

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 300

Q&A 36, Part 1

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Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers rapid-fire questions and listeners give their thoughts on the podcast.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 300. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike. 300! Five years! Many, many, many, many months later.

MH: I know. It's another milestone I didn't think we would reach. [laughs] I guess we look forward to the next one now.

TS: That's a lot. 300, Mike. I'm tired. Are you tired? I'm tired.

MH: *Today*, I'm feeling tired. Yeah. We're recording this the day after Thanksgiving.

TS: Did y'all eat a lot of food? Did y'all have family? Did y'all do the traditional big meal, all that stuff?

MH: Yeah, what, eat a big meal and watch your Fantasy season go down the tube? Yeah, we did that again. [laughs]

TS: Is that an every year thing for you?

MH: Nah. This year I'm in one particular league that I'm just kicking myself. Just stupid decisions. It's not the Pugs' league. The Pugs have won four in a row now, but it's still doubtful that they'll make the playoffs. This is a different league that I'm just kicking myself. It's happened before. It'll happen again. We didn't go anywhere at least, so that was nice.

TS: And you said you closed on your house in Florida? So you're official!

MH: Yeah. It's all over now but the packing. Packing the trailer and hitting the road and all that stuff. We have a solid month here yet, but yeah. All the details are over, which is nice.

TS: One more Christmas in Washington state. Is everybody sad?

MH: Yep.

TS: Are there going to be tears shed?

MH: I don't think so. I think Drenna's past that point now. I think she sort of passed that when we sold the house.

TS: At least for the kids.

MH: I don't think so. I think they'll be fine. We watched old videos of them as really little kids last night. We found a box of those and found a way to watch them—hook it up to the TV. I think it was good because it's like, "Yeah, we've moved before."

TS: Did you cry?

MH: No. I laughed a lot. [laughs]

TS: When you see stuff like that, you don't cry? You're not... Do you cry at all? At sad movies?

MH: Occasionally. It's been a while.

TS: You'll let yourself cry, so you're a real man. You're a real man if you let yourself cry at a sad movie.

MH: Yeah, what's the definition now? A 21st century man? [laughter]

TS: Yeah, I'll cry. I'll be the first to admit it. I can't watch videos like that because I always cry. I'm a baby.

MH: That doesn't bother me. I'd cry at *Saving Private Ryan* or *Schindler's List* or something like that.

TS: What else do you want to talk about, Mike? We have the *whole show* to just chitty-chat. Is that what we're going to do with 300?

MH: Well that's going to be a disaster then. [laughs] So let's not do that.

TS: No?

MH: I'm the least chitty-chat person that there is, I think.

TS: It's a lot of work, working with you, Mike, trying to draw out chitty-chat.

MH: Well, you should've learned by now that I'll just let you fail. [laughter] It'll just go down in flames. [laughs] And I won't cry when that happens either.

TS: Yeah. It's a real pleasure and a joy sometimes, Mike. I just love it.

MH: I know. I'm hoping there are other questions.

TS: No, this is it. This is it, just me and you, sitting here, hanging out.

MH: This is the shortest episode ever. [laughter]

TS: No, I did ask people to send in questions.

MH: No bandwidth for this one. No storage space taken for this one. [laughs]

TS: Fortunately, we have good questions. We got a lot of questions and comments, so we figured we would do a rapid-fire answer. We're not going to have you get in too deep on some of these answers, so just we can get to them all. So we're going to rapid-fire these questions and throw some comments...

MH: Yeah, do as many as we can.

5:00

TS: I'll read some comments from some of our listeners and we'll try to... If we can't pull out some chitty-chat, we'll try to pull out some answers from you. Do the best we can here.

MH: We'll make an effort. We'll try as hard as the Cowboys did yesterday. How's that?

TS: Yeah, that's rough, Mike. It's rough being a Cowboys fan right now. They're... I don't know what's going on. It's not a good Thanksgiving when the boys go down.

MH: I know what's going on. They're just not that good. They're not as good as they thought they were.

TS: Well, I can't argue with that. I can't say anything, because they're not playing very well.

MH: It's a team sport.

TS: At some point, your players have to play. A lot of people blame it on coaching and... It's all of the above right now. I don't know, Mike. It's depressing.

MH: I'd like to see the owner go. I think that would help.

TS: No! Jerry's fine. Come on. Nothing wrong with Jerry. He's a great owner.

MH: I'd like to see him take a leap.

TS: He's put together a lot of talent this year.

MH: I wanted to see him go in 1989. You forget, I used to be a Cowboy fan, until Jerry Jones bought the team. That was it. The treatment of Landry and Staubach. Forget it. You're toast.

TS: You were a bandwagon fan. You jumped off the wagon when something happened.

MH: No, I was a fan since 1970. My first Superbowl. The first Superbowl I ever saw on TV. The Cowboys lost the last play of the game. It was heartbreaking. So I was with them from '70 to '80-whatever. To the Jerry era—when Sauron bought the team. [laughs]

TS: So you didn't enjoy those three Superbowls in the '90s?

MH: No.

TS: Okay.

MH: I didn't even watch them. And I'm being serious there. I didn't even watch them. I don't know that I've ever seen a single Cowboys game with Troy and Emmett and Michael Irvin. They were dead to me.

TS: Oh my gosh. I'm about to end this podcast right now. And delete all of our past episodes.

MH: I'm serious! I don't think that I watched a single game with them.

TS: Oh my gosh. I just threw up in my mouth. [MH laughs] Excuse me while I clean up my mess.

MH: I did that yesterday watching the Cowboys. And I'm not even a Cowboy fan.

