... I went through a series on Sheol and the human dead versus the nonhuman spirits that are in Sheol, and who's in Sheol and all that kind of stuff. And so we discussed broadly this whole topic. But this verse in particular is part of that complex of ideas. And you know, when you read through the Old Testament, you get this notion—born of reality—that everybody dies. And then there's this sort of question, like, "Well, then what?" Because even in Sheol, you have this conscious life going on. People would say, "I'm going to go be with my fathers." Well, that reflected the idea that you would rejoin your family members. People were buried... We talked about the Old Testament view of the afterlife. And I'm one that doesn't think that Israelites thought there was nothing going on (or soul sleep or anything like that) because people would be buried with things that they used in life under the assumption that they would use them in the next life.

5:00

Israelites weren't any different than lots of other cultures in this respect. People just anticipated they would have some sort of existence. But if you were a Mesopotamian, you would sort of view this existence as kind of cadaverous—you know, nothing really good. If you were Egyptian, you viewed it a little bit differently, depending on which era of Egyptian history and the theology that went with it was in. Sometimes the positive afterlife was just for the Pharaoh and whoever he granted it to. But eventually it widens to more people. And Egyptians were quite noteworthy for their positive outlook of the afterlife. So Israel is part of this mix. When it comes to the biblical writers, in some passages there's a question: "Well, you don't really know what's going to go on." And in other passages, it's actually positive. There are Old Testament passages (and again, in that series I did on my website, you could look them up) that have a positive view of the afterlife because it's anticipated (or at least hoped for) that the righteous—those who have a right relationship with Yahweh, the God of Israel, the God of

the Bible—would be removed from Sheol. Yes, everybody goes there, but the righteous are going to be removed from it.

So the writer of Ecclesiastes is sort of in that mix. Ecclesiastes is kind of an unusual book to begin with because there are parts of it that are really cynical and pessimistic and other parts of it are optimistic. And so scholars always discuss Ecclesiastes with the question, "Well, is it a pessimistic book or is it an optimistic book?" And it's some of both. This question kind of reflects that.

I want to read something from Provain about this particular passage. He wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes. It's in the *NIV Application Commentary* series. So looking at Provain here, he writes:

The one "place" to which all the living go is Sheol, the world of the dead (e.g., Job 30:23, "the place appointed for all the living")...

In other words, all the living are eventually going to be among the dead. They're gonna die.

...translated by NIV simply as "the grave" in Ecclesiastes 9:10. The Old Testament often speaks of death as if it were a final ending to human existence—a place of separation from God (e.g., Ps. 6:5; 88:10–12) that the righteous as well as the wicked will experience as darkness and chaos, and from which even they will not return (e.g., Job 10:20–22).

Again, everybody dies. You're not going to... There was no sense that when you died, maybe you'll be undead at some point. That wasn't a question like it is for us, on one level anyway.

Other texts, however, tell us that the *wicked* depart to Sheol (e.g., Ps. 9:17; 31:17), implying that the fate of righteous is ultimately (if not immediately) different—a point explicit in Psalm 49:13–15, where the righteous are ransomed from Sheol's power (cf. also 16:10–11)... Job 14:13 pictures Sheol as a place in which God might hide Job until his wrath has passed, the passage envisaging a later time when God will remember him and the dead will be roused out of their sleep (14:12, 14–17; cf. the famous 19:25–26 ["I know my redeemer lives"]). In passages like Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2–3, moreover, there are clear references to resurrection from the dead.

In other words, there are clear references to being removed from Sheol. The writer of Ecclesiastes here is sort of expressing either a non-committal ignorance or a pessimism that's reflected by his words. "Well, who knows if... " so on and so forth. Provain, elsewhere, says:

The writer cannot be certain what will happen after death (cf. the same question in 2:19); it is unseen. He rests content with that which, in the grace of God, he *has* come to see (Heb. *r'h*, 3:18), namely, that death renders pointless during life the quest for “gain” or “advantage” (*motar*, related to the *yitron* employed in 1:3; 2:11; 3:9) over the rest of creation.

10:00

So Provain is saying that the writer... At the very least, he's sort of saying this in the context of the fact that everybody dies. And death is ultimately going to be the great leveler. And so why should we waste our lives after ill-gotten gain and taking advantage of other people and so on and so forth? Because he's gonna end the book with, “This is the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments,” but during the course of the Ecclesiastes, he asks questions like this and expresses either pessimism or some sort of cynicism.

