

**Naked Bible Podcast Transcript**  
**Episode 285**  
**Evil and Satan**  
**August 18, 2019**

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**Episode Summary**

Many listeners will know that the New Testament teaching about Satan underwent a good deal of development during the centuries that followed the Old Testament era. Like many theological concepts that begin in some form in the Old Testament (e.g., sacred space, kingdom of God), the subject of God's main adversary (among other adversaries) develops over the course of time in the literature sacred to both Jews and Christians. In this episode we talk about that development with Dr. Archie Wright, whose academic work focuses on Second Temple Judaism and Christian origins, particularly in regard to the forces and figures of supernatural evil.

**Transcript**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 285: Evil and Satan, with Archie Wright. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike. We finally got Archie on our show.

**MH:** Yeah, "finally" is the right word for it. It's been a long time.

**TS:** It has. We tried to do this last year. As some of our listeners may have realized, he was at our first annual conference.

**MH:** Yep. And it just didn't work out. But we kept thinking about it. And it worked out this time.

**TS:** And this is just a reminder that our second annual conference is just around the corner. We still have a few tickets available. So go to [NakedBibleConference.com](http://NakedBibleConference.com). It'll be here before we know it.

**MH:** Yeah, I know. It is coming up, and I'm looking forward to it.

**TS:** Well, Mike, we have some exciting news. We have a book that we'd like to talk about. It's called *One Big Family in the Heavens and on the Earth*. What's that about?

**MH:** It's a kids' book. I get asked all the time, "Hey, are there kids' books about the Divine Council worldview stuff that's in your books?" There are two women on the East Coast, Sue and Laurel. And they have written this book. It's aimed at pre-schoolers (that age). Just a short little paperback kids' book with illustrations (nice, kid-friendly artwork) about what went on in Eden and the Old Testament story up through the tower of Babel with sort of a Divine Council framework, where Eden is God's home, and the cherubim and all that stuff. But it's specifically aimed at little kids (real small children). So this is the first of what we hope... We hope there will be others. But this is their debut effort to take my content and make it digestible for really small children.

**TS:** Yeah, it's exciting. Again, it's called *One Big Family*. You can look for it on Amazon. So please go leave a review if you get it. And we look forward to more books. It's very exciting.

**MH:** We do want to plug the book, but we're trying... Sue and Laurel asked us to help them publish the book, so we're publishing it through Naked Bible Press (that's the imprint). And it would really, really encourage them if you went out and bought the book. We obviously want all the authors that we bring on here to get a benefit out of this. But this is really unique. This is the first of its kind. And it would really encourage them to have you order a copy on Amazon and encourage them as they are going to work on trying to make the content friendly to kids of a very young age. I get lots of emails about, "Hey, how do you do this?" or "Hey, is there something like this?" And the answer used to be, "Hey, I don't know," and "No." [laughs] But now the answer is yes. This is something you can use, either for kids or grandkids just to get them started on thinking about the Bible in the way we really need to—thinking about the text through the eyes of the original author and the original recipients. So this is a good place to start.

**TS:** Yes, and it's just another place to help support what we're trying to do here at the Naked Bible, and we're excited with Naked Bible Press what other projects we're going to have in the future. So it's exciting. It's good news, Mike. I can't wait for the next books that we publish.

**MH:** Yeah, hopefully we'll be able to convince some people to give us conference papers or stuff like that—anything that's really going to be pertinent and helpful. For me, as soon as this was proposed, I thought, "Yeah, this is something we really have to do." Because there just literally is nothing in this space. So there's stuff in that other space that I just mentioned. But there's nothing here. So we're just hoping that this is a successful enterprise.

5:00 **TS:** Yeah! Naked Bible Press is something that you and I have talked about for two years now. So it's exciting to see it finally... This year is going to be huge. We have other things coming.

**MH:** And while we're on it, there may be somebody out there that has taken *Supernatural* or *Unseen Realm* and tried to produce notes or lessons for a youth group. That's the kind of stuff that, if we can publish that... We are certainly willing to take a look at it and help promote it. It just needs to be done. There's just nothing in this space.

**TS:** Well there is now. It's called Naked Bible Press. There you go, Mike.  
[laughter]

**MH:** Right.

**TS:** Alright. Well, let's just jump in with Archie Wright.

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**MH:** Well, we're thrilled to have Archie Wright with us on the podcast, *finally*. [laughs] Archie spoke for us at the conference last year (the first Naked Bible Conference). But we didn't manage to get him on before that. So hey, at least we got you on before the second conference. [laughs]

**AW:** Yeah, better late than never, right?

**MH:** Yeah, really. You're going to be new to a lot of people in the audience. If they've read *Unseen Realm*, they're going to have seen your name in the footnotes. *The Origin of Evil Spirits* was a major work. You have other things as well on the whole Genesis 6:1-4 reception tradition and how that fits into Second Temple Jewish demonology. But I want you to introduce yourself as far as where you went to school, where you're teaching, maybe a couple of classes you teach normally. And then get into the interview. And mention your new book. So go ahead. Tell everybody about yourself, Archie.

**AW:** Okay. I currently teach at Regent University in Virginia. My title is Associate Professor of Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins. I did my PhD at the University of Durham in the UK under Loren Stuckenbruck and Robert Hayward. It was titled *The Origin of Evil Spirits*, which you can imagine. [laughs]

**MH:** Sure.

**AW:** I did my master's in Ancient Languages and Early Judaism at Oral Roberts University and did my undergrad in New Testament and Old Testament there also.

**MH:** I have to ask you. What was it like being a graduate student under Stuckenbruck?

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**AW:** It was fantastic.

**MH:** Good, I'm glad to hear that.

**AW:** He is a... I would highly recommend anyone to study with him. He is probably one of the top in Second Temple Judaism, Dead Sea Scrolls, Enoch literature especially, which was my primary focus at that point. He's a great person. I couldn't ask for a better supervisor. And also Robert Hayward. He was fantastic, too.

