

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 238

Q&A 32

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Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions:

- Was the Masoretic Text produced because Orthodox Jews were reacting against Christians using the LXX? [2:55 time stamp]
- What does he think about the Logos note on Psalm 82:1 that is in contradiction with his own view? [14:35]
- How does the Son of Man vision in Daniel 7 relate to the other visions of beasts and kingdoms? [16:30]
- Is there any textual basis in 1 Enoch for the idea that Satan and the Watchers introduced musical instruments to distract people from worshipping God? [22:35]
- Why does God say in Ezekiel 5:9 that he will never do something like this again, when he *did* do it again later? [26:30]
- Why did God create plants “before they were in the earth?” (Genesis 2:5) [33:50]
- Is Genesis 3:15 wrongly labeled the “Protoevangelion?” [41:20]

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, episode 238: our 32nd Q&A. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing this week?

MH: Another busy week.

TS: It’s been a while since we’ve done a Q&A. Don’t forget to send me your Colossians questions to TreyStricklin@gmail.com because we’re going to be doing an entire Q&A about the book of Colossians. Mike, also, I’d like to remind everybody we *are* confirmed to do a live Q&A in Denver when we’re there for ETS/SBL conferences. That Friday, November 16th, at 7:00pm is when we’ll have our live Q&A. It’s going to be in a church in Denver. I don’t have the actual location of that on me, so check the blog. Hopefully by the next podcast I’ll have

that exact information. But you can go ahead and pencil in 7:00pm on Friday, November 16th. We will be doing a live Q&A. And hopefully Burnett can join us.

MH: Yeah. We've talked to Dave. It's still taking shape. When I have the information, I'll put something on my calendar for the website where the blog lives. It'll come together. It looks like there's nothing that's standing in the way. It's just people getting all their ducks in a row. And then we'll announce it.

TS: And there's no need to talk about Fantasy, because I still haven't won. [MH laughs] So we can just get right into the questions if want to, Mike.

MH: The last time I looked, you were, what, in second-to-last place? Is that it? Have you dropped another peg?

TS: Yeah, I'm second to last. I don't even want to look. I've won one game, and that's all that matters. Out of sight, out of mind. It's too painful to...

MH: Right. Well, I now have an assistant coach for the Pugnacious Pugs, since we have a second pug. So the coaching staff is expanding. [laughs]

TS: I have nothing to say. I can't talk. I just have to sit here and take it. [MH laughs] That's rough. Keep my mouth shut, and just take it.

MH: That's good advice.

TS: Years of losing, Mike. But not in life, so there you go. [Laughter] Well, we've got a handful of questions. Do you want to get started?

MH: Sure.

TS: Alright. Our first one is from Lance, and his question is:

Was the main purpose of the Masoretic translation, because of early Christians using the LXX and making the Jews who were Orthodox upset that their scriptures had been usurped?

MH: Well, just a few preliminary things here. First, the Masoretic Text isn't a translation; it's a text. This is something that, since it's related to discussions about the Septuagint, which is a translation, sometimes the terminology gets a little confusing. The Masoretic Text is a Hebrew Bible. It's not a translation.

And second, when people hear this question, they can hear it in such a way that they might assume that the Septuagint was around before there was any Hebrew text that we would call the Masoretic Text. That's not the case. So I don't think the questioner presumes that, but there might be somebody out there who is hearing that in the question when that isn't the case. The Dead Sea Scrolls

2:55

5:00

provide evidence that at least three editions (three versions) of the Hebrew Bible existed after the Old Testament period had closed. So you think of the end of the Old Testament period not as the return from exile (roughly 530s B.C.), but the Old Testament period actually closes a little bit after that because the Jews return to their homeland and then you have other activities (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther). So it spills into the Intertestamental (the Second Temple) Period. Let's just use as a number 400 B.C. That's when the Old Testament period closes. So what the Dead Sea Scrolls show us is that there were at that time (let's just call it 400 B.C. or thereabouts) at least three editions or versions of the Hebrew Bible in existence. Now those three were what would become known as the Masoretic Text—the text that would be used to create the Septuagint (what those guys used as their beginning point when they did that translation) and the Samaritan Pentateuch. And I say “at least” because there are texts of the Hebrew Bible known from the Dead Sea Scrolls that don't align with (or match) those other three. So there could have been *more*, but there are at least three editions. That's typically how scholars talk about it.