Now, another way to look at this is, or at least part of the discussion of this kind of statement in Ecclesiastes, is the whole issue of progressive revelation. Why would we assume... This is important, because as people are listening to this they might be thinking, “Well, shouldn't the writer of Ecclesiastes know that the righteous go to heaven? And why is it even a question?” Well, it's a question because not every biblical writer would have known [recording skips]...

...at the same time. If you think about it, we're fond as evangelicals of sort of touting the Bible as this collection of 66 books, written over a couple millennia and all this kind of stuff. Well, it is. It is all that, but all those people obviously didn't live at the same time. Why would we expect that all biblical writers had the same grasp of some point of theology if they all lived over the course of a couple millennia? Why would we expect that they all had the same knowledge pool in their heads to draw from? That's an unrealistic and, frankly, an unbiblical assumption. But it's a common one for the average church person because, “Well, their writings show up in the Bible, so they all believe the same thing, right?” Well, maybe when you meet... If you could assemble them all in heaven, well then there'd be agreement. But in real life—in real time—there are doctrines even within the Bible itself that develop—that grow, that get accrued to. It's not just one knowledge dump in Genesis 1 and then everybody sort of knows the same thing throughout the course of human history and all that.

This question, like so many others, sort of dovetails and is influenced by what I have contested on many occasions to be a deeply flawed view of inspiration—that one sort of eliminates the humanity from it. And in this case, there's just no reason to expect biblical writers to have the same grasp of any given subject at the same time, especially when they lived in such a broad range chronologically.

Revelation—information from God—is given over time. It's a self-evident thing, but it's something that evangelicals often don't think about at all. But it's true. Material is added to theological threads. Part of our job as Bible students is to

trace the threads. Anyone living after the time of the writer could provide a better answer because they had more revelation. People living further down the road (like, let's just say in the New Testament) are going to be able to answer certain questions better than certain people in the Old Testament, just by definition, because revelation is given progressively. As just another example, or I guess a related example here... In the Mosaic era, the dead... You see this phrase: "The dead go to be with their fathers." Again, it's this afterlife notion with loved ones. That's different than the wording here in Ecclesiastes 3:21 about going *up*. Remember Ecclesiastes 3:21:

²¹ Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?

Well, we know that everybody's spirit goes down into Sheol. But the question is: does the spirit of man go upward? That "up" language is different than, "I'm going to die now. I'm going to go be with my fathers." People had different ways of expressing the notion of an afterlife. But here you have this directional element that sounds to our ear more like heaven. I think there is this sort of "God attachment" to the upward language, as opposed to just a general "afterlife with loved ones" kind of feel that you get in the Torah, for instance.

So you have certain ideas that in parts of scripture are going to conform to the upward language, and other ideas that are going to conform to the positive afterlife expectation, but not necessarily this upward orientation.

Fox, in his commentary in Ecclesiastes... Michael Fox was my advisor at Wisconsin. He writes this. He says:

[The writer] is aware of the belief that at death the soul goes upward to the heavens, rather than down to Sheol. This idea is not Semitic in origin, but it was found in popular Hellenistic religion, which held that the soul rises to the ether, the heavenly seat of the gods.

15:00 I would actually quibble with that because of the Psalms' language about being with the Lord—having the Lord take you out of Sheol. Well, if the Lord takes you out of Sheol, where is he going to take you? He's gonna take you to be with him. And he's in the heavens and so that would be upward. I think Fox is giving in a little bit too quickly to this Hellenistic idea. Now, as the writer of Ecclesiastes portrays things, Fox says:

As the author portrays Koheleth, the sage has heard of this notion, but he does not know if it is true, and he refuses to be comforted by conjecture.

Again, I think it's a bit overstated. Is it really a lack of comfort, or is he just being sort of cynical? Or is he just saying, "Hey, I don't know." Again, those are three

related but different things. So I read Fox here because he's kind of the broad consensus kind of position on this. But Provain, again, is a little more positive because of the language in the Psalms. And it stands to reason that if God is going to take you out of Sheol, he's gonna take you to be with him. And that is a pre-Hellenistic and it is a Semitic idea. So I wanted to throw that in to address the consensus thinking. Consensus thinking, I would say, is not terribly coherent, at least in its consistency.