**MH:** Yeah. I've never met either of them. But I'm more familiar with Stuckenbruck's work, naturally.

**AW:** Yeah, sure.

**MH:** And I've heard good things, but I don't know that I've ever really talked to anybody who was under him as far as direction. So that's good to hear. That's the way it's supposed to be. Somebody who's...

**AW:** Yeah. He was very hands-on. I would hand stuff in and he would give it back with... [laughter]

**MH:** Copious notes? [laughter]

**AW:** Yeah. [laughs] Good ones, though.

**MH:** "I'm going to publish my notes on your work." [laughter]

**AW:** Yeah, in the end, it was fantastic. Great experience. I know some people have some terrifying experiences with their PhD program/dissertation. But...

**MH:** That would be me. [laughter]

**AW:** Durham was great, and Stuckenbruck and Hayward were fantastic. I was also there with some other really impressive... Like Tom Wright and Jimmy Dunn and C.K. Barrett and John Barclay. So it was a fantastic group of scholars.

**MH:** Wow. That's like a heyday.

**AW:** Yeah.

**MH:** Wow. Other than *The Origin of Evil Spirits*, go ahead and mention some of your other books, including the new one. Our audience will be interested.

**AW:** A colleague at Regent (Kevin Spawn) and I did a book on the role of the Spirit in biblical interpretation [*Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Biblical Hermeneutic*]. That was kind of a result of a conference that we did, or at an

ongoing research session we do at IVR. And also did a two-volume edited anthology on Early Jewish Literature. It was originally titled *An Introduction in Literature*, [laughs] but it got so big that we had to go to two volumes and turned it into an anthology. That's been out now with Eerdmans for almost a year. It's having a really good reception. And it'd be a great textbook for anyone who's going to teach Early Jewish Literature, either in a university or college setting. So it's a variety of... Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, pseudepigrapha, Josephus, apocrypha, and Septuagint. And it gives a brief introduction to about 45 different texts from those six areas of literature. The new book I'm working on is about Satan (of all things). [laughs]

**MH:** No surprise... [laughs]

**AW:** People just tell me, "You've done work on evil spirits. You might as well go on and do the big guy." It's coming out with Fortress Press hopefully in the spring of 2020. I'm in the final stages of it. It's titled *The Problem of Evil: The Satan Tradition in Biblical and Extra-biblical Literature*. It carries from some of the allusions in ancient Near Eastern literature through the Jewish Scriptures into Second Temple period literature (the New Testament) and then goes on into the early Church Fathers. I think it is a significant addition to any research that's been done on the figure before, trying to figure out where we have that transition into this almost autonomous opponent of God in church tradition.

**MH:** I have the two-volume set. And I think for those in the audience who probably have things like Charlesworth... And then there are short introductions in Charlesworth. Maybe the old Stone volume (*Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*)—that Brill title. That was Fortress as well, I think. But this would be... I would characterize your two-volume set as a significant upgrade, both in terms of just being more up-to-date and just the material. I think that's fair to say.

**AW:** Yeah. And I think what it does is... With Charlesworth, it was basically the pseudepigrapha. This has given everyone a really...

**MH:** This is broader.

**AW:** ...a fantastic overview of six very important selections of texts, with a variety from the Dead Sea Scrolls, a good number of Philo's writings, a good number of Josephus' writings, and so forth. And they're all written and translated by the top scholars in the field. So I think we did a fantastic job with it, as did Eerdmans. It took a long time to get it out, but we finally made it.

**MH:** Mm hmm. Well let's... We do want to talk about Satan. [laughter]  
Specifically...

**AW:** Of all things.

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**MH:** Yeah, of all things. I guess in most contexts, he gets a little too much attention, but we have to give him some time here. And this is, of course, in conjunction with your specific book. This is why we wanted to have you on.

Let me jump in here with a question now. Obviously, many in our audience are going to know (at least will have been introduced to the thought) that the New Testament teaching about Satan underwent development during the centuries that... Just the flow of biblical literature. You're going to have this antecedent information. English Bibles are going to have various renderings of the Hebrew *satan* in the Old Testament. Then you have the Second Temple period on into the New Testament. So they're going to know from previous discussions on this podcast and a little bit in *Unseen Realm* (my book), that there's this concept of development. And what I'm wondering is, to a wider audience... You're a Second Temple Jewish origins guy. To a wider audience, both in terms of lay people but also in terms of Christian scholars in disciplines like systematic theology, do you find that a lot of them don't realize that there's been this development?

**AW:** Yeah, certainly. For the majority of Christians who are kind of focused on the New Testament, that becomes a significant issue. I think one of the first things we have to understand is that there's no single idea of what we would call a Judeo-Christian Satan figure in the Hebrew Bible or Septuagint (the Jewish Scriptures). He's understood as a heavenly being for the times that we look at him in this setting as being *the satan*. And he falls into what we call so-called angelic category. In fact, we even see the Angel of the Lord acting at times as a *satan*.

15:00

**MH:** Opposer, adversary, yep.

**AW:** Yeah. Numbers 22, for example, is the Balaam story. That's a really good example. He also functions in a role that's given to him by the heavenly divine court. In fact, as you know, he's likely a member of that divine court, if we look at texts such as Job 1 and Job 2 closely. I think we can see that there also. He also...

**MH:** Yeah, I always like to talk about it... And this is a bit (what's the right word) "overstated" to call it an office, even though you'll get Semitics guys like Lowell Handy who will flirt with that sort of approach. So it's not completely out of hand, but it might be a bit overstated. There aren't precise parallels as far as office-holders. But you get that role. There's a role that either God is using a member of the heavenly host to function as an opposer in some context, or like even with the Angel of the Lord with Balaam, obviously, impeding him. But yeah. Our audience is going to be familiar with that. Systematic theologian folks... I've had the experience of having... You know, these are people with PhDs (but it's just a different field). They'll kind of look at you like you have two heads. [laughter] Just wondering if you've had that experience, even at that level.