Now, all of this stuff is largely the same. The texts divide or become distinct from each other in places where they disagree (obviously), but they're largely the same. There was a text that would be nearly identical to what would become known later (after 100 A.D.) as the Masoretic Text. That precursor Masoretic Text is therefore called the proto-MT (the proto-Masoretic Text). So if you think about what we're talking about, when you talk about *The Masoretic Text*, that's something that's roughly 100 A.D. and beyond. That doesn't mean that there was no Hebrew text that would be in the Masoretic tradition, ultimately (that would reflect that Masoretic Text that would be created around 100 A.D.). There were lots of texts—lots of manuscripts—that looked basically 99-whatever percent just like that one that existed earlier (all the way back to 400 B.C.). So you have this era of textual or versional plurality, and then you have this benchmark date of 100 A.D., beyond which we get what we know as the Masoretic Text. And then that departs in terms of its endorsements (its approval) from what the Christians are using, which would have been a different Bible (the Septuagint), which is in Greek. And whoever translated that used a Hebrew text that was slightly different from the proto-Masoretic Text manuscripts, and of course, the Masoretic Text when it emerged later. So that's the situation.

As an analogy, think of what would happen if there was some official deliberative body that said, “Hear ye, hear ye! All these English translations! We're sick of this. We want to come up with one version of the Bible in English.” Now, whatever version they came up with, if you compared it against the ones that existed prior to that declaration, it's going to align, percentage-wise, more with one than the others. Okay? You could call the one that it was closest to the “proto-Official English”—that kind of thing. So that's the set of circumstances we're dealing with, moving from textual plurality in the Hebrew world to one official text that the Jewish community is going to create. It's largely identical to stuff that had gone before, but this one has official approval. And then they're

literally going to hand it over to people that they called the Masoretes. These are families that are going to be tasked within the community with the official duty of copying this text from here on out, forever. That's where Masorete comes from. They're going to be the ones who copy and hand it down from generation to generation. But earlier than that, you had a Hebrew Bible that was pretty close to what this one turned out to be.

Now all of that leads up to how I would approach the general question. What's the motivation for doing this? Why do they do this? Well, there were several motivations. I think probably the first two of these that I'll mention are really what's steering the bus here. They wanted to produce a text for the mainstream Jewish community, and they wanted a text that they could endorse as the one to be used within that community from here on, forever. In other words, they wanted a text that would bear the official stamp of approval of the Jewish community. So the thinking is, if we do that then the people that are in our community (the leadership, the rabbis) gradually are going to copy this official text now, because we've handed it to the Masoretes (which are the official class—the official families that are going to bear this task) and as they produce copies, the synagogues will adopt this one official text. And that will by default lead to the dropping off (or the passing away or forgetting) all of these other texts that had existed up to that point within the Jewish community. So that's really what's floating the boat here, or steering the bus.

10:00

Now the peripheral aftereffect of that is that the Bible of the Christians (they're reading Greek)... Their leaders are saying things like, "Well, our Greek translation comes from the Hebrew text, and it's a Hebrew text that was slightly different than *yours*, Mr. Jewish Person. And this text is better. This was the better text." To a scholar living in the 20th and 21st century, that may or may not be true, but to someone living in this era, when this transition happens, the rabbis would say, "Look, if any Christians pull that on you, telling you that the Hebrew text that they had was superior and that you ought to be listening to what the Septuagint has when it reflects a different text, you tell them, 'Look, our scholars—our scribes—had a look at all that stuff and decided *this* is the best text, and that's why they created the Masoretic Text. So we're just not listening to you anymore. *This* is the official Hebrew text. In fact, it's still in Hebrew. You guys are reading Greek. We're sticking with the Hebrew text approved by the experts within our community.'" So that doesn't have to be like a bunch of rabbis huddled together saying, "Oh, we better come up with a text so that we can poo-poo on the Septuagint or have a club to beat those Christians down." That's a little more sinister, silly way to look at it.