TS: [laughs] Oh, listen! Oh, folks, this is Mike Heiser talking trash at his finest, right here. That's great. That was a good one. Loved it.

MH: Yeah, just bring up Jerry Jones or Pete [inaudible] and you can get it out of me.

TS: Yeah, all of you Cowboy fans out there, feel free to email Mike.

MH: Look, if the Cowboys were playing the Seahawks, I'd root for the Cowboys. So they're not the bottom of the barrel.

TS: I just have to sit here and take it. This is your chance to say anything you want, because it's all true right now.

MH: I'm done.

TS: You sure? I feel like you have one more in there.

MH: I'm sure, I'm sure. It's... Yep.

TS: Oh, yep, see? I feel like there's one more at least.

MH: There's not.

TS: Okay. Alright. [sighs] Do we still want to continue...

MH: If we kept talking about the Cowboys, I might nod off to sleep, so I don't want to do that.

TS: Hmm. I hear that. I have to drink some caffeine here real quick to make it through this show, I'm so tired from the Thanksgiving meal. Lots of turkey and dressing. Do y'all eat turkey and dressing? Traditional? Do y'all do anything fancy? Low-key?

MH: It's just, you know, normal. Drenna made my favorite pie, though. It's awesome.

TS: What's that stuff you like? Mincemeat? What's that?

MH: Mincemeat pie. Oh man. It's so awesome.

TS: Is that what she made?

MH: Yeah.

TS: Oh my gosh. I just threw up in my mouth again, Mike.

MH: If you ever come over and we have mincemeat pie, you don't want to touch it. It's terrible.

TS: Trust me.

MH: You stay away from it.

TS: Fern and Audrey and other people have made you some mincemeat pies. I think I tried it once, and... No thank you. It's all yours, Mike.

MH: I don't think you tried it once. If you had tried it, you'd love it. But you don't want to try it. Stay away from it.

TS: Trust me, you can have it all. I'm not going to...

MH: If I'm there, especially. It's good. Mission accomplished.

TS: Yeah. If the word *minced* is in the title of the dish, I want nothing to do with it.

MH: There you go. Keep that thought. [laughter]

10:00

TS: This might be the driest podcast yet. [laughs] Alright, Mike. Let's get into these questions here. That's the good thing about podcasts, there's no time limit. We can just sit here all day and chitty-chat. This is what it'd be like, folks, if we just chitty-chatted. This is what you'd get. An hour of this. So thankfully, this is a Bible study show.

MH: That's right. I'm not the chitty-chat type. I don't think that surprises anybody, Trey.

TS: We're demonstrating it now, Mike. Five years into it, and this is the best demonstration of that yet.

MH: I can't fake it.

TS: Hey, that's okay. That's alright. I appreciate that. So do the three other people that listen to the show.

MH: [laughs] You mean the three other people that are still listening to this episode?

TS: Right. I wonder how long we could go until they'd fast forward. Hmm. I don't know.

MH: Right about now.

TS: Right about now? Okay. Well, you want to jump into these questions and comments?

MH: Yeah, I wanted to jump into them five minutes ago. But go ahead. [laughter]

TS: Alright. We have three comments. I'm going to start with three comments here. Gary says congratulations on our 300th podcast. We appreciate that, Gary. Larry really enjoys the podcast. Larry always chimes in with nice things to say on Facebook. So thank you, Larry. And Elise says, "I love you, Mike and Trey. Looking forward to this episode." So... Probably not so much after you heard the first five minutes.

MH: Yeah, we just crushed your soul already.

TS: [laughs] Alright, we'll just get to our first question. Lena would love to know when your third book of the *Façade* series will come out. So would Brenda, because her husband... And she loves listening to the podcast.

"It has definitely helped deepen our understanding of the Bible and shed light on difficult passages. Thank you."

Brenda says she'd addicted to the podcast but wants to know when the sequel to *The Façade* and *The Portent* is coming out.

MH: I'm hoping it's shipping by the end of 2020. So a year from now. That's *the* dedicated writing project for 2020, to finish that.

TS: Okay. Somebody else had a question. We didn't put it down here. Couldn't get to all of them. But somebody mentioned about your astral prophecy book that you have mentioned in some podcasts. Any development on that?

MH: Well, one chapter. Honestly, it's hard to stay interested in it. It's probably because it has the word *prophecy* in the title. I'm poisoning myself. [sigh] I repurposed a little bit of it in the Enoch commentary, so... The issue is the content, so whether the content takes that form or not, it'll... I think a good bit of it will eventually get out there.

TS: Josiah has a question.

Are the disciples that Paul found in Acts 19:1 disciples of John the Baptist? And if they already believed in Jesus, why does it show them receiving the Holy Spirit as a separate account from initial salvation? Absolutely love the podcast. Keep on keeping on.

MH: Well, since this is the rapid-fire episode, I'm going to say to Josiah, "Go listen to the Acts series, specifically the episode on Acts 19." I think the episode is Acts 18 and 19. Episode 54. So that'll be a better answer.

TS: George has a comment and a question here:

“The podcast and Dr. Heiser’s work has been instrumental to me in both my faith and to develop the religious story of a video game I’m developing. Hope to share it with Dr. Heiser when it’s complete.”

Good luck on that.

MH: Cool! Yeah.

As a question, I would love to know if there’s anything supernatural going on for Judas. Love what you guys do. Thank you so much for all 300 episodes, all of which I’ve listened to.

MH: Well, I think the short answer is yes. The Scripture says the devil entered into him, so you might be dealing with some sort of possession issue there. So I think that much is pretty apparent.

TS: Josh can remember the day he came across Dr. Heiser’s book, scrolling through Amazon.