**AW:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. That's not foreign. Whenever you're dealing with traditions like this that they're so set on trying to figure out one and only answer to it, and it can only be that way, and trying to explain to them the development of this figure (like you said leading up to this). It's so important, the development of this figure. It's not a black and white issue. He wasn't this at this point in time and then became this at this point in time. There's this huge development that we'll talk to (I imagine) later on in this... But I agree with the office thing. I think that's a bit too far. I think there's a function of this being. And I think at times there may have been more than one of them functioning in this role. I'm not sure it's a single one. But we also see this figure acting as a kind of a prosecutor in Zechariah 3 when Joshua is brought before the Lord for the so-called questioning as to his worthiness as becoming high priest. I think we see that there also. So it's a multi-faceted role that this so-called angelic being... I don't really like that term (angelic).

**MH:** It's a little imprecise.

**AW:** Yeah. I like calling them heavenly beings.

**MH:** Yeah.

**AW:** I think somehow they come from that realm.

**MH:** Yeah, "angel" is more of a job description. So is *satan*.

**AW:** Yeah.

**MH:** So it's an awkward way of referring to it.

**AW:** Yeah. I think in general terms, though, that the term *ha satan* (and that's how the majority of the references are to the figure in the Old Testament) does not fall into the category or categories that Christians like to see him today. I think that's just not there—to see him as this anti-God figure in the Old Testament. Then when we get to the Second Temple period, we see a further transitioning of that where the term *satan* becomes even more enigmatic to the point of almost disappearing from use. But at the same time, there are multiple...

**MH:** Substitutes.

**AW:** ...other figures who come along, potentially taking up the role he holds, although it becomes a little bit different—a little more vague, so to speak.

**MH:** Do you think it's figures or is it terminology for an emerging tradition about an arch-rival or arch-enemy? Those are two related things. For lack of a better way of putting it, there's this entity we're talking about, as opposed to the way the



entity gets talked about. Do you see either one of those or is it a little bit of both? How do you look at that?

20:00

**AW:** I think it's probably a little bit of both. I think it's... Depending what your approach is going to be. Is it going to be a single figure, this *satan*? If so, then he kind of disappears. But if you want to look at it from the point of view that perhaps there are multiple adversarial figures... Again, one of our sticking points is terminology, so whenever we hear the word *satan* or Satan, we have this Judeo-Christian mindset that goes, "Oh! I know who that is!" But then if you think of that in the terminology sense where, what does the word mean? It means adversary. So when you start looking at the other figures or the other nomenclature that's used in Second Temple literature like Beliar, Belial, Mastema, angel of darkness... When you start looking at those, are these just other names for a similar type of role that's going on with the *satan* figure from Hebrew Bible? That's the question that nobody's really been quite able to sort out yet with Second Temple literature. There's been a lot of really good effort so far. And of course, I have two or three chapters in the book that are going to be directly related to Dead Sea Scrolls, pseudepigrapha, apocrypha, that treat all these various names—specifically how they relate in the scrolls. Who is the angel of darkness? Who is Beliar? So it's something that... I think there are a couple of different ways to look at it. And I don't know that there's one that really fits specifically to saying, yes, Satan becomes this figure in the Dead Sea Scrolls, or Satan becomes this figure in the pseudepigrapha. Because it's just not that clear with what's going on.

**MH:** For listeners, if you're not familiar with this... If you've read *Unseen Realm*, you should be familiar with this issue. *Ha satan* is a big deal, because you have *satan* (that's the noun) with the definite article appended to it, prefixed to it: *ha satan*. The *satan*. And in terms of Hebrew grammar, when you add a definite article to a noun, that... Proper personal nouns don't do that in Hebrew grammar. So it's the same as English. I'm not "the Mike." [AW laughs] I'm not talking to "the Archie." Hebrew rejects that the same way English does. So when you see it ("the" and then a noun, the *satan*) it tells you it's not a proper personal name. It's either a title or a role or something like that. It's just not a proper personal name. So that's what generates this discussion. For anybody listening who wants to get into that, you could actually put my webpage ([drms.com](http://drms.com)) and the word "satan" and "proper noun" or something like that and you're going to get a discussion of it. I blogged on that before; it was in *Unseen Realm*. So if this is all new to you, we're not going to drill down on the Hebrew stuff here because I want to get into the Second Temple material. But if you're already a little bit lost, I recommend reading that because that's where this issue arises from. It's not just a scholarly oddity. It's actually a phenomenon of the text and the grammar. But how do you... You teach a lot of students. Do you both undergrad and seminary?

**AW:** I do primarily seminary stuff, but I do teach some undergrad. But it's generally more... It's not biblical studies. It's more of a...



**MH:** Historical?

**AW:** ...historical, even theological stuff. But nothing that's going to touch this kind of a topic.

**MH:** I was wondering how you look at it. But when you get into just the concept... Not even this concept. I remember sitting in a... I guess it was a seminary class. And I don't remember precisely what the topic was. But when the concept of "theological development" first landed in my head, I thought, "What do you mean, theological development?" [laughs] Because you get this impression...

**AW:** It can't be... [laughs]

25:00

**MH:** Like doctrines are just handed down. And they never grow. They never develop. Nothing's ever added. Obviously, part of that thinking is because we aren't taught as believers really anywhere how to do biblical theology, where you start at one place and then you follow the breadcrumb trail through salvation history and things accrue. There is development. But I remember the first time I heard that, I thought, "What in the world? How can that be?" So I was going to ask you, how do you help people understand that? And how do *you* understand it (if you've never had to shepherd a flummoxed student along with that)?

**AW:** Let me correct what I... In undergraduate, I don't teach the biblical studies/theological side of things. In the graduate school and the School of Divinity I certainly do. So yes, this is a [laughs] question I think I can kind of offer something...

**MH:** Surely you've run into that. [laughs] The deer in the headlights.

**AW:** Yeah, absolutely. I think... This is one of the more difficult issues when you get into the classroom, trying to discuss with students and folks in a church, depending where they lie in the theological spectrum. That's the question mark when you first jump into this kind of thing with a classroom full of students. Where are you all on this spectrum of understanding? Is everything set in stone? So that's the thing. And I think at the same time this may depend on the theological issue in question. How much does this issue affect the person that you're talking to? How badly are you going to mess with their world?