What's really going is they know what the effect of standardization is going to be in their community. And that's what's really motivating them. "Eventually *our* people will get used to *this* Bible that has our official approval and they will trust *our* scholars in *our* community to have done the best job they could, and that's just going to end the question." So that, by default, cuts off Christian arguments

that are based on a different text. Just by default, that's just going to happen. Now I think with some who were involved in this, yeah, there was a little bit of intentionality here, certainly. There is the "Two Powers" thing lurking in the background where Christians could refer to the Septuagint where it was different and where it made a theological point, and they could rightly say, "Hey, this was based on a Hebrew text. You guys just got rid of that." They could say all that. All of that is true. All of that's legit. But the people who are creating the Masoretic Text don't care about having that debate. What they care about is knowing the people in their community are going to trust them and adopt this particular text. And eventually, all those other ones are going to fade. They're going to go away.

Now one more note here before we move on to the next question. You have to realize that even though there's this benchmark creation of the Masoretic Text, not every rabbi in the Jewish community liked the idea, and they continued to use the version of the Hebrew Bible that they'd been using in their synagogue for years. They just kept doing it. They didn't really care. They might care theologically about debating with Christians, of course, but there's a lot of evidence that it took a long time (decades, maybe even centuries) for this specific textual creation to diminish and wipe out through the ravages of time all of the other ones that were in use. I've mentioned this guy before. There was a German rabbinic scholar, Aptowitzer, who collected variants *within* the Masoretic Text tradition during the years 110 A.D. and beyond into the Middle Ages. He collected all that stuff. He has a seven-volume work showing that it's not like every synagogue had an identical text, even after the Masoretic decision. That just didn't happen. It took a long time for the Jewish psyche to zero in on this text and end that discussion.

TS: Greg has a question:

14:35

We know Dr. Heiser is affiliated with Logos. Interestingly, the "Community Note" for Psalm 82:1 is in direct opposition to Dr. Heiser's divine council worldview. I would be interested in hearing Mike's rebuttal.

MH: Yeah. Well, "rebuttal" isn't the right word for this. I don't have any control over who posts what in a community note. I think the problem here is not understanding what community notes are. Community notes can be posted by anyone who has Logos from anywhere in the world within any Faithlife group. They aren't vetted. No one looks at them to say, "this one's in" or "out." That's why they're called "community notes". So it's not like I can just say, "Hey, take this community note down." Or "fix this community note." It's just somebody in the world posted it, and there it is. And if you open the software and you have your community notes turned on, you will see that. It depends in part what Faithlife group or groups you belong to. It's a cloud thing. So there's no systematic vetting or approval process or removal for any of this stuff. My view of Psalm 82 is by now known in thousands of locations online and, of course, in my books and articles, including the Faithlife Study Bible, in which I did do the notes for Psalm

82. Listeners can also go to www.thedivinecouncil.com. There's literally thousands of places you could go to online for Mike's view of Psalm 82. Community notes are just not something I have any control over or really even care about [laughs], to be honest with you. It's just a forum. It's something in the cloud.