“That then led to the podcasts. Many questions have been answered and so many new questions have been raised. The podcast has helped me connect so many dots in my faith journey. I am thankful for Dr. Heiser, Trey, and the podcast.”

Appreciate that, Josh.

MH: Yep.

TS: Scott asks:

What are your comments on the prodigal son parable in Luke 15... maybe some historical, contextual, and literal contextual goodies?

MH: In short form, I think the best way to understand that parable is to read the parables that go with it. So that would be literary and contextual. If you think about it, what are the other two parables that go with it? There’s the parable of the lost sheep and there is the parable about the woman trying to find the lost coin. And then you have the “prodigal son.” So if you read all three, what do all three have in common? They have someone seeking something. And so the point of the parable of the so-called “prodigal son” isn’t the son. It’s really been unfortunately named. The point of the parable, like the other two, is the father. So in the parable of the lost sheep, you’re supposed to think of Jesus or God as the shepherd who seeks the one lost sheep. And you’re supposed to think of him as the woman who seeks the one lost coin. And in the parable of the prodigal son, you’re supposed to think about that in terms of what is the father like? What is

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God like? He seeks what's lost. So it's far too much attention paid on the son and his self-destructive behavior and not enough attention focused where it belongs—on the one seeking that which is lost. So I think that makes all the difference when you're preaching it and trying to understand it.

TS: David loves listening to the podcast. Thanks, David.

Thank you, guys, so much for putting this material out there for all of us. Real quick, if you had to choose from just one book of the Bible to read for the rest of your life, what would it be and why? May the Lord bless you both. Keep fighting the good fight of faith.

MH: Boy. [laughs] I don't know. Um. See now, just to be a smart Alec, I'm tempted to say something like Jude (because it's the shortest one). But that's not true.

TS: Is it [inaudible] that I thought that same thing?

MH: [laughs] Right. Um. I think... Boy... Genesis doesn't sound like a real answer, but I think so. It probably is. It's either Genesis or Romans. I'd probably flip a coin.

TS: Yeah, I think you'd have to go New Testament. Acts...

MH: Yeah, Genesis or Romans.

TS: Or Revelation. I know you won't like that, but that way you can just sit there...

MH: Nah, I can easily take that one off the table.

TS: "When's the end times going to happen? When's the end times going to happen?"

MH: Right next to 1 Chronicles. I don't need nine chapters of genealogies. Or maybe I can interpret Revelation by the genealogies. There we go. Everybody else makes something up. I can make something up, too.

TS: You should do that and then the last page of the book, say, "Psych. Not really. Gotcha. Made you read it." No? Okay, there you go, folks...

MH: [laughs] No, I think people would skip. [laughter] I'm making you suffer, Trey. [laughs]

TS: Yeah, trust me, I'm hurting right now. Hopefully it's coming across on the air. Alright, what do I have here? Carrie.

“Really appreciate you guys. Dr. Mike has helped me reconcile the entire story of the Bible and the world into a cohesive whole. Also, I now appreciate the true glory of the pug.”

Oh my gosh, Carrie.

MH: There you go. I'm sure that hurt for you to read that, Trey.

TS: I like pugs. I like dogs.

MH: Pugs are awesome.

TS: Pugs *are* awesome. I got no problem with pugs. No problems. Only...

MH: Those who follow me on Twitter yesterday saw a good picture of Norman. When we had the table set, Norman hopped up in the chair at the head of the table and just sat there. He didn't try to jump on the table, he just sat there like, "Okay, I'm ready." [laughs]

TS: Nice. Alright. Howard has a question. His question is:

The convicting work of the Holy Spirit such as referenced in John 16 seems as if it would be an important topic unless you have already addressed it in a previous podcast. And if you have, please tell me which one. I am what you would call a layperson and I learn so much from the podcasts. They tend to draw me closer to the Word of God.

MH: No, I haven't spent any time on that. So I think the best answer for that is, yeah, we'll put it down on my list of topics. That would be a good topic.

TS: Cameron's question is:

How do you think the supernatural worldview plays into or provides a better understanding for World and Church History?

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MH: I think just generally, you have the... You read Daniel 10 and it's hard to take it seriously and not come away with the notion that there are supernatural intelligences behind empires. So it would stand to reason that there are supernatural intelligences behind what empires do—what power structures do in the world. And specifically in World and Church History, I don't think you can separate those into two separate buckets. I think they're always entwined. So I would say just generally that Daniel 10 instructs us to be mindful that behind the things that do happen, there is a greater intelligence behind those things, working a plan. And the plan is always to forestall the fullness of the Gentiles and do as much damage to the Church in the process of forestalling that as much as

possible. So beyond that, I understand why people will try to look at the events of history and try to discern something in them. But the truth is that everything that we might come up with—most of what we might come up with—would be pretty speculative. I think that I would put the most weight on the things that change the way people think en masse—moving herds, that whole idea. But at the end of the day, we're left to wonder what we know from Scripture, that there is something going on behind the things we see.

TS: Scott has a comment here real quick:

“Thank you for introducing me to the Divine Council worldview. It has opened my eyes to an important aspect of the Bible as much as another overlooked topic has— that of the Old Testament manifestations of the embodied and multi-plural Yahweh, which happens to be how I came across your work—your talks on the Trinity of the Old Testament leading to your talks, and then books, on the Divine Council.”

So Scott says thank you.

MH: I understand, believe me.

TS: David's question is:

Can you compare/contrast differences, if any, between Mike's method of interpretation of the Bible text and that put forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1?

