

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 301

Q&A 36, Part 2

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**Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)**

**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 301, our 36<sup>th</sup> Q&A. This is Part 2. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! We're continuing the 300<sup>th</sup> milestone celebration, and we're going to keep going with all the questions and comments that we got for 300.

**MH:** Yeah, see how we cheated there. We turned 300 into 301. It's like 300 with an asterisk.

**TS:** What's that in baseball stats?

**MH:** Well, there are a lot of people who want the asterisk for the steroid era, so I don't know. [laughs] steroids were used.

**TS:** Where do you come down on that? Should they be in the Hall of Fame?

**MH:** I think there's a couple that should, because they're... Yeah, I think his performance even prior to that was Hall... If you're going to put Harold Baines in the Hall of Fame, Barry Bonds before the steroid era should be in the Hall of Fame. So, case-by-case basis.

**TS:** Gotcha. Well, we wanted to do something fun. We thought about doing a giveaway. Christmas is coming up. We've got Carmen Imes coming on the show next week, to promote her new book (*Bearing God's Name*). We got several copies of that in, so we're going to give away her book and a couple of items from our Naked Bible Podcast store. What you have to do is hashtag #NakedBible anything on social media. We'll see the timestamp. It could be Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, something else, it doesn't matter. But just use the hashtag #NakedBible and Mike and I are randomly going to pick people, and we're going to send you Carmen Imes' new book, *Bearing God's Name*. It's

going to be an awesome book and a couple of items from the Naked Bible Podcast store. So we're going to try to get it to you before Christmas. So again, hashtag #NakedBible. Hopefully it'll be fun!

**MH:** Yeah. I mean, it's a great book. And of course, our merch is fun. So yeah, you need to jump in here, like Trey said. The faster you jump in, we get responses, then you're going to be able to get it by Christmas. So do yourself a favor and jump in. Use the hashtag, and we will just pick some winners and go from there.

**TS:** Sounds good. And Mike, you know, the winners that I pick... I like humor, so the funnier... Might give you a slight edge for my picking. Mike, do you have any...?

**MH:** Oh, yeah. If there's a picture of a pug in it, that's a winner right there. If there's a pug in it, that's a winner. [laughs]

**TS:** That's funny. Alright. There you go. So don't forget. Hashtag #NakedBible out there. And we're going to this for the next two weeks. So Friday, December 20th, we're going to end that. We'll pick the winners over the next two weeks.

**MH:** Yeah, I should add a footnote to my "if there's a pug in the picture, it's a winner." It can't be my pugs. Okay? It's got to be a different pug.

**TS:** Gotta be a different pug.

**MH:** And it's gotta be like a real pug, not just like a pug image, you know, downloaded from somewhere on the web. It's got to be... You've got to be holding the pug or something like that. So footnote.

**TS:** I'd like to see people wearing our shirt or reading your book somewhere unique.

**MH:** Yeah, there you go.

**TS:** You know, if you take a picture listening to the podcast, where you listen to it, where you read Mike's books, or wearing our merch, or maybe you have a coffee mug. I don't know. Something like that is what I'm looking for, Mike.

**MH:** Maybe they can tie somebody to a chair and read it to someone that doesn't want to read the book. There, how's that?

**TS:** Nice, nice.

**MH:** That's a winner.

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**TS:** Or, just maybe a quick video of you blasting the podcast and your whole family is having to suffer in the car, or something.

**MH:** [laughs] Right. Yeah, there you go. Captive audience. [laughs]

**TS:** [laughs] Sounds good, Mike. Alright, good luck to everybody. Well, 301. This episode is still technically 300. We recorded it with 300. So I guess congratulations still. We're still partying! The partying has continued for Naked Bible Podcast, a week later. Again, congratulations for all of our hard work. And let's just jump back into the questions here.

**MH:** Yeah, let's get started again.

5:00 **TS:** Joy wants to know:

**Has your research prompted you to delve into the incarnation? What do you think the Holy Spirit's role was? How can Christ be like us in all ways, when he actually has no human father? I've always believed he is 100% God, 100% human, but biologically, how can that be? Would his parentage be similar to Adam's (the breath of God)?**

**MH:** This is a bit like asking how Jesus can be like us in every way, having never sinned. In other words, Jesus' experience and these things about them, we don't have to have a 100% to 100% alignment. So the similarity is not about matching every chromosome to what we are. It's just being human. And he is human by virtue of the way God created humans... We should ask ourselves, "How can Adam be like us?" Well, it's because that's the way God made him. He's human; we're human. Okay? So I think that the problem with... What's creating the confusion or the question itself is this notion that we have to have this microscopic 100% alignment to Jesus. "Well Jesus never sinned and we do, so he can't be just like us." Well, no, that really isn't the point. The point is not that there has to be this utter totality of all aspects, down to the chromosome or gene or something like that. What Scripture is trying to communicate is that he was human. We're human. He's human. And as a human being (we talked about this in the series in Hebrews), Jesus *does* know what it's like to be tempted. He *does* know what it's like to be hungry and to have other physical urges. And he knows what it's like to live as an embodied being, because he's human.