TS: Alright. Lindsay has a question. His question is:

16:30

The coming of the Son of Man in Daniel 7 is a debated text when it comes to eschatology. Some see the passage as fulfilled in Jesus' ascension (his "coming" to heaven from earth), while other see it as his second coming (his "coming" to earth from heaven). If it's fulfilled in his ascension, then it implies that the persecuting horn also occurred in the first century. However, I noticed that Dan 7:13-14 begins with "I saw in the night visions," which is similar to the beginning of his vision of the animals (Dan 7:2). It makes me wonder if this marks off the vision of the Son of Man as independent from the vision of the four animals, and if this means its fulfillment is detached from the sequence of beasts (and thus the horn).

MH: Oh, this could go a lot of different directions. It wouldn't be the ascension, because it's pretty clear that the Son of Man's kingdom is going to be an earthly kingdom, if you keep reading through the rest of Daniel 7 there. Daniel 7 is a council meeting (I think pretty clearly) to judge the beasts in the earlier part of the chapter, which are these earthly empires. I don't know that anyone I've ever run across would say that one part of the chapter doesn't have anything to do with the other part of the chapter. They're viewed as having a direct relationship. And the ascension idea just wouldn't make a whole lot of sense in that light.

But to the paradigm of the eschatological question, I think the answer is the "already, but not yet" sort of thing going on. Let me try to unpack that. So Daniel 7 is, of course, a judgment scene in regard to the four beasts. That's pretty obvious as we start the chapter. The fourth beast is, by all accounts... (Or nearly all, I should say—maybe somebody out there in the world sees it differently. I don't know who, but I'm just leaving that door open.) Overwhelmingly, the fourth beast is thought of as the Roman empire. You can compare Daniel 7:14 with Daniel 2's fourth kingdom. (Daniel 7 and Daniel 2 have a symbiotic relationship with each other.) And if that's the case, then that would be the time when the messiah came the first time. Jesus came during the Roman empire. That's your "already" aspect. So Jesus' first coming has something to do with Daniel 7. So the question is, is that all it has to do with? [laughs] And I don't think we can put all our eggs in that basket. Those raised in a dispensational environment overlook the very obvious fact that the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 (which they'll say is the Roman empire) corresponds to the fourth kingdom in Daniel 7, and that's when the Son of Man (Jesus) comes. So you have the kingdom get a foothold (take hold)... The kingdom *comes* during the first coming. But the question is, is that all the kingdom is? And if you're really in the dispensational tunnel vision, you never

quite see that, for some reason—probably because kingdom is always talked about as the millennium, later on. So I think that’s a thing that needs to be grasped, needs to be seen.

20:00

All that is not to say that the kingdom has been consummated in the first coming. It hasn’t come in its fullness. We know that because after Jesus leaves, they’re still talking about his return and the kingdom, so that’s your “not yet” half. So “already, but not yet.” This is a paradigm that operates a lot of places in scripture with a lot of doctrines. The New Testament is just as clear about that (the future aspect) as it is to statements where the kingdom is already present in some way. We talked a little bit about that in Colossians, specifically with Colossians 1:13. So if you take Daniel 7:14:

To him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away. His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

You can see that that hasn’t arrived yet. All people don’t worship him. All nations don’t. All languages... There’s something that’s still not here, that’s still not a reality. But since it has taken root, nothing is going to cut it off. Nothing’s going to stop it from becoming what God intends it to be. Nothing is going to stop the progression of the kingdom of God from reaching its final fulfillment. So it’s just a better way to read this kind of language—this “already, but not yet” sort of thing.

Now, just to summarize it, let me just try to do it again here. I’ll summarize it this way. Maybe this’ll help me be a little clearer, a little shorter. I would say you can best honor the language of Daniel 7 as saying the kingdom rule described has begun (it was inaugurated) so yes, the Son of Man has something to do with the current set of circumstances and the first coming. It was put on an inexorable path to full consummation (already, but not yet), but there’s no need to divorce the vision from the kingdoms. If it takes hold in the Roman era (the fourth kingdom), good. There’s no reason to divorce the kingdom talk in the Daniel 7 vision from the four kingdoms. The kingdom was inaugurated during the reign of the fourth beast, which died off. The Roman Empire went away. The everlasting kingdom, though, continued, and it will continue until its final consummation.