MH: Well, I don't see any particular method outlined in the Westminster Confession method of Bible study. You're not going to read it and get, “Do this. Don't do that. Follow this trajectory.” You're not going to do that. It does, as other creeds do, hint at the big idea of comparing Scripture with Scripture. And that, I think, is quite consistent with what we do here. It's very consistent. “Intertextuality” is the term academics use for this. On the podcast, we're constantly beating that drum. When your New Testament references the Old Testament, it's a good idea to go back there and look at what's going on. And today's modern Bibles will make that easy for you to discern when the New Testament is doing that. So intertextuality is a big deal—comparing Scripture with Scripture.

But the Confession doesn't do anything to really help you or move you toward the notion that we ought to be reading the Bible in light of its own ancient original context. And I'm not picking on it—none of the confessions do that. But at least they're trying to say something about comparing Scripture with Scripture.

I'm going to throw something in here. Because a couple of times, just in conversation, in Q&As and what I get questions about... And this is sort of a Reformed thing, that I think in part derives from the Westminster Confession (maybe some other ones): the perspicuity of Scripture. People ask me this question to make it sound, I think, to themselves, so they can have it ringing around in their heads, or the minds of people listening to the question, that, "What Mike's suggesting here about reading the Bible in light of its own ancient context, that's not compatible with the perspicuity of Scripture." Perspicuity is a word that means clarity. Like what anyone does... Like what the Reformers do or Calvin does at any given point, that's just self-evident. It's not. So this is a bogus claim. And if someone's asking about perspicuity for that reason, it's a bogus question as well. And if you actually looked at the Westminster Confession, it will say that the things that are clear in Scripture are the core ideas—those things to be known for salvation. And the other stuff isn't.

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So can we just stop with the perspicuity question, Reformed person out there in the audience that might be a little offended that I'm not? We don't say on this podcast that you should interpret the Bible through the lens or through the filter of a particular creed or confession. We don't do that, because those things are all post-biblical contexts. I would suggest to you instead that you go back and read the Westminster Confession and get perspicuity—get clarity—on the fact that the Confession itself says that there are a lot of things in Scripture that aren't self-evident. And the solution to that is not to try to find them in the Confession, or if you don't find them in the Confession or any other creed, you just dump them and forget about them and ignore them. That's not the answer. Scripture is supposed to make sense. And it can, if you read it for what it is: an ancient document written by ancient people *to* ancient people. You try to get them living in your head. There are a lot of things that will become clear (at least clearer) and will connect to each other and will inform your knowledge of Scripture and God's plan. So there's a lot to be said for the notion that we propound here—that serious study of Scripture goes beyond creeds and confessions. It's not dependent on them. Nor will those things produce a method for you to do that. So now that I've just offended the last three people listening to this episode, Trey, let's move on. [laughs]

TS: What was that word again? Pers- What?

MH: Perspicuity. The perspicuity of Scripture.

TS: Alright. Here we go. Trey in Louisiana has a couple of questions and comments. His first question is:

We often hear Mike speak of the supernatural worldview or the Divine Council worldview of the biblical authors, and thereby their context, and keeping it in the forefront of sound biblical interpretation. Are we to understand from the text that this was the

understanding or worldview of the authors and what they simply perceived to be reality, or are we to understand from the text that spiritual beings are ontologically real? In other words, does Mike believe personally, after studying the texts in depth, that the unseen realm is an ontologically eminent reality that today interacts with and/or against us in more ways than that thinking? If yes, how so?

MH: This is easy. The answer is yes. I'm a little surprised to even be getting the question. I don't know how many... This ought to be clear. So, yeah. I'm not just saying this is something the biblical writers believed and we're safe to ignore it. I don't know how anyone would draw that conclusion, listening to the podcast or reading *Unseen Realm*. So that's easy. And, "If yes, how?" Well, I'm not omniscient, so there's no way I would know that. And besides, this is the rapid-fire episode. So... How do spiritual beings interact with people today? I'd say, "A whole lot of ways." But I can't sit here and comment. I can't even tell you specifically when episodes of my own life involve this. I might be able to tell you when I suspected it. But that's about the best I can do. So I'm not going to be able to do that for anybody else, either.

TS: Alright. Trey also has a comment.

"I am beyond thankful for the Naked Bible Podcast and all of the content and materials that come from the team associated with Mike. The work that everyone does is a blessing for me individually and corporately. I am a completely different person, father, and follower of Jesus because of everything Naked Bible. I am all the more excited and eager for the future of this ministry and its impact for the kingdom of God."

So thanks, Trey.

MH: Yeah, thank you.

TS: Luke has a question:

I've just finished *That All Shall Be Saved* by David Bentley Hart. I'm curious about Dr. Mike's take on hell not being eternal, but instead a temporary refining period to get us all back to God eventually. Temporary meaning Hitler will probably do more time than your atheist grandma or something. God bless you all.

MH: Yeah, I think it's nonsense. And I'm not trying to be harsh here, because I have friends who are Universalist, like the guy who wrote the *Evangelical Universalist*. I don't know if I need to use his real name. Robin Perry is his real name. I think he has published that. We interviewed him once, one of these SBL years. So I have friends who are Universalists, but I'm just not buying it. It doesn't

make any sense to me. It's funny how Universalist talk doesn't include the Old Testament, for one thing. So we have the *kharem* wars (wars against the giant clans) and those individuals are still called people, even though they have the bloodline back to before the flood and all that. You have Baal worshipers. Rejecting God in the Old Testament, there was a heavy price to pay. And there's no talk (and I would say there's no seeding talk) of Universalist outcome. So it's funny to me how Universalists don't include the Old Testament and then they want to affirm, though, on the other side, that we have the same God in the Old Testament as in the New. Well, you can't have both. You can't have that cake and eat it, too. If we have the same God and the same trajectories for salvation history, then I think you're seeing something on the other end that really is not at all evident elsewhere. And I think that it has some real weaknesses in the New Testament, too. Why is the writer of Hebrews worried about unbelief, of falling away? He's just worried about them spending extra time in hell? Well, then why doesn't he say that? Why give the Great Commission? Everybody's going to get there anyway. Why write John 3:18 or John 3:36? John 3:18, this is two verses after John 3:16, which the Universalist is, of course, going to want to affirm.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And John 3:36 says,

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life.