So looking at theological development, I think certainly the issues evolved through periods of history. I think my area of starting in Hebrew Bible and moving forward into the New Testament, I see this development of theological issues on numerous occasions. And I think it has a lot to do with the changing needs of the people groups in question of how the theology is developing through various time periods. I think we even see it today in the case of the church, where there are different denominations in question. Theological development occurs

differently—specific issues in particular in various denominations in the church. In the ancient world, though, I think that there are varying viewpoints on things going on in and around the Jewish people, particularly in the Second Temple period. And as a result, the development and the strengthening or even the changing of theological ideas was not uncommon. I think it's something that you can see on a fairly regular basis, starting from Hebrew Scripture and then looking at how these concepts and ideas were developing into the Dead Sea Scrolls. The community's there—the pseudepigrapha and so forth on into the New Testament.

**MH:** What are these bodies of literature? They're people... The people at Qumran, they're people who take their Hebrew Bible seriously and they're thinking about it. [laughs] You know?

**AW:** Yeah.

**MH:** And they write stuff down and we can see where they were at any given point and what they were trying to noodle—problems they saw in the text. They're trying to understand things. They're not doing anything different than what we do now.

**AW:** No, no. Absolutely.

**MH:** So yeah. Sometimes I think maybe a good strategy is to take something that's really obvious (like sacred space)... We begin with Eden. God's building his temple, and there's Eden, the cosmic mountain. People can understand, okay, heaven comes to earth. God lives there. That's sacred space. And then you get Mount Sinai and you get the tabernacle and you get the temple. And by the time you get to the New Testament, you have Jesus show up and say, "Destroy this temple," referring to his own body... [laughs]

**AW:** Exactly.

**MH:** That's development. It's so obvious. And then believers become sacred space. So there's a very obvious development... It's hard to miss that. But you get that. But it might be useful (at least I've found it useful) to say, "Okay now, we all can see this one. There are other theological topics within the pages of this thing we call the Bible." And just in the flow of believing community history here (if we can use real broad terms) the same thing is happening.

**AW:** Yeah. Let me just throw you a couple of examples that happened in the Second Temple period, which you are familiar with. So it's a very short period of time... (Although 400-500 years in some perspectives is not a short period of time.) But there are significant developments going on in the theology of the Jewish people at this time. One that I've written on is the idea of evil spirits. So like the *satan* figure in the Hebrew Bible, there's very little evidence of evil spirits

as most Christians would understand them today. It's just not there. Not until the Enochic text of the Book of Watchers comes along did this idea of the oppressive, tempting, semi-autonomous type of evil spirit seem to have a part in the theological worldview of Jewish people. But it was there, starting in probably the early third century B.C. and on through. Why? I think one idea to propose is that maybe this is a result or the desire or need of the Jewish people to have a response to the problem of evil during the Second Temple period. They're looking around and going, "What's going on with us? What's going on in our communities?" They're asking the question, "Why are we, your people, suffering?" And they're trying to figure out, based on their reading of Genesis 6:1-4, why these evil spirits have shown up. So that's part of it.

**MH:** That's a good example, especially when it comes to... You used the trajectory of personal temptation. Because the Septuagint obviously is part of the Second Temple period and they're looking back into the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) and they're going to be using terminology... They're going to be seeing things in the Hebrew Bible and they're going to be calling it a *daimonion* or something like that. And that language... Your point is that that language for a particular entity... I mean *daimonion* might refer to a foreign deity in the Hebrew Bible. And there's nothing in the Hebrew Bible about that particular foreign deity tempting someone to personal sin. Maybe there's a sense in some passages about a seduction into idolatry. But you're talking about in your example this seduction to some sort of immorality or personal sin or something like that. But now that we have this label (*daimonion*) which itself is neutral... It's just a spiritual being. But now some of them are (looking back into the Old Testament) bad guys. I'm using the broadest terms possible. They're bad guys. They're not on our side. So that becomes a useful term to convey this next idea, which is what you're talking about as far as depravity and personal evil and whatnot.

**AW:** Yeah.

**MH:** So there's terminology issues there. There are context issues (like you were just talking about). But it's kind of the thing when you see what they're doing, looking back into their Scriptures... They're taking their Scriptures seriously. And then they're talking about it in certain ways and using vocabulary, and then that vocabulary itself becomes subject to... It's malleable. It can get applied in different ways.

**AW:** Absolutely. I think the other example is the angels, which you've talked about numerous times. But I think you see that development there, that was necessary (so to speak) because of what looked like a changing worldview and theological positioning of the Jewish people about who God was over against what the Gentile nations are that are surrounding them. I think you had talked about that a great deal. But I think that's another idea where we see this idea of angels and how that theological issue or idea or concept developed from the

Hebrew Bible/Septuagint on into the Jewish texts and then forward from there. I think that changes something...

**MH:** Let's take that and talk about some of the terms you brought up earlier. Why would this sense that... Okay, we're going to use the broadest terms we can. Back in the garden (or Ezekiel 28 or whatever)... Somebody who has the whole Hebrew Bible. They're reading it. They're just at the cusp, just getting into what we call the Second Temple period. So they're reading their Scriptures and they can see that we had... The humans were deceived by this supernatural agent. "Boy, wasn't that an awful thing? Look at the catastrophe this was." And so you don't get a whole lot... Some would say you don't get any reference back to specifically Genesis 3 when it comes to the human dilemma other than maybe death (the realm of the dead) or something like that. Now you get into the Second Temple period, why do we get a term like Mastema? Who would have...? I'm not going to ask you because it's an unanswerable question. But who came up with that? [laughter]

**AW:** The author of Jubilees. [laughter]

35:00

**MH:** Right. But why...? What do you think is going on inside their head? Give us a couple of terms and what they mean. But what would be going on their head to all of a sudden have this term pop into their head and, "Yep, it fits. I see this term as applying to either the one big guy," or something else. What do you think they were thinking about? What prompted it? (Possibly. Obviously we don't know for sure where these words initially come from.)