TS: Jacoby has our next question:

22:35

Attempting to find something on the book of Enoch, I found one of the many crazy pits that internet theology has. But they were saying that music itself and particularly musical instruments were a device given to man by Satan and the Watchers to deceive us and keep us from listening to God’s word. Is this just internet theology gone wrong, or does this have some basis in the text?

MH: Yeah. I'm going to fall on the side that this is bogus internet teaching. Let me just read 1 Enoch 8. This is the list of what the Watchers get blamed for. 1 Enoch 8, beginning in verse 1:

¹ And Azaz'el taught the people (the art of) making swords and knives, and shields, and breastplates; and he showed to their chosen ones bracelets, decorations, (shadowing of the eye) with antimony, ornamentation, the beautifying of the eyelids, all kinds of precious stones, and all coloring tinctures and alchemy. ² And there were many wicked ones and they committed adultery and erred, and all their conduct became corrupt. ³ Amasras taught incantation and the cutting of roots; and Armaros the resolving of incantations; and Baraqiyal astrology, and Kokarer'el (the knowledge of) the signs, and Tam'el taught the seeing of the stars, and Asder'el taught the course of the moon as well as the deception of man. ⁴ And (the people) cried and their voice reached unto heaven.

Now, that's from Charlesworth's *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, so that's a pretty recent translation. It incorporates Ethiopic material, as well. I don't see musical instruments in there, probably because there *weren't* any there. That's good since the Old Testament Israelites (who lived well after the Genesis 6 era) used instruments in the worship of the temple. So yeah, this is bogus internet teaching. You'd also have to wonder why loyal angels are playing trumpets in scenes in the book of Revelation. I mean, you get these positive portrayals of music, is the point, even in the worship of God himself. Well, if musical instruments were something that the Watchers had something to do with, that would be really incongruous. And it's not. Again, this is not something coming from Enoch and the Watchers story. Now maybe (this is just taking a stab in the dark) whatever source the questioner saw or heard about this may have been thinking about (I'm trying to be generous here) something else other than the book of Enoch. There *is* something in Ethiopic literature called the *Maṣḥafa Mestira Samay Wameder* ("The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth"). If you read that Ethiopian source, that adds musical instruments to the list of angelic revelations, and so maybe the internet theology source had that in mind and either they're not telling their audience or they don't know (they're just parroting something along that the questioner saw and it prompted the question). But if you're going to go with Enoch and the Watcher tradition from Second Temple material, the instruments aren't there. They're not in the passage.

25:00

TS: So you're saying the Watchers weren't playing harps? [MH laughs] But we *do* know they're listening to heavy metal, right?

MH: Yeah, there you go. Right.

TS: They're playing their records backwards.

MH: *That's* what they're doing.

TS: There you go. You heard it here. Alright. Christina is studying Ezekiel with the Naked Bible Podcast. She had a question about Ezekiel 5:9 that states:

26:30

And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again.

I am questioning the part which says “and will never do again.” It seems that God did do this very thing: famine, sword, fire upon the city, exile, etc., again through the Romans, and will do much of the same during the Day of the Lord. He says that it is because of your detestable idols. Is that why the “never again” language—because Judah did not return to idols? But that seems weak since God seems to be referring to his acts and not theirs?

MH: I would say this is a good instance to point out that you shouldn't isolate the phrase “will never do again” from what surrounds it. Let me just read the passage. We'll just jump into it this way.

⁸ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. ⁹ And *because of all your abominations* [MH: key line there] I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again. ¹⁰ Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers. And I will execute judgments on you, and any of you who survive I will scatter to all the winds.