So that's the point. The point of the author is not that Jesus had this exhaustive totality. Like I said, we can always come up with exceptions to ask how he's not like us or how he could be like us. And we could also do the same thing with Adam. And frankly, if there's any omission of experience or even biology between you and somebody walking down the street, do you really know what it's like to be them? Well, the coherent answer is "Yeah, we're both humans." The point of the question, "Do you know what it's like to be this other person you see walking down the street?" Well, how can you if you don't have the genetic flaw

that he has in his genome? Again, those kinds of details are not the point of the analogy that Scripture is trying to communicate. And they're really not the point of our identification with our fellow human beings now. We don't need this 100% microscopic, exhaustive totality in order to say, "Yeah, we are like each other. We understand. We understand what it means to be human." And that's really the point: that he was human. He's genuinely human. He's the second Adam. I think this is a good place for that analogy. Because, "Adam didn't have a father either, so I guess he wasn't human?" You know, that sort of thing. That really isn't the point of what the Scripture writers are trying to say.

**TS:** TJ says:

"Thanks Mike and Trey for making scholarly content accessible to everyday people. The Divine Council worldview has helped to clarify so much that I suspected was there in the text but couldn't articulate."

His question is:

**We are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ. Is the principle of blood as the requirement for atonement connected in any way to the idea of blood used in the creation of man according to Babylonian creation narratives?**

**MH:** The short answer to this is no. I don't know of any Scriptural thread to tug on here that would make those connections, or that connection.

**TS:** Zarek has a question:

**I started reading the book *Without Form and Void* by Arthur C. Custance. Are you familiar with it? And if so, what's your opinion? Is it legit? So far the arguments on how the Hebrew words are used in other verses seem to make sense, but I'm very ignorant in biblical Hebrew.**

10:00

**MH:** Uh, yeah, I am familiar with it. No, it's not legit. Custance articulated the Gap Theory. That's what *this* particular book is articulating. I mean, Custance, by training, was an anthropologist—a bit of a polymath. He dipped into lots of different subjects. So it's still valuable to read Custance, even though the books are old and he's not... The fact that he's not a biblical scholar is going to show in places. He's still worth reading because he's an outside-the-box thinker, which is always welcome. But the Gap Theory just has no exegetical merit to it. If you go to my website, [drms.com](http://drms.com), and you go under (I believe) Resources For Videos... Or you could just google this, too: "drms.com" and "gap theory" or "Genesis 1:1-3," you're going to find a video presentation that I did on this. The issue is not Hebrew words. And again, Custance can't take you beyond vocabulary. The issue is the Hebrew grammar and the syntax (the way the clauses in the

sentence relate to each other in the first three verses). There is no linear sequence in verses 1 through 3. The Hebrew grammar forbids it. And the Gap Theory absolutely *depends* on there being a linear sequence, because that's going to dictate how it translates. He's going to try to argue that in verse 2, "the earth *became* formless and empty." Well, the word *became* requires a linear sequence: events preceding and events following. I'm sorry, but the grammar and the syntax do not give you a linear sequence. The Gap Theory is dead on arrival if you care about Hebrew grammar. It just is. There's really not much I can add to it. But again, I made a video trying to illustrate this in the English first and then talking about how Hebrew does what it does. And this is really the Achilles' heel or the kill shot to the Gap Theory. It's about the grammar. It's not about Hebrew words and vocabulary itself.

**TS:** Nikki has a quick comment.

"I am very grateful for these podcasts and books. What I really appreciate is the references on content."

So thanks.

**MH:** Mm hmm. Yep.

**TS:** Scott has a question:

**I've always wondered, how can anyone be a descendant of the Nephilim after the flood? I mean, by what mechanism, not saying that it is impossible. A global flood would have wiped out all the Nephilim. A local flood would be targeted at where the Nephilim lived, or else it would be kind of pointless. In either case, if Noah's family was chosen to continue the human race, it would be counterproductive if he himself had Nephilim lineage. Is the mechanism of inheritance spiritual rather than genetic? Is it merely a vocational sonship—the giants in Canaan adopting the title of the Nephilim and Rephaim due to their coincidental similarity in size or behavior, or perhaps influenced by the whispers of the Rephaim locked away in Sheol through some sort of possession, medium, or necromancy?**

**MH:** Well, the fact that a third option is excluded from Scott's description leads me to wonder if he *has* read *Unseen Realm*. Because in *Unseen Realm*, I go through the various options of how this is approached. So that's the first element to my response. Either go back and read *Unseen Realm* again, or read *Unseen Realm*. I think for this particular question, it'd be somewhere in chapters 23-25, thereabouts, discussing the giant clans and whatnot. The way the question is worded also presupposes some things. Saying that... Assuming a global flood, okay, sure. Well, you can have a local or regional flood. But then he says, "Well, that's directed at the Nephilim anyway. Well, we're losing the factor of the sea

peoples in this, which were part of the Nephilim heritage or inheritance, and migrations and whatnot from other parts of the Aegean. So if the flood... Again, this is all spit-balling here, because we don't