**AW:** Yeah, we don't.

**MH:** But what might be the thought process?

**AW:** First of all, we know it's from the term... Mastema first emerges in the book of Jubilees, which is mid second century B.C.E. Jewish texts, along the lines of the timeline of some of the Qumran scrolls. I think we have the issue of... Again, I think they all kind of surround the problem of evil—how they explain what's going on in relation to the oppression of Israel, the oppression of individuals, the oppression of communities. So I think you would know more about the etymology of these words than I would. But I think that they're saying probably that the term *satan* in Hebrew Bible and they're kind of maybe throwing a new twist or niche to that in their understanding of, "Well, let's have this lead figure of these evil spirits that we're going to take out of the Enochic Book of Watchers story and bring him into the book of Jubilees." So now they've decided, "Well, I think they kind of need a leader. We can't have them running amuck around the world. So I think the author of Jubilees is perhaps seeing, "Well, maybe we could take on this Satan figure from Hebrew Bible and kind of twist that image a little bit and put him over these evil spirits so that they're not out of control." There's some kind of divine control over what's going on with these evil spirits. They know they're

there now. They know. They've read about them. They've heard about them. They believe they're seeing the action of these spirits in the midst of the Jewish people in the Second Temple period, but now the author of Jubilees thinks, "Well, maybe we should put a little divine sovereignty, a little divine authority above these evil spirits. So let's take this Satan figure and put him over them." I think that's kind of what might have been going on.

**MH:** For sure, some of the terms would be almost gestures of contempt.

**AW:** Yeah.

40:00

**MH:** Belial. That's "worthless one." So you get some of that. And I would agree that... Again, a sweeping generalization. What upright Jew with a high view of his Bible and a high view of God and God's providential control over things... That person is not going to look at the other side as evil and just say it's autonomous. In other words, God has to have some sort of... There has to be some kind of check and balance. There have to be some kind of limitations. Because the only unlimited being is the God of Israel. It's that kind of thing. So we have to circumscribe this in some way. So they're thinking about how that needs to be. And then once that thought takes hold, how do we express that? And that's where you get some of these other expressions and the vocabulary and the descriptions and things like that that... I tend to think that... There isn't much (I know there's going to be something)... But there isn't a whole lot in Second Temple literature that the data points or the seed thoughts (the little kernels)... That's going to come from the Hebrew Bible. But the things aren't connected. They're not put into a narrative. They're just sort of scattered. And as people think about what they're seeing in the text... (And then to add to your thought about context) then they look at themselves, like "Look at our situation here." They're going to essentially do the exegetical math. [laughs] they're going to try to put those things together and come out with a coherent way (within their context, within their community) of talking about this. Essentially, not only how life is, but how the spiritual component of life, both good and evil, is working. They're going to try to address that. And that's a very human enterprise. We wouldn't look at what we do today (as either writers or pastors, or our church leaders)... We produce things. We talk about things (verbal or written). Nobody is going to look at that and say, "Well you shouldn't be doing that." You know?

**AW:** Yeah.

**MH:** "All of this should be self-evident. No one should be writing or commenting about anything." Nobody's going to look at what ministry is or what the Christian life is that way. But then somehow, when you hear a discussion like we're having here about, "Well, you know, they had to think about that. It took them 100 years to get the point of, 'Yeah, there's where we want to be.'" They finally were able to articulate it well. And then you see development of thought on various topics. Why is that any less legitimate than what we're doing today?

**AW:** Yeah. I think it's a very key exegetical component of what was going on in the second and first century B.C.E. within Judaism. They were looking at... And we can see this in the Pesharim (the commentaries on the prophets) in the Dead Sea Scrolls where the authors of those texts are looking at the prophet texts of the Hebrew Bible and they're putting them into their everyday context. "This is what the prophet said. Here's what it means to us." So I think that trying to put something, a name connecting something to a theological issue that they're trying to examine, trying to understand in their community context... Coming up with the name Mastema to try to control these evil spirits. Or trying to read Isaiah in light of the Qumran community. It's very much what they were trying to do, just as we do today. When we're reading the New Testament, we're trying to put it in our context. The thing to keep in mind is "What did the text mean to the community?"

**MH:** Right. They had a context, too.

**AW:** Right, exactly.

**MH:** You would like their context to guide us, as opposed to the other way around.

**AW:** Yeah, yeah.

**MH:** That's essentially why this podcast exists. [laughter]

**AW:** Exactly.

**MH:** This is sort of an "inside baseball" question. I'm not asking you to land anywhere here. But when you talk about the community in the Second Temple considering their own oppression, do you think... When you say "oppression," are you...? (How do I ask this?) It doesn't matter to me where you come down on this, because this is going to bring N.T. Wright into this discussion. [laughs]

**AW:** I'm not going to answer it then. [laughter]

**MH:** Do you think they still considered themselves to be in exile? Is that what we mean by oppression? Or is it the immediate Roman problem? What do you think? That is an inside baseball question.

**AW:** Well, if I wanted to land on Tom's good side... [laughter] I would say, "Yes, they're still in exile."

**MH:** I find that attractive. I'm not saying that... I don't know if it's...



**AW:** It *is* attractive, but I think that... If you look at exile, they are in an exile of not being in the right place where God wants them. If you want to look at it broadly like that, I think maybe you could say that. But have they ever properly come back from Babylon? I don't know that they have.

**MH:** Yeah. Because you get these prophecies that assume (or presume) that all twelve tribes are going to be restored. So that's got to be a lingering sense that... I like the way you put it, that some things are not the way they're supposed to be.

**AW:** Yeah. I think that's clear through all the Second Temple texts for sure. "We're not right. We're not in the right place. Where are we supposed to be?" And I think you make a very good point about the entire twelve tribes. That would suggest they're still in exile, too.