Oops.

But the wrath of God remains on him.

That's not a very good Universalist verse. "...*shall not see life* and the *wrath* of God *remains* on him." So Universalism just... These are just isolated verses because we have to do this quickly. But it just doesn't make sense to me. So I realize you can do lots of logical argumentations and say this or that, and it all looks beautiful, except when you probe it. So it's just... Universalism to me is a soteriological system, kind of like how people come up with eschatological systems. They're all beautiful, but they all cheat somewhere and relegate data that are problematic to someplace where people can't see those data. Or they will put some kind of spin on them to make them not say what they seem to plainly say, just like John 3:36. So anyway, I'm not buying it.

TS: Nolan wants to know,

What's holding back the biblical study scholars who aren't Christians? This has always bugged me.

MH: I think there's lots of answer to this, because people are different. I guess we'd have to know what "holding back" means. Does that mean taking the text seriously, believing what it says? Does it mean becoming a Christian? I don't really know. If it's the latter, then I guess you could say, well, scholars who are Jewish, they're committed to Judaism. Or they don't... They've been trained or taught or they embrace a different way of looking at Jesus himself, so they're just like anybody. Someone in that community has to be challenged and hopefully brought through some of the things that are preventing them from considering the New Testament as having equal weight to the Old. Then there are others who are raised in Christian traditions. Like I said, everybody is different. Some of them just don't want to believe it because there's an issue of accountability. Some see Scripture (I think this is probably more predominant) as the product only of human hands. And I think this is an either/or fallacy that works a lot in scholarship. And honestly, I think those who take a high view of Scripture (that would be the Evangelical world)... I think the Evangelicals need to own their failure here. And that is that we've taught people this X-Files view of the text—X-Files view of inspiration—that it dropped from heaven and God's whispering every word in somebody's ear. And then when you're exposed to that, either as a young person or as an adult, and then you actually get into Scripture and you see how that can't work, what a lot of people do is they just dump the whole proposition that God is behind this, and it becomes the product merely of human hands. This holds back biblical scholars from believing the truth propositions here. That in large part contributes to it. And the failure there is how we (those of us with a high view of Scripture) think about what the Bible is and how it came to be, and do a poor job of that, and create an indefensible view that just makes it harder for people who get into the text to believe it. What we really need is to rethink the whole idea.

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The short version solution to this is that we need to understand inspiration, not as an event or a series of events, but as the result of a long, Providential process that involved many hands, involved editing... And honor God's decisions to pick the people, to prompt the people, to prepare the people Providentially, who would produce Scripture to do the job. He picked them when they lived (certain time, certain place, certain culture, certain context, certain worldview)... All this stuff. And then God lets them do their job. They are free to use genres of their own times and patterns and formats. And God is free to bring someone else along and arrange material in such a way, do editorial work on something. It's a long process that God is involved in all the time, because multiple hands are contributing to what we have here. And God has his own reasons for doing it this way, as opposed to the X-Files view of inspiration. So I think if we just were able to articulate a better view of inspiration, my optimistic (maybe naïve) hope would be that fewer people would look at it *only* as the product of human hands. I think there's a large element of that being the answer to the question.

TS: Joshua wants to know:

What Old Testament scholars do you find yourself agreeing with more than not?

MH: I don't know. It's not like I've kept a tabulation of this. I tend to agree with points that... I wouldn't even use words like "agree" or "disagree." I read people, not to ask myself, "Do I agree with them or disagree with them?" I read people to try to discern some contributing point—some data point—that is significant. I don't sit down and intentionally even do that, but that's more descriptive of how I think and what I do. I am a dot-connector. I'm a sifter and a dot-connector. And if you do that long enough, you come across things, and it's like, "Yep, that has the ring of truth. Because I can see how it informs five or six other things." That doesn't mean I accept it out of the gate. It means this goes on my list of things to think about. Does it work? And when I say, "Does it work?" I don't mean in the passage that the guy or the woman is talking about. When I say, "Does it work?" I mean, "Does it work *everywhere* that this passage informs?" And by the way, this is the fundamental difference between me and somebody like a John Walton or some of the Old Testament scholars that I enjoy promoting their work and really enjoy them as people. But a lot of good scholars (like John or somebody else, in Old or New Testament) are content with, "I've come up with a way to understand this that works here, that makes sense in the passage." And there are lots of those. There are lots of interpretations that make sense in a particular passage. In other words, they're workable. They can do the job there.

I don't ask that question. I don't stop there. I want to know if this works here, and I know that there are five or six or ten other passages that this passage is part of a bigger matrix of. I want to know whether it works in *all* of them. I'm not saying I'm smarter. I'm not. I depend on the work of scholars. What I am saying is, that's just how my mind works. For it to be satisfactory, it needs to work everywhere. Because if it doesn't... I don't like outliers. There shouldn't be outliers. It should make sense across the board, in every way. That's what I want. That's what I want to see.