Now as time goes on, the two ideas of positive afterlife in some sense (not being left in Sheol, and then this “upward with God” kind of orientation) are fused in the Second Temple period and the New Testament. And their joining is logical from the Old Testament. Again, what other source of ongoing life would there be but with God? So this is a good case (and I think you have instances, like the doctrine of Satan and a few other things in the angelological and demonological sphere) that the Second Temple period literature and the New Testament will say things... They'll essentially take data points from the Old Testament and then connect the dots. The dots are not connected in the Old Testament; they're connected later. But the connection points—the data themselves—are quite consistent with the Old Testament because the Old Testament is their source, and the connections that are made are coherent and logical. It's just that you don't find the connections—you don't find the picture, the mosaic—in the Old Testament. You find it later. I think this is kind of an example of one of those sorts of topics.

TS: Okay, Mike. This next question and I've been working on my Croatia pronunciation is...

MH: (laughs) You need to work a little harder.

TS: (laughter) Yeah, it's Ante from Croatia. I hope did that right, sir. So, all right. He's got two questions and his first one is:

17:45

Can you give a few examples where Jesus uses Jewish doctrines developed in Second Temple period that are not explicit in the Old Testament?

MH: That's an interesting juxtaposition in light of what I just said. You do have broadly... I brought up Satan... The full picture of Satan is going to be different in Second Temple and New Testament. But to be more specific to the question... examples where Jesus uses the Jewish doctrines. Again, I'd quibble with the wording. I mean, Jesus isn't looking to use Jewish doctrines, but he's going to be part of a world that has connected these dots. The dots come from the Old Testament, but they're not connected in the Old Testament. They're connected later. So, I think even that is a helpful way to think about it.

But here are a couple of examples: the phrase in Matthew 25:41 about the Lake of Fire being prepared for the devil and his angels. Okay, that is an idea... The association of this place of torment—place of punishment—that might be eschatological across the board... But to associate it specifically with the devil and his angels (as though devil has a bunch of angels that worked for him) that's not something you're going to find in the Old Testament. You're going to find the devil—the Satan figure. You're going to find other fallen divine beings that would be on the same team, as it were, with Satan. But you're not going to find verses that actually specifically connect them, like Satan is the captain and here's his team.

20:00

You're also not going to find this description that specifically the afterlife's a place of punishment—the one that sort of made permanent this this Lake of Fire thing that we see that at the end of the final judgment, when they're cast into and there they go. You're not going to see the underworld really cast as a Lake of Fire. There are little glimpses of things like that. You certainly get the idea of punishment, where Satan is cast down to the underworld. You certainly get that. Jewish tradition, which is built off of not only Old Testament, but also Second Temple stuff, like about the fallen sons of God of Genesis 6:1-4... Since the Apkallu (which is the original Mesopotamian story for those four verses) wind up being imprisoned in the abyss, that's where that idea comes from. And the writer of Genesis 6:1-4 1 sort of assumed you knew the backstory. He doesn't discuss the backstory. It gets discussed a lot later in the Intertestamental period (Second Temple period). All that you get in the Old Testament are the Rephaim, which are part of the giant thinking in Old Testament theology. You see them in Sheol, but you don't ever have a verse where they're working for Satan, like "What's my job today, boss?" You never have this explicit association. You do have this place that if you're left there and if you have no hope of escape, that's bad. Because who are your neighbors now? Who are you living with? Well, you're living with the original fallen rebel of Genesis 3—the Satan figure. You're also living with the spirits of the giant clans, which are demons in Second Temple thought. That's really not great. I mean, can I find a better neighborhood? Well, the answer is no because if you're left in Sheol, that means you're one of the unrighteous.

So again, you have all you have these ideas—these data points—floating around in the Old Testament. But they're never put together. Later on in the Second Temple period you get the dots connected, and the dots derive from the Old Testament. And they make sense in light of what you read in the Old Testament. They're just not connected the way you're reading them here in Matthew 25:41 or in a Second Temple passage.

It's the same thing for exorcism of demons. You don't have this in the Old Testament. In fact, you barely have the expectation of the Messiah being someone who would exorcise demons. We did a whole episode on this on the podcast. It's episode 87. Where does this expectation come from, that the Messiah would be someone who would cast out demons when you have zero

referenced it to exorcism in the Old Testament? It's built off one or two things that you find in one or two Old Testament passages and that get applied in this way. Certain little points of language get applied to the idea that the son of David—the Davidic descendant—has power over demons and over evil spirits and things like that.