It very clearly links the abominations of the people with the judgment that comes. So I think the questioner clearly sees that. It seems that they do see clearly that God sends judgment and people are reduced to cannibalism and these horrible circumstances, and of course (later in the book of Ezekiel) what actually happens to the city and the temple and all that. Well, that's what happens when God's people sell themselves to idolatry. That's the end. That's the end of that trajectory. The circumstances are a judgment for idolatry. In fact, Jeremiah 19:9 says the same thing. I'll just read that:

I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.

This was something that happened in siege warfare if the siege went long enough. Siege warfare is you surround the city. You cut the city off from its water supply and its food supply. If there are fields outside the city, you burn them. They're not eating. “We're going to sit out here until you surrender. You can do it now, or you can do it six months from now. It's a vacation for us (or a staycation),

for the army. We're just going to sit here with your city surrounded and we're not going anywhere. Nobody's getting in; nobody's getting out. And you're not eating." So that's just how siege warfare was done. Later on (what the questioner is alluding to with Rome) when Rome did what it did, that wasn't a judgment because of idolatry. The Jews weren't idolators. It wasn't the same situation (like it was with Babylon), so it isn't a repetition of the Judah/Babylon judgment. Rome also didn't exile the population. They did different things with their captives or their victims or the defeated people. So I really don't think that we can look at the passage and then look at Rome and say, "God did the same thing." No, he actually didn't, because what happens with Rome is not a punishment for idolatry. So I think we need to keep those two thoughts together because they are in the text together.

So how do we view the Roman persecution/destruction of the temple when they did it? Obviously, to somebody living during that time, they're going to see analogies with Babylon because the temple was destroyed. There were two temples. Those were the two who destroyed them: Babylon and then Rome. But the circumstances are quite different. Frankly, what happens with Rome is in concert with the succession of empires that Daniel prophesied about—that would oppose God's people. And, frankly, the fourth kingdom (Rome, in this case) was worse than all of the rest of them. But there's no suggestion in Daniel 7 or Daniel 2 that all of the kingdoms were instruments of God because of Israelite or Jewish idolatry. Rather, they were what they were. They were kingdoms filled with people who were not God's people. They were unredeemed, or unbelievers, or however you want to characterize them. They were kingdoms bent on conquest (especially Greece and Rome) and they were the tools of their own gods working their own designs—their own plans for their own purposes. And God's people get in the way. It was during the Roman time that, right under Rome's nose (think of it this way), when they're doing all this terrible stuff to the temple and the Jewish people, that the true king had been born whose kingdom would—and did—outlast Rome and overturn it and defeat it. And ultimately, it's still on that trajectory toward the consummation. The kingdom of God (the kingdom made without hands, the stone made without hands) was born out of this matrix, this awful era. That's when it's born.

Now there are those (I think tragically, because there's nothing terribly specific in scripture that it ought to be framed this way)... But there would be some that would say even though it's not a punishment for idolatry... So you have this disconnect with Ezekiel. They would say, "Well, the temple got destroyed and the Jews got overcome and the Jews have been persecuted ever since because they rejected Jesus the Messiah." Like they're forever cursed now. And scripture does not use this cursing language of the people of God. Paul's very honest in saying there's a period of hardening that they're in right now. And he links that to the gospel going to the Gentiles and the fullness of the Gentiles idea. But Paul's attitude towards his own countrymen was not, "Well, they're going to get what they deserve. Good. God is just. God's going to punish them from here on out

forever because of this.” No, he doesn’t say anything like that. Paul’s concern is that they become the spiritual seed of Abraham. The physical seed of Abraham is transformed by belief in the Messiah, by embracing the Messiah. What he wanted was their conversion. He wasn’t sitting on the sidelines clapping or shrugging his shoulders saying, “Well, that’s the way it goes.” But a lot of people in late antiquity—early Middle Ages—this is the stance they adopted, and it really was part of the recipe for anti-Semitism. And we’re still dealing with that, too. So I think that’s a bit of an inversion or a perversion of the set of circumstances that extended from what happened during the Roman period. But it’s not really a good analogy to Ezekiel because we’re not dealing with a punishment for idolatry there.