So you might have a good (or at least a workable) interpretation here that satisfies you. It doesn't satisfy me for that reason. So I tend to read material this way. If you do this long enough, you come across things where now I just have a sensibility where it's like, "Okay, I think they're on to something. Because I look at it here. It makes sense. And I know that this thing connects to this other thing. And that seems like it might... And this one. And over here." I can't help it. That's just the way my mind works. So it's not a method I can teach. I guess I can demonstrate it or illustrate it. *Unseen Realm* tries to do that. I think unconsciously, people read it and see that. It's a verbal or written illustration of the way Mike's mind works. So that's just how it goes.

40:00

So I could say I agree with hundreds of scholars and disagree with those same scholars in some other points. Again, those aren't really the right words. It's not that I'm necessarily thinking they're wrong (if that's the right word). In some cases, yeah, I think they're wrong. "Just no, this just isn't it." But the basis for it is that this is wrong because I know this isn't going to work in these five or six other places. It's going to be like 0 for 5. It's just dead on arrival. In other cases, I may not favor what they do because it's not complete. When I go for understanding and interpretation, I don't want outliers. I want complete coherence. And when I don't get it, you just have to keep thinking about it, and you have to keep looking for more data to help that to work, to help it come together.

TS: Alright. Katherine has a comment.

"The Naked Bible Podcast probably saved me. Finally, someone who speaks to me about religion and the Bible as if I have intelligence. Dr. Heiser also tackles the entire Bible. It made me want to really read the Bible and savor it after reading at light speed in a one-year program in 2018. Dr. Heiser's commentary ties the Bible together for me as the living, relevant-to-the-present Word that it is. I'm listening to all the episodes for the second time and encouraging ideas that somehow escaped me the first time around. Praying for Dr. Heiser's success in his exciting new endeavor."

MH: Thank you. That's a good comment, too, because it illustrates the idea of connectivity, how things relate to one another. If we really believe that one mind ultimately steered the circumstances to produce this thing, it ought to make sense. And the best interpretations aren't the most supernatural. The best interpretations aren't the ones that take care of our concerns or make us feel comfortable. The best interpretations of any given passage are the ones that work there and everywhere else. It creates the matrix that doesn't leave you with outliers. That's what we're shooting for here.

TS: Travis has a question:

Jesus is from the line of David, according to the Bible, as the Bible in Matthew and Luke shows his genealogy. However, the genealogy leads to Joseph, not Mary, in whom Jesus was conceived. How can it still count for Jesus to be descended of David when he has no blood connection to David through Joseph? Is it enough that Joseph was married to Mary even though Jesus didn't come from Joseph's body?

MH: In their time it was, because of the way they viewed things like adoption. So for the leadership of the time, when Jesus becomes the son of Joseph through adoption or whatever, they at least looked on it that way. That probably had a higher or a different significance psychologically (maybe that's the right word)

than it does for us. So that's one part of this. Scholars have looked at the genealogies and how they establish sonship back to David through Joseph. And the only way that works for them (and honestly, that's where it counts, because they're the ones that have to accept the claim on the basis of inheritance—how they looked at inheritance). And it works for them.

45:00

But this question is biological. And that wasn't so much the issue in terms of these genealogical relationships. But having said that, there are a handful of scholars that suspect... There's no way you can prove it conclusively. You can build an argument for it, and a few scholars have. They suspect that at least one of the genealogies is actually Mary's. It's difficult to do that, but there are people who have tried to prove that, even though the phrasing "of whom was born Jesus"... Some people have tried to play off that and re-interpret the genealogies. But in a very short-form way, here's how you would approach the problem, generally. If Mary... And I think this *is* establish-able, at least the likelihood of it. It's going to fall short of what the questioner or other people might want. But if it can be established that Mary is a blood relative of anyone (not just the immediate ancestry of Joseph), but *anyone* in a lineage that includes Joseph, and since Joseph's line does go back to David, there you have your Davidic connection. So this is what scholars have tried to do to add this biological element. But again, there have only been a handful that have really tackled that. So for everybody else, the legal descent that people of his day would have accepted and embraced has been sufficient.

TS: Joanne wants to know:

Is the concept of a carnal Christian biblical?

MH: It depends how you define carnal Christian. Really, that's the short answer. It depends how you define this. If you define it carnal Christian as someone who struggles with sin, then certainly you can have "carnal Christians." I'd also say you can have believers who are quite ignorant about something that is sin. They might have been taught their whole lives that it's not. It's not like every point of biblical morality is intuitive. If someone has been taught all their life that a behavior is fine or normal and the Bible says it isn't, then that person has to be exposed to what the Bible says and they're going to struggle with it. It's something new. They have to incorporate that into how they think. That's not going to be this thing that you flip on and flip off. They aren't going to just know it. They may struggle with submitting to a particular point of teaching. So those sorts of struggles are not antithetical to being a Christian. Paul wrote two letters to the Corinthian church that illustrate everything I've just said to this point. Most of the believers in the church were pagans who had been taught certain ways, or not taught at all—not taught anything about various points of morality. And Paul still calls them brothers and sisters in the Lord. That's the point of the letters. He's trying to instruct them and get them not to do these things in life. On the other hand, though, if you define carnal Christian as someone who claims to be a

Christian and could care less about what Scripture says—who willfully chooses their own autonomy over what they know Scripture teaches as far as being a true disciple of Jesus—then I think that person’s testimony of faith should be questioned or challenged. It just depends how you define this.

TS: Alright. John has a comment:

“As a result of the Naked Bible Podcast and the *Unseen Realm*, I was motivated to enter grad school for biblical studies. Dr. Heiser’s ministry has answered so many questions that I had in regards to the Bible and the supernatural realm, and I hope to pay it forward in academia in working with others.”