So there's an idea... Jesus, obviously, in the Gospels does exorcism on a number of occasions. You have sort of the kernel thoughts and the data points in the Old Testament, but you have no sort of explication of those things—of the idea. You have nothing that states these connections in the Old Testament itself. But then later on you do—during the Second Temple period on into the New Testament. So there are things like this that develop.

I'll go back to my previous question: why would we ever expect all of the biblical writers to know exactly the same things at the same times? Or having lived so far apart, why would we have this expectation that everybody knows the same thing? Well, the short answer is because that's what we're taught in church. That's not the correct answer. It's not a coherent answer. Again, we just sort of make this assumption that everybody knows the same thing, and then when they know it and they write something, it's all written at the same time and everybody has a Bible.

You know, folks... I hate to try to disabuse listeners of this idea, but it wasn't until the modern era—post-printing press (and even then you've got to go a few centuries afterwards)—that you could pretty much assume that the average person, despite their station in life, would actually have a Bible. That is not true in the ancient world.

And so these assumptions that we look at Biblical characters, we look at biblical writers, and we sort of expect them to just be able to look something up or just to automatically know it because they're a prophet... "Well, they know all that stuff that somebody else wrote because they're a prophet." Well again, that doesn't make any sense. They don't have the information downloaded in their heads. Most of them will never pick up anything that you could call a Bible. This is why prophets exist. Prophets are the oral covenant enforcers. This is why you have "schools of the prophets" in the Old Testament—so that they can share information. They can take what is written (and it's not a whole lot) and then they can be taught by the prophet. They can pass that on, because prophets need to be succeeded. This is how it works. It's not like in our time when you could just look stuff up and everybody's got a Bible. It's just not the way it is.

TS: All right. His second question is:

25:00

As an Old Testament expert, what would you say are the best arguments from the Old Testament for Jesus being the promised prophesied messiah, beside stating that it is messianic mosaic? And compare it with what

usually Christians say. And what are the most effective scriptures to share with a religious Jew? And what are effective with the atheist?

MH: Alright, let's just take one at a time. I mean, this might be disappointing, but I honestly don't know what else Jesus would have to do to validate his status as messiah. In other words, as an Old Testament expert, I would say go read the New Testament and align what Jesus actually does with the Old Testament scriptures. I could add the incarnation, because the incarnation is absolutely essential to the messianic profile. Because only God could fulfill the covenants that God made with man. So the only way to make that happen is if God becomes a man, because humans are going to fail. Covenants that are made with humans... If God doesn't become a man and fulfill them himself, they're never going to get fulfilled, because humans fail. All the time. With regularity. Unceasingly and unfailingly.

So the incarnation is sort of a wild-card element here, but honestly, what else would Jesus have to do? I'm just being bluntly honest because this is kind of a familiar question. "Well, how do we know that Jesus...?" Well, what else would he have to do? And a sub-question is: who else did that? Who else did? Who else fit the profile other than Jesus? And Jesus fit the profile really well, so what's missing? I would suggest to you that nothing's missing. There's plenty of information there for you to draw the accurate conclusion that he was the messiah. You see what he did in the New Testament and you check back in the Old Testament. So if you run into a person that says, "Well, I don't know," their problem isn't really Jesus. Their problem is... I'll be so audacious to say this: they probably don't know what they're looking at if they read the New Testament. They probably haven't spent enough time actually reading it. And then once they read it, actually cross-referencing the Old Testament passages. And then it gets a little tougher sometimes to conceptually understand what's going on between the connections of how a New Testament writer would repurpose an Old Testament passage—what he would see in there. That takes a little bit more work.

But typically, this is the kind of question that that... Again, I can only speak for myself and my own experience. This is the kind of question you get from people who just don't want to believe it. And they don't really put a whole lot of effort into reading both Testaments evaluatively and then asking the other question: "Well, who else fits the profile?" The answer would be, well, really nobody. And then if you throw the incarnation in there, then it's really nobody. Because the incarnation is essential.

So if we're talking about the way it's presented for most Christians, I think probably the incarnation might get... I won't say skipped, but sort of not fully appreciated for the necessity of the incarnation.