**MH:** Yeah. That has big implications. Let's go back to something a little easier, like Satan. [laughter]

**AW:** Yeah, of course. [laughter]

**MH:** Okay. Now you have some Second Temple texts that have multiple *satans* or Satans. Do you think that is sort of a generic application of a Hebrew term to just various bad guys? That the point of having multiple *satans* is literally no more than that? It's a term that we now find useful just to label bad guys. Or do you think there's something else theologically going on there?

45:00

**AW:** Hmm. Interesting. This may go back to your question on theological development to some degree. I think when you're looking at the Second Temple texts, I think it's important that we don't dump all these Second Temple texts into one barrel. And I think people have a tendency to do that with all these texts. They have a tendency to... I have students that talk about the Old Testament as if it's one big book. Or they talk about the New Testament as if it's one big book. So I think the same thing is true of this literature. And no, I don't think there's a significant variety of texts that belong to this period—a variety of sectarian groups writing from its own somewhat unique perspective. So all these texts are very different. So we can't really clump all of the Dead Sea Scrolls together, as they're written by different groups during different time periods that can vary as much as 300 years with the scrolls. And this is kind of what you're talking about with these multiple *satans*. It comes from the scrolls and then also the Enoch texts, too. So I think one has to determine on an individual basis how one author is using a term over against another author—with scrolls versus the pseudepigrapha or apocrypha.

But then back to your question, "How do we understand this?" It depends on how we define the term *satan*. I mentioned how we have to determine the contextual meaning. Does it mean adversary? And that's the legitimate translation of the term *satan*. Or does it mean Satan (big S)? I think that's one of the questions you



have to think in context here. If adversary, then yes, there can certainly be multiple adversaries (human and supernatural). So we have to realize that even the term *satan* in the Hebrew Bible is primarily a human adversary. The majority of occasions where it's used in the Hebrew Bible, it's referring to an adversary, not a spiritual adversary. I think there may be more than one Satan operating in the cosmos in the minds of the various authors (and perhaps maybe there still are multiple Satans operating in the cosmos). But I think definitely...

**MH:** Yeah, just depending on what they were thinking, how they were thinking about it.

**AW:** Yeah. It all depends how you define that term. Is it a big S or...? I hate to even think that way. But "adversary" is the key to understanding. That should be your first stop when you're looking at the term *satan*, whether it's in the Hebrew Bible or Second Temple literature, even in the New Testament too. "Adversary" is the key to understanding. But part of the problem in our thinking about this figure is that we make him almost omnipresent. So when you start thinking about multiple Satans, to me that kind of makes sense sometimes. So in other words, he can be anywhere at any time, if you make him Satan with a big S. He's almost like God to some people. They think he can be anywhere at any time. That he can be here in Virginia harassing me and at the same time harassing you wherever you might be. He doesn't have that power. And the Jews in the Second Temple period realized that. And if there *are* multiple *satans*, I think that's a very legitimate understanding for them during that time period. And that may be where these varieties of names started to come into play that we see in the scrolls and pseudepigrapha. There were just rather confusingly (maybe for them) using the same term over and over again. Then maybe they started to draw on other terms that have variations about what they were actually doing or how they were functioning.

**MH:** Mm hmm. Why do you think... There are probably half a dozen different possible trajectories to answering this question. Taking what you just said and then going back to... At some point, you have a lead adversary that... (How do I want to say this?) At this point, there's this perception of the need for order and hierarchy in the hostile spiritual world. And the lead figure (lead adversary, lead opposer) is referred to as (in the New Testament *Satanas*) Satan (with a capital S). So why do you think that that made sense? Because that figure gets linked back to the garden. So why do you think...? What are some of the possible thought processes for assigning the lead role (or at least preeminence) to that figure? There's a way I would answer this or approach this, but I'm just wondering what you think the logic may have been?

50:00

**AW:** Well I think it goes back to what we talked about a few minutes ago about having the divine sovereignty (divine authority) in place so that things don't just run amuck. I think that's probably...

**MH:** So you would look at elevating the one as sort of an appointment? In other words, who looked at him as the lead? Is that something that a Jewish writer would say, “God appointed this one to wrangle the other ones.” Or would you say, “The other ones look at this one as preeminent.” Or which direction does that go?

**AW:** I think if you look at the *satan* figure in Job, his task there is to go to and fro on the earth, testing and trying God’s faithful (or even the unfaithful—who knows?). So now all of a sudden, in the Jewish worldview in the Second Temple period, we have these evil spirits that are suddenly on the stage where they weren’t there in the Job story, but they’re now there in Judaism of Second Temple period. And their task is similar to what we see, although at times they seem a bit more violent. But that’s really hard to say for sure. But I think the authors had decided, “Let’s set Satan over these…” All they really had to do is look at the book of Job. And they say, “Oh.”

**MH:** So the reasoning would be that, “ultimately God must have oversight over this, so who would God appoint? Well, he would appoint this guy.”

**AW:** Yeah. Why not?

**MH:** Okay, so that’s one potential route that these Jewish writers could have taken to “make sense of” all that. Am I summarizing that correctly?

**AW:** Yeah, I think so. I think they’re trying to keep God in control and this figure is already in the literature. And remember, they’re reading just like they read Genesis 6:1-4 for the development of evil spirits. They’re now looking at, “These spirits kind of need somebody to keep them under control.” And if you look at Jubilees, you see this is exactly what’s going on. The Satan figure there called Mastema is given permission by God to keep some of these evil spirits that come from the Watcher tradition, to work with him in order that he can fulfill his task on the earth, which is to test and to put to trial humanity.

**MH:** What was it? Ten percent or a tenth?

**AW:** Ten percent. In some people’s minds, there’s a gazillion demons on the earth today. But if you think about how many there possibly could have been, based on that, if only 10% are left, we’re probably lucky.

**MH:** This just popped into my head when you said that. But I often get that question on Q&A. To me, this seems to mean something. In the Bible you get this “myriads upon myriads” language of the heavenly host. That’s never used of those in rebellion. It’s only used of just generic heavenly host, those who are loyal to God.