TS: Tim from Missouri wants to know:

33:50 **Why did God create plants “before they were in the earth?” (Gen. 2:5)**

MH: Let’s read Genesis 2:5:

When no bush of the field was yet in the land, and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God did not cause it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.

35:00 So there’s a number of ways (and I’m not going to quibble about this) to take this. Here’s the way I would do this. Genesis 1 and 2 are two retellings of the creation story. They aren’t meant to be read as a linear combined chronology, because they obviously aren’t. You’d have to have a fairly inept editor if that was your intention. “Hey, read chapters 1 and 2 as a linear chronology.” Then you make statements like this, which... “In Genesis 2:5, there’s ‘no bush of the field was yet in the land,’ well, what about the land stuff that he created back in Genesis 1? There goes the chronology.” Yes, that’s the case. There goes the chronology, and it ought to inform you that Genesis 1 and 2 was not meant to be read as a linear sequence of events, one following the other. Genesis 2 is something a little bit different. Genesis 2 repeats certain things in Genesis 1 and it also adds details and tells the story from a different perspective for different reasons. They could be the result of different authors, as well, each with his own agenda (like the Synoptic Gospels). I’ve already made the comment that I think Genesis 1 through 11 is substantially composed or edited during the exile in Babylon, because there’s a Babylonian polemic running through those 11 chapters—almost on every page.

Now, you could have had an existing creation story in Genesis 2 that gets married to the material that’s created in Genesis 1 through 11 during the Babylonian exile by an editor. That’s fine. I don’t have any problem with that. There are different agendas. They’re both included because they’re different perspectives. They have different audiences in mind. That’s likely what you have. It’s kind of like the Synoptic Gospels. Why can’t we have this in Genesis when

we have it in the Synoptic Gospels? You've got Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They not only don't always have the same events in their Gospels, but even when they *do* have the same events sometimes the order is different. And the reason is because each writer had a way of presenting the material intentionally to his specific audience for a specific reason.

I wish I knew if this is online somewhere. I actually saw this pop up on Twitter. A few weeks ago (maybe a month or so ago), I was in Salt Lake and I did a couple of sessions on inspiration of the Bible. What I tried to do in the series of lectures was pick out things that I knew would make the audience uncomfortable, because the way we're taught to think about inspiration is this paranormal event where God zaps people and their minds go blank and out comes scripture like automatic writing. We treat the Bible like it's a channeled document. I'm using New Age terminology there deliberately. Like it's the *Urantia Book*. ETs or aliens or some spirit took over the mind of the writer and the writer doesn't know what he's doing. He just cranks out material and then looks at it later and says, "Oh, I can't wait to read that." No, that is *not* the way we got scripture. It's demonstrably the case.

So we look at things like *this* and think it's a problem because that's the way we're taught to think about the Bible—that the mind of God or the Spirit of God just took over a person and produced stuff, implanted it into their heads, downloaded them like *The Matrix*. That is *not* the way the Bible was produced. It just isn't. And there are hundreds and hundreds of things in the Bible itself that tells you that isn't what happened. And this is one of them.

So to finish the rabbit trail here, my view is that we ought to have a view of inspiration that actually conforms to what we find in the Bible. Wouldn't that be nice? It's just a suggestion. Let's talk about inspiration in a way that actually reflects and honors what we actually find in the document that we say is inspired. That would be a good idea. So just like the Synoptic Gospels, they present their material in a deliberate way for a deliberate reason.

During that session in Salt Lake, I used the gospel of Matthew as an example. The whole document of the Gospel of Matthew (all 28 chapters) can be put into a huge chiasm. It's a deliberate literary arrangement. Even within each point of the chiasm... (If you don't know what a chiasm is, I guess the best thing I can tell you to do is look it up. It's you order events in a sequence, and they lead to a hinge point. From that point on, they double back on themselves. They mirror what came before, point by point by point.) Even within each point of the grander chiasm, there are chiasms. It's just this fantastic literary thing that's well-known to New Testament scholars. Well, Luke isn't like that. Mark's not like that. Matthew does it that way because he has his own reasons for presenting the material that way so that one thought mirrors the other thought. One thought goes with another thought. He just assumes his readers are going to pick up on that sort of stuff.