Now the other questions. There was something to the effect of what's the most

effective passage to share with a religious Jew—I guess to convince them Jesus was the messiah? I would go to the Two Powers stuff. Honestly, it's one of the reasons why I've camped on it. In other words, a religious Jew has to be prepared for or at least has to understand how his ancient compatriots—his ancient forefathers—could have accepted the worship of Jesus and not feel that they were violating the Shema, which is the fundamental tenet of Judaism: “The Lord our God is one.” You have to show them how that worked—how that often worked and could have worked—in the ancient first century Jewish mind.

So you would want to introduce him to passages that reinforce what scholars call “Jewish binitarian monotheism,” because that's really what was going on in the first century. There were a lot of Jews prepared for the notion of a binitarian—two powers—a binitarian godhead. And all of the Christians were doing the... Christians weren't inventing anything new. They were just saying, “We believe that the Second Power is Jesus of Nazareth. And here's why.”

So I would take a religious Jew to that, because they're going to balk at the notion of, “If I convert to Christianity, I'm somehow dissing or giving up or denying the Shema.” And they're really not. So they need to understand what first century Jews were thinking.

30:00

As far as the atheist, atheists don't care about scripture so there is no passage. Why would we assume that I'm going to quote a passage of scripture to an atheist and it's going to make any difference at all? I would say with an atheist, you need to get an atheist to probe their own views and their own ideas. Seriously probe them for their weaknesses in terms of coherence. Tell them why you don't find atheism persuasive. Tell them (or ask them), “Hey, why is it... ?” I file this under: are you an honest atheist? I would recommend having these conversations about how honest an atheist they are. And here's what I mean. If I'm sitting across the table from an atheist, here's what I really want to know: why is it that someone with exactly your education—went to your school, in your field, educated by the same professors you were, and your faculty... You have people who were educated by the same people that educated your faculty who don't buy atheism. They don't find it persuasive at all. Rather, they find theism and Christianity very persuasive. So what I want to know is: have you really thought about how this isn't an intellectual position? It's really not about who's smart and who's dumb. Because you can show people hard sciences. There are thousands—ten thousands—of people in the hard sciences who are educated in the same universities. They have the same PhDs. They're published in the same journals. They write or co-write for the same publishers. They go to the same conferences. They belong to the same scientific organizations. Their papers are cited just as often as somebody else's. And they are Christians. Why is that? Can you explain that to me, Mr. Atheist? I want to know if you've come to grips with the fact that there are many people just like you (and the people who taught you) that find your atheism completely unpersuasive? Why is that?

If you really think about it, they've only got a couple of choices. They have to say, "Well, all those other people are deceived. All those other people are lying." Well good, you're an atheist and you want to depend on empirical research. So where are the studies for that? Can you show me a study that proves empirically and scientifically that all of these other people are deceived and all of these other people are lying? Can you show me that? Okay, they obviously can't. And what you want to do is you want to get them to start thinking about, "Why do I adopt this position?" And oftentimes it's because they've met one Christian or maybe ten Christians that are just jerks. The Christians have done them wrong. They have some problem of pain (just more broadly speaking) and they're blaming God for that. And that's when you can... Lord willing with the pain issue, you can help them to realize that lots of other people have gone through exactly the same thing. And that's not to excuse it, but it is to say that you have a group here that sort of becomes your peer in this regard. You have people who have suffered exactly the same thing and they know it's horrible, but they process it a different way.

So the question is really about processing it. Why do they process this way and you process it another way? I think what you're trying to do is you're trying to show the atheist that at the end of the day their position is no more intellectual than anything else—than theism or Christianity. They're winding up in their position for some other reason. And maybe the best you can do is just have that conversation with them. And then if they were burned by Christians, then you need to be the counter example. You need to have the best relationship with that person you can possibly have. You need to affirm them in any way that you can to help defy the stereotype or sort of undo it or at least be a living apology for what happened to them. Because typically it's about pain and it's about anger with the atheist. But a lot of them have never really at all taken the time. They just assume a position of intellectual superiority and they've never actually thought about the kinds of questions that I just brought up here.