Awesome. Good luck, John!

MH: Good. Yep, that’s pretty cool. And I would say anybody... Let me just add this to that. You don’t have to go to grad school or seminary to pay it forward. I think *everybody in this audience* can pay it forward to somebody else. And honestly, that’s the way... We love when the podcast grows. That’s wonderful. But I’m more interested in the content. I want the content to infect the world. Let’s just be blunt about it. *Unseen Realm* has done amazingly well. It’s sold 100,000 units. I don’t call that a success. I know it’s a success, but I don’t call it that. I call it a good start. That’s really what it is. So everybody in this audience, every reader of *Unseen Realm*, ought to get a book or two and hand it to somebody else, and have them read it (*Unseen Realm* or *Supernatural*). Or invite somebody else to listen to the podcast. That’s paying it forward, too. If you want to devote yourself to scholarship, that’s going to have a tremendous ripple effect if you remain faithful to the task of paying it forward that way. Because you’re going to write books. You’re going to produce content that will get out there. That’s awesome. But I don’t want anyone to get the impression that they can’t pay the content forward in some way. Of course you can. And I hope you do.

50:00

TS: Well, Joshua listened to the Naked Bible Podcast, and it encouraged *him* to go back to Bible college as well.

I was wondering how the podcast has affected Mike and Trey’s life. What has been the most encouraging thing, and what has been the biggest struggle in what they have learned about God?

So Joshua going back to Bible college, too. So obviously, the podcast has, like you said, prompted a lot of people to go back.

MH: Well, Trey, you were included in this question. Do you want to chime in first?

TS: Yeah, I’ll chime in. The most encouraging thing is obviously how far and wide the reach is of the show. I get emails from people from all over the world—people

in the middle of Africa, to South America, to all over. So I love that. I love the fact that I use this as a way to serve. So the fact that it reaches so many people. Because for me, it's a lot of work and a lot of time sacrificed for me personally. And I'm more than happy to do it, because I know how important this content is. So just being able to help produce something that has such a far and wide reach, like I said, is everything to me.

MH: Yeah, I would say the positive part (what's the biggest encouragement) is that. It's knowing that basically I'm producing content that's useful to lots of people. I say that a lot. I'm glad to be useful. And I actually mean it. For me, it's just that simple. I've never been one that... I could get absorbed in content and just enjoy it. That's perfectly within my makeup to do that. But I know, having... As a believer, I've always sort of been this way, that what we're doing here ought to be practical. It ought to be helpful. And not just something that we sit here by ourselves and enjoy. That's how what became *Unseen Realm* was born—just that realization one day in Madison, WI, that 99% of the people in church are never going to have the experience of enjoying this. And that's just not right. So for me, that's the biggest thing.

He asked what the biggest struggle is. I think the biggest struggle and frustration is engagement. Because the bigger this thing grows, the less able I am to answer people's questions—to engage them in email or anything on social media. That's very frustrating. Because that... I now refer to email as my daily opportunity to not feel useful [laughs] or to just be depressed. Because that's what it is. You get so much of this stuff and you know you can't get to it. So that's irritating. That's a downer, I guess we'll say. So those are the two poles for me. But it is what it is and we just trust that the Lord will use it, and basically make what we do useful in spite of our limitations. So we just have to believe that he'll do that.

TS: Alright. I hope I don't mispronounce the next person's name too badly, but Rwasanda... (That's my guess. Mike, do you want to take a guess at that?)

MH: Spell it.

TS: R-W-A-S-A-N-D-A.

MH: Yeah, how would you pronounce that? Ruh-wuh-sahn-duh? It's hard to do the R and the W really quickly together. Maybe it is.

TS: We apologize. They want to know,

Where did Cain get a wife from? Was Noah's flood universal? And is human marriage divine or not?

MH: [laughs] [sarcasm] Yeah, this is really easy in the short form. You know, actually it pops in my head here that it is. We did a FringePop321 episode on the

question of were there other humans. I don't remember the title of it, but if you go to YouTube (FringePop321) and look through the episode videos, there's going to be something about other Adamic races or something like that. So I bring this up because of this whole issue of where Cain got his wife from. There are two possible answers. One is that there were other human beings around at the time, and there are things in Genesis 4 that would make you think that. This whole thing about Cain having a wife is just one of three things in Genesis 4 that sort of suggest that, or have suggested that to other people.

And the other one is that he gets a wife from those of his own relation—those of his own extended family, from Adam and Eve. And the reason why it's not clear-cut... You might look at Genesis 4 and, "Ah, there are these things in here that make it sound like there were other people out there besides Adam, Eve, and Cain, after Cain kills Abel. Like Cain goes and moves and he builds a city. Well, did he do that all by himself? Well, it sounds like there were other people. Or he's afraid that somebody's going to kill him. Well, supposedly, they're the only ones there, so like who's out there that's going to kill him? So there are these things that hint that there are other people.

The problem is that these narratives in Genesis don't give you any scope of time. In other words, they don't put a number of years between the birth of Cain and Abel and when Cain kills Abel. They don't tell you how much time elapsed from the time Cain kills Abel to the time when he leaves the home and moves somewhere else. So in theory, it could be a couple hundred years. Well in that time, yeah, they're going to still have children, because Adam and Eve are going to be obedient to the initial command ("Be fruitful and multiply"), so Cain can easily have a wife from his own extended family. It could work just as fine as the other one, and maybe (I would say) even more so, based upon what we're told here. So that's how you approach that. But you could look at the video and get a little bit more on that.