**AW:** Yes.

**MH:** So it would seem to suggest that there's a finite number. A much smaller number.

**AW:** Yes. That's what I thought too. Yeah.

**MH:** Maybe a Second Temple writer... Who knows if that's why they had that thought. I'm just saying that's the thought I have. But that seems consistent. Just a finite subset. Not this "gazillions," like you said.

**AW:** Yeah. And it keeps things in control. I think that's one of the keys, that they're trying to keep this force of evil (whatever you want to call it)... The authors are trying to keep this under some kind of control, because God is still sovereign over it. So it can't get out of control. So if there's massive number of demons running around, God says, "Okay, I'll give you 10%, Mastema. That's it." You can use them to fulfill your task. That's it."

**MH:** Right. That's God's decision to make. It's not his.

**AW:** Yes. Right.

55:00

**MH:** And you could see a Second Temple writer... That's a good way to express the idea of oversight. You could see how that might work.

Last question. You mentioned that your book... And this is different (for books on Satan, at least the academic ones that I have), including the early church in the discussion. So a very broad question here. What's different about the way the early church thought about Satan as opposed to Second Temple Jewish communities? Give us an example. What would they have thought about?  
[laughs]

**AW:** Well, what we have to understand when we get into the Early Church is, we have the apostolic fathers. We have the apologists. Then we group them together with the Early Church Fathers. But one of the main things you have to keep in mind is why they were saying things and what their purpose was. Their primary response (and you can see this in the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, and even into Augustine)... Their use of the Satan figure... Or the development is a better way to put it—theological development. (There we go back to our early question, coming full circle here.) Their purpose was to thwart the heretical teaching (primarily in the Gnostics) that this figure (the demiurge) was another name for the devil or the *satan*. He was the bad guy. So the Early Church is trying to narrow the power and the authority of this devil/*satan* figure in the Early Church.

So part of the development that we see there is in response to the heretical ideas of who Satan was or the power that he had. So maybe they're at the same time

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trying to put a lid on the power (the authority) of the Satan figure. But one thing we look at... And the New Testament, moving on into the Early Church period and the second and third centuries C.E... You can read some of the New Testament in the same way that you can read the function or the role of the Satan figure in early Jewish texts or even the Hebrew Bible, where his task and purpose is to test and try individuals, the righteous, even Jesus himself in the trial of temptation in the wilderness. I think that's something we have to recognize. So this theological development is still going on, even into the New Testament. And then when you get into the Early Church Fathers, this seems to be where this thing clicks, where he becomes an almost semi-autonomous anti-God figure. Where I think he's most likely, if you're reading it properly, he's an anti-humanity figure which was his view of humanity the whole time, running from the Hebrew Bible all the way through Second Temple into the New Testament. I don't know that he's really... Describing him as an anti-God figure is, I don't think, the right language to use. I think anti-human, because he's jealous of humanity. If you look at the *Life of Adam and Eve*, which is an early second century C.E. Jewish text where he rebelled because he was told to bow down to Adam and worship Adam. And he got mad and rebelled and got cast out of heaven, along with his angels. That's the first idea besides Revelation 12 where we see Satan rebelling against God. But he's never really anti-God. He's always been anti-Adam. Anti-Adam. Anti-Eve. And that's the difference that we see—probably a clearer understanding of who he should be. He's definitely against humanity. Definitely against us.

**MH:** Yeah. He's in favor of human destruction. [laughter]

**AW:** Yeah, exactly.

**MH:** That's the platform.

**AW:** I don't know if I answered your question there. I think I kind of rambled...

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**MH:** No, the demiurge thing is interesting because to a Gnostic, the evil demiurge is the God of the Bible. And you could see how the defenders of the God of the Bible... It's interesting how that battle would have played out. You have 2 Corinthians 4:4, "the god of this world," and the reference in 1 John as well. So you could see how the two sides could duke it out in a gnostic context by appealing, or by... I don't know what the right word is, appealing to or utilizing the notion of a main rival to set them off against each other. I could see that happening in a Gnostic context, where they would fight that way or at least the Early Church would have an effective rebuttal against the whole demiurge thing, pasting that onto the God of the Bible. Yeah, I could see that. That's interesting.

**AW:** But it just seems like particularly the apologists... Justin Martyr. He was the first one to make the connection between the serpent in the garden... Although let's keep in mind that there's no Satan in the garden scene in Genesis.

**MH:** Right, it's just *nachash*.

**AW:** It's just the serpent. So he's the first one that makes the connection between the serpent and Satan and the devil and the heretics. So he's battling their original story, because he's trying to limit the power of the Satan figure in the garden, whereas the Gnostics are trying to make Satan the reason the material world is evil. It's his fault. He's the one that made it that way. He's the one that created it that way, in fact. So the Early Church apologists are trying to limit... "Okay, we'll give the devil (the Satan) the credit with tempting Eve, but that's as far as it's going to go. He's not going to be this full-on... We'll push that agenda for him." So they're pushing the connection between the serpent and the devil and Satan in order to limit his power in the world that the Gnostics are trying to give him. The heretical...

**MH:** He's just a created being. At the end of the day, he's a created being.

**AW:** Exactly. Instead of being God #2. Right? That's where we see Marcion, in his evil God of the Old Testament versus his loving God of the New Testament. That's that same heretical, Gnostic worldview that he has that he tries to give Satan the equality of Yahweh, in fact. He goes along that line of, "Yeah, he's the bad God versus Jesus' God." So the apologists in the Early Church period are trying to limit the devil's power. So they're giving him that. "Okay, we'll let you have the temptation in the garden bit. But we're not going to give you any more of that." So they pushed that. And that causes the rise of the Satan figure to take on that role of this tempter of all humanity in the garden, which kind of fits with what we've seen running up to that. His job is to tempt humanity, test humanity. So let's just let him do it in the garden, too. And that's what happens.

**MH:** I'm going to tack one more question on here real quickly. I'm sure you've been asked this in class, maybe even in church if you've taught adult Sunday school in church, and people kind of get to know you and what you do. But here's the question. Why do we have to read all this non-biblical Jewish stuff? [AW laughs] In other words, what's the point? [laughs] Why are you making us do this? Or why do you think we should? So how do you answer that to an undergrad or somebody in church?