But quoting a scripture to them, that's not going to do anything. In fact, that's what they expect. That's what they expect and they're just going to dismiss that. It's only after they've thought and processed about why they're making the decision that they do that if they can at least cross the road to theism, then things like appeal to scripture might be something that's really useful. But from the gate at the outset, we have no reason to suspect that that's going to move them at all. In all of it, we don't know what's going on in their heart of hearts. God can take his Word and use it in some specific way. But to just sort of randomly quote something about them to defend yourself, that's what they expect. They expect you to defend yourself. They don't expect you to really politely insist that they defend themselves and their thinking. And if you have a sincere one, if you have an honest one, they should not be afraid to do that. And you just take them through questions like the examples I just gave.

35:00

TS: Chris in Baltimore, Maryland has a question about John 3:13.

The King James version reading has in John 3:13, "Son of man who is in heaven." One: is it possible this is the correct reading? And two: if so, is this a reference to the son of man of Daniel 7?

MH: I'm not quite sure I'm following the question. Let's just look at it this way. I don't know of any other readings that *don't* say "son of man" (that would say something else, for instance, "son of God" or something). Just that "son of man" part of the phrase is textually secure. Now, there are additions to that. The "who is in heaven" phrase is one of those. Some manuscripts that will have that, while others won't have that. Something like Metzger's textual commentary will address that.

Looking at the textual evidence, "who is in heaven" is, in terms of manuscript data, probably a little better—a little better off in terms of manuscript data than the alternative—than not having something there. I don't think it's a specific reference, though, to Daniel 7, "who is in heaven." It could be in John, "son of man who is in heaven," the human one who's in heaven. Elsewhere, "son of man" is pretty generic. If "who is in heaven" is the correct reading, it might be an allusion to that figure. But again, there are other ways you could look at it. First of all, you could deny the "who is in heaven" part, and then you're just stuck with "son of man." That's very generic. Even if you have "son of man who is in heaven," Jesus may not... I'm not saying I read it this way, but people could read that and say "Well, Jesus is not really identifying himself with that," or something to that effect. I think it's possible that it's an allusion to Daniel 7. To sort of feel better about, I would really want to have some reference to the clouds or that sort of thing. Then you could say, "in heaven... clouds." It's kind of six of one, half-dozen of the other.

But you have passages also from John (like John 6:41) where you have the son of man who has come down from heaven. People wouldn't really process that as a fulfillment of Daniel 7 because you're missing the everlasting kingship stuff—being handed dominion over the nations of the world and all that. And it's the same thing here in John 3:13. So I would say that there's some possibility in these more generic passages that maybe the Daniel 7 is lurking in the background, but I certainly wouldn't say that the writer is sort of viewing this as some kind of tight identification or we're moving toward fulfillment of that idea. I think that does come later. Jesus gets more explicit when he's on trial before Caiaphas. There's a more secure quotation of Daniel 7 there. So that's the way I would approach it. I would say there's some possibility here. There's some things I'd like to see that would make it a little bit tighter. But I think it's at least possible.

TS: Samuel from Winston-Salem North Carolina has a question that was prompted from episode 70 on an answer you gave. He wants to know:

What happens to the Holy Spirit if someone turns their back on God? Does the Holy Spirit leave?

MH: He referenced the earlier episode. We've done more recent things that are in the same theological topic as this question. So I would say, just generally, that it would probably be a good thing to listen to some of the other episodes. But for this one, let's just say this: I would say that the New Testament says the Holy Spirit can be grieved and quenched. Again, the Holy Spirit indwells us to mark us and marking us is how I take the sealing language of certain passages: "sealed with the Holy Spirit." I think that refers to being sort of marked out from others. I don't take it in terms of having some irreversible status on you. So I think the Holy Spirit indwells us to mark us as believers and to sanctify us and assist us in walking with the Lord. His presence doesn't guarantee that people will not turn from belief, else the writer of Hebrews and other writers in the New Testament would have no reason to be concerned. The very fact that they're concerned that people not turn from the faith tells you (or at least it ought to tell you) that the sealing language of the Holy Spirit is not about making it impossible for people to turn away from the faith. Certainly, the New Testament writers are not reading the language that way, because they are concerned.