"Was the flood universal?" I would say go up to my website or google "drmsb.com" and put in the words "local regional flood" and you're going to find the post I did on how you can articulate—how you could demonstrate—that the flood is local from the text of Scripture. It doesn't mean it was. You could take the language as universal, and many do. I'm not bothered by either choice. I think there are other things that probably make a little more sense if the flood was local or regional (regional especially). But you could go see the post on that for how you would do that. My point is that either view can derive from the text. A local or regional view is not science-dependent, or a view that arises because we're afraid of science. You can quite easily do this from the text of Scripture, which is why I did the post.

"Is marriage divine or not?" I don't even really know what that means. Marriage is two people, so... But I don't know what it... Is marriage divine or not? I'm not really following what the point of that question is, so I'm just going to... I'll just say that and let's move on. [laughs]

TS: I'll say yes, just to make my wife happy.

MH: If the question is, "Is the union of male and female, man and woman, God's definition of marriage?" well that's pretty obvious. Yeah. But I don't know that that's what the question is angling for. So I don't really know what to do with it.

TS: Well, unless your husband or wife nags you, then it's not that divine.

MH: [laughs] Yeah.

TS: Alright. Jacqueline has...

MH: I'm not in that situation, Trey, so I'm happy. [laughs]

TS: I'm not either. That's why I said it's divine. I see other people, and I'm like, "Hmm, not so divine." But alright. Jacqueline wants to know:

**If Yahweh is a spirit, what is the necessity of a throne/throne room?
When he is meeting with the sons (as in Job), is he in some form
with them?**

1:00:00

MH: Yeah, I think the key word here is "necessity." There is no necessity. The Scripture writers are writing about God the way they do because they can't help it. We are embodied beings. The Scripture writers were humans. They're embodied beings. A world of non-embodiment, where our physical limitations are no longer in the picture and we have maybe different kinds of bodies or different kinds of corporeality, that's just not in the picture because none of them have ever experienced that. So what's true of descriptions of the afterlife, descriptions of the throne room of God, God himself... At least when he's not on earth, because then we kind of know why God would appear as a man, because now he's decipherable. We know we're talking to somebody now. And the glory is veiled and all of that stuff. We've talked about that at length in the podcast, and of course in *Unseen Realm*.

But when we have these visions of God's house, as it were, somewhere in the spiritual world, on the spiritual plane, how else are humans going to talk about those things other than to use the language of embodiment? And that's what's going on here. This is metaphor. The biblical writers are going to strike analogies. They're going to use the language of hierarchy, for instance. They're going to use the language of the royal court because God is king. How else would you talk about God? If God is king, you're going to talk about kingly things, like a throne and a throne room and attendants and bodyguards and all this stuff. So the language is used by the writers... And of course, God is not objecting to any of this. God is behind the scenes. He's the unseen hand, prompting all these things, as it were, and approving them.

So this gives us an idea that God is organized. That the heavens are orderly. There is a hierarchy. It would make sense that an intelligent being would like an ordered existence. I mean, we're intelligent beings and we don't like chaos. We prefer order over chaos, at least if we're in our right minds. So we're a reflection of that. God is going to be like that. So he's discussed in these terms that denote kingship and order and rank and hierarchy and who's in charge and who gives commands and who doesn't. Where God lives... this is the language of embodiment. And so there's no other way for human beings to talk about God than to use this kind of language. There's no other way to talk about the spiritual world than to use the language of the embodied world, so that people have some way to express what it is they're seeing or what they're being prompted to write—all these sorts of things, when it comes to Scripture. So this is a necessity. There's no other way to do it. For a human to be the instrument of God, to write about God, God knows that this is what human authors are going to be locked into. And he also knows that that's a good thing because it communicates well. It will get the ideas that God wants humans to know about him across. It will communicate. So that's what we have.

TS: Alright. Brian says:

“A big thank you for increasing my knowledge and helping me shed a lot of bad theology that comes with denominational traditions.”

So there you go. Thank you.

MH: Uh hmm. Yep. Thank you.

TS: Alright, Mike, our 300th episode is so good that we're going to have to split it up into two parts. So we're going to stop it there and we'll finish up next week, because we're so good. 300. We're going to stretch it to two episodes. [MH laughs] We're going to keep the celebration going.

MH: See, you thought this would be torture. And maybe it still is, but the audience carried it.

TS: That's true! Yeah!

MH: It's all true. [laughs]

TS: If we didn't have them, we would be in trouble. If it was just me and you, we would be in trouble.

MH: That's right.

TS: if we didn't have...

MH: Serious trouble.

TS: It would be about 17 minutes of Fantasy talk, followed by seven minutes of awkward silence, followed by I don't know what.

MH: Right, getting something to eat. Yeah. [laughs]

TS: Something about pugs, baseball. I'd take a quick nap during that. And then we'd wrap it up. [MH laughs] Alright.

MH: [laughs] Right.

TS: Well, congratulations! This is 300. That's a big milestone.

MH: Yep.

TS: Christmas is coming up. Go to the NakedBiblePodcast.com. Go to the store. Get yourself something for Christmas. Please continue for the next 300 episodes. Help us grow. So tell everybody about the podcast.

MH: Yeah. Honestly, all joking aside, it's audience-driven. That's the only way it's really going to be effective.

TS: Absolutely. Well alright, Mike, congratulations on 300. And hopefully we'll be alive for the next 300.

MH: Yeah. Congratulations, and thank you, too. Ditto. It's hard to imagine we got to 300. But we did it once, we can do it again.

TS: There you go. Rinse and repeat. Thanks for all your hard work. Well, I want to thank everybody for listening to us for the last five years. We appreciate it. We hope you all continue to listen for the next five. Thanks for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.