40:00

This is what you have in Genesis. This is what you have in Chronicles and Samuel and Kings. There are records of the same thing, but they're presented in different ways for different reasons, different purposes. So Genesis 1 and 2 could very well be separate accounts. Different authors, same author, I don't really care. I'm not a JEDP-er. As I've said many times on the podcast, I am what used to be called a "supplementarian—there's a Mosaic core that was added to and it accrued until it reached the final form of the Pentateuch. So it doesn't bother me in the least to have something done in Babylon that incorporates earlier material from a different hand. So what? It's all there. It's just the same account from a different perspective. So that's the way I look at stuff like this. This is a literary and theological account. It is not an account of a running chronology between these two chapters, because it can't coherently be read that way. These sorts of things only become problems when we want the text to conform to a context of our own (like modern science or a modern sense of how you should write something). Our context is thousands of years removed from the writer and his original audience. So I would say, let's just stick with the Bible as it is. Let the Bible be what it is and go with the techniques and the agendas of the original author and audience, and that's what we have. Maybe we wouldn't do it the same way. Fine. Doesn't matter. This is what they did, and God was fine with the original product.

TS: Alright. Tim's next question has the word of the week [MH laughs], and that is:

41:20

Is Genesis 3:15 wrongfully labeled the "Protoevangelion?"

MH: For those who... Protoevangelion or Protoeuangelion, depending how it's spelled. This is a word that means the gospel story in seed form. I'm trying to think of a good analogy here. It's sort of like a time-release capsule [laughs]. Like is Genesis 3:15 essentially the whole story of the plan of salvation in that one verse? Are all the ingredients sort of in there, and everything else is going to sprout from this? I'll read the verse:

I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

So this is God cursing the *nachash* (the serpent). So back to the question, "Is Genesis 3:15 wrongfully labeled the Protoevangelion?" The short answer is, it depends what you're thinking and how you're thinking about the proto-gospel. It depends what you pack into that. Now, if what you mean by that is the broad idea that there would one day come a man from Eve who would undo the effects of what had happened in Eden, well, that's fine. You can read Genesis 3:15 as saying that much. Now, that isn't a whole lot. "Well, someday, one of your descendants, Eve, is going to undo the effects of what the serpent (the *nachash*)

has caused here.” That isn’t saying a whole lot, but what it *is* saying is absolutely crucial to the rest of the story. So if that’s all you mean by the proto-gospel (the Protoevangelion), okay, sure. Go ahead and call it that. Now, I would think that it’s mislabeled, though, if somebody is trying to extract *all* the details of the work of the cross from that verse. That just goes way too far. But if it’s broadly stated, that there’s going to be a man descended from Eve that’s going to undo the effects of the Fall that were caused by the serpent’s deception... If that’s what you’re going to say, well, that captures the gist of the messianic accomplishment (at least as it relates to the first rebellion, the Fall).

TS: Alright, Mike, well that does it for this week. We appreciate you taking the time to answer our questions, and also, I got confirmation of the location for our live Q&A in Denver next month. That’s going to be at the Colorado Community Church in the Upper Room.

MH: The “Upper Room.” [laughs] That’s a nice touch.

TS: So that’s Friday, November 16th at 7:00pm. So you want to come just a little bit early if you can. That’s going to be at the Upper Room at the Colorado Community Church. And we appreciate them for hosting us. We hope to see you there. That’s the location, Mike, so now we know where to go.

MH: Good.

TS: Looking forward to it. Well, Mike, we appreciate you taking the time to answer our questions. And I want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.