**AW:** That's how I get my paycheck. [laughter]

**MH:** That's what I get paid for. [laughter]

**AW:** Although, that's a smart...

**MH:** Here's the thumb screw. Wear it. [laughs]

1:05:00

**AW:** We're 2,000 years away from even the New Testament. So how do we really understand that? In order for us to get a fuller understanding of what the Gospels are saying, what the epistles are saying, what the book of Revelation (John's apocalypse) is saying... In order to properly understand what's going on in the New Testament, we have to see what's running up to that. Like we said earlier, what developments are occurring in ancient Israel, what's going on in the Assyrian and Babylonian exile, what's going on in there, what's going on in the Second Temple period, what's going on at Qumran? How do those things...? It's important for us to know how those things help us read the New Testament properly. I think that's the key. If we just look at the New Testament in a vacuum, we're just not going to understand what the message of the kingdom of God is really about. By understanding Jewish theology from the Second Temple period or Hebrew Bible or even the ancient Near East, we bring in from there to help us best to understand what the message of the New Testament is. I think that's the key to all this literature.

I try to tell my students (because I teach Early Jewish Literature at Regent)... And my students will ask me, "Why am I doing this?" And I said, "It's to help you understand what the message of the gospel is." And they said, "I could just do that on my own, can't I? I have the Spirit." I said, "Okay, fine. You can have the Spirit. But at the same time, you should be intellectually ready to defend." And this literature—the literature of the pseudepigrapha, the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the literature of the Hebrew Bible—helps us better understand what on earth Jesus was trying to say to us. What on earth was Paul trying to say to us? What was Peter trying to say to us? What was John trying to say to us? And I think having the tools in our tool bag to help read the New Testament in light of a Second Temple period context is what we need. Let me just say this. We actually just are about ready to start a monograph series with Baker Academic on the New Testament in its Second Temple context. So we have a list of contributors lined up to do that. So that's something you can look forward to down the road. But I think it's important. We have to have this context to properly understand what the New Testament is saying to us.

**MH:** Yeah. In a student's (and I think just believers in general)... If you ask them, "Write 1,000 words on what you believe about X (some social, cultural issue that has worldview implications)," they could produce that, but then the follow-up question would be, "Would you like me when I interpret this (this 1,000 words that you've given me) to be acquainted with your life and times when I do it, or can I just wait 10 years or 50 years and then assign an interpretation to it? Which would you rather have?"

**AW:** Exactly.

**MH:** "Do you want to be taken in context or not?" is the general question. So that's why you're doing it. Because the New Testament writers were part of this world. And they were trying to answer questions. They were trying to rebut



things. There were other things that they read that somebody else wrote that they found really useful to make a particular point over here or over there. And they interacted with it. They were acquainted with it. They interacted with it. It was part of what they (under the providence of God) produced—what God had them produce. They're interacting with it in a number of different ways. And if we know what they had to think about, we're going to catch what they're laying down a whole lot more efficiently. We'll just become better readers of the New Testament. We just sort of lack that.

**AW:** I think it's clear... If you look at the New Testament, you can see that the authors of the New Testament were reading this literature. So if they were reading it, I think we should read it too. [laughter]

**MH:** Yeah. That pretty much cuts to the chase. Well, thanks for spending an hour with us and talking about your work and what you do, especially the newest one on Satan. Lord willing, when we get to ETS and SBL... You said it would be out in 2020, right?

**AW:** Yeah.

**MH:** So when the calendar rolls around to that and when it's actually out (we always do interviews at ETS and SBL), we'll catch you after it comes out and remind people that, "Hey, you may have listened to this episode, but now it's here. So go get it."

**AW:** Absolutely. That sounds great. I appreciate it.

**MH:** Thank you.

**AW:** It's been fun, Mike. Thank you.

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**TS:** Alright, Mike, another good interview. Do you happen to have Archie's book that he's known for and the second book that's coming out?

**MH:** Yeah. The one that he's really known for that you'll see referenced in the footnotes in various places in *Unseen Realm* is *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature*. That's out in paperback now. It's very reasonable. In the old days (as we like to think, but it wasn't) it was expensive. But it's an affordable book now. And it's great. It is *the* best book out on the primary source material for Genesis 6:1-4 in Second Temple Judaism. And the other, the one that he just... This is real recent. This is the other two-volume set that he referred to. It's called *Early Jewish Literature: An Anthology Volumes 1 and 2*. I know it's an introduction and an anthology... It gives you

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overviews on, like Archie said, a whole bunch of Jewish literature within this period, not just the Dead Sea Scrolls and not just the pseudepigrapha, but a whole spectrum. I know it's an introduction, but it's actually a good reference work for a lot of our audience. So if you're looking for a book that gets you into that literature with good bibliography and gives you good summaries about what in the world this stuff is about, that... It's just a great title.

**TS:** Alright. We're going to follow up with Archie when his other book comes out and maybe have him back on.

**MH:** The one on Satan.

**TS:** Yeah, absolutely. Alright. Don't forget, our second annual Naked Bible Conference is just around the corner. Just a few tickets left. So go to [NakedBibleConference.com](http://NakedBibleConference.com) to get those tickets if you're interested. We hope to see you there. Also, we have some swag, so go over to [NakedBiblePodcast.com](http://NakedBiblePodcast.com), and there's an indie store link in the menu. Click that and you can get yourself a T-shirt or a pillow with our faces on it. [MH laughs] It's funny. I can't stress how much fun. I've been threatened...

**MH:** Have your dog sit on it or something. [laughs]

**TS:** You need to take pictures of it. You need to put Mori on it and take a picture of him, because I've been threatening to do this stuff for a long time, and we finally got around to doing it. So now we have T-shirts and coffee mugs and all kinds of fun stuff. It's just fun. I love it. Everyone, again, please go check out *One Big Family* on Amazon. We would appreciate it. And with that, Mike, we'll see you next week. And I want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.