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So either we should, as it were, walk up to them and say "Hey, you know, Hebrews guy and Paul (or whoever else it is), don't worry. Don't you guys realize that once you have the Holy Spirit that turning from the faith is impossible? So you don't need to worry." It's very obviously not what's going on in the New Testament. I would say it's painfully obvious. Given that little backdrop, in Ephesians 4:30 it says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." We have to presume... Just reading it sort of gives us the impression that it is possible that the Spirit can be grieved. Further (and this is digging a little bit deeper), the grieving language of the Holy Spirit might come from Isaiah 63:10 because the language is the same there:

**¹⁰ But they rebelled
and grieved his Holy Spirit;**

And the rest of the verse says:

**...therefore he turned to be their enemy,
and himself fought against them.**

This is Israel in the wilderness wanderings, where God gets angry at the Israelites for their reaction. They just grieve the Spirit. They turn away, they rebel, all this kind of stuff. Well again, if that could happen in the Old Testament and if Ephesians 4 is quoting this passage about grieving the Spirit, well that says something. It's possible that the grieving language does come from that passage.

And if so, then the Holy Spirit can act in judgment against a person who abandons faith. That's just kind of scriptural math there. 1 Thessalonians 5:19:

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.

This is the same verb lemma (the one translated "quench") as in Ephesians 6:16, where the fiery darts from the evil one are extinguished. Again, it's the same lemma. It would seem that belief and the ministry of the Holy Spirit positively to a believer are intertwined. They are interrelated. That's another way of saying that if you want the ministry of the Holy Spirit to work out in your life, you need to believe. So we're back to square one again. You need to believe. This is a concern to New Testament writers—that believers forsake their faith. They turn against and away from the God of Israel—from the gospel, against the gospel. That seems to be a very transparent concern in the New Testament. And for that reason, if that is a concern... And it's not hard to find. We trucked through a number of passages in the book of Hebrews. If that's the case, then what does the Holy Spirit do? Well, the Holy Spirit could judge them. He could be the agent of judgment. Now that doesn't mean (and it didn't mean in the Old Testament) that the Spirit of God never has a positive ministry to that person. He certainly did with the nation of Israel.

Why would we expect that on the other side (in the New Testament) for the Spirit of God to not also try to draw them back? Again, we talked about that in Hebrews, as well. We said that one of the ministries of the Spirit of God is to work in the heart of a person to help them to believe—to keep them in the faith. But the spirit can be quenched. The spirit can be grieved. We don't really like to talk about these kind of verses. It's largely because of the theology that we have in our background that makes us look at these passages and sort of conclude that turning from the faith wasn't a real problem. That would have been news to the New Testament writers. Otherwise, why are they writing about it? In the case of the writer of Hebrews, why is he hung up on it? The answer is the context—the persecution, the hardship. This was a real concern. It was not a fabricated concern. It's not a theologically misguided concern. It's in the New Testament. And by virtue of the whole idea of inspiration, I would say it's a valid concern.

So the bottom line is that the writer of Hebrews and other writers are either genuinely concerned about people abandoning the faith or they're not. Or they're dumb. Or they're just theologically inept. I don't think they were dumb or theologically inept. I think this is a real concern. So if people cannot turn from the faith, these concerns are illegitimate. The writers are making some sort of theological error. I don't think they're in error. If people can turn from the faith and the presence of the Spirit is about something else other than guaranteeing that people can't turn away... Again, this is very simple step-by-step logic, thinking about what we read in the text. I'll repeat it: if people can turn away from the faith (and that seems to be a big concern for writers in the New Testament), then the

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presence of the Spirit is about something else besides guaranteeing that people who profess Christ can never reject that belief. It's pretty evident. Again, the writers are really concerned about it. So it would seem that we should take their concern seriously. We don't want the Spirit of God, who is working to keep us in the faith, to have to judge us—to have to chastise us, be the agent of chastisement. Maybe that's for our own good because the Spirit of God will, as he did the Old Testament with the Israelites who were cantankerous and rebellious across their history... The Spirit of God did act on occasion as an agent of judgment. But he also acted on other occasions as the agent that God would use to draw them back to himself through various means.

TS: All right, Mike. Well, that's all of our questions for this episode. So hopefully we can ask one more question of ourselves and that's to please say a prayer for us while we're in Israel, everybody.

MH: Yep.

TS: Pray for safe travel. We appreciate you answering our questions. And again, send me your questions at treysticklin@gmail.com. I will put them in the queue to be hopefully answered at a future point in time. But with that Mike, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible podcast! God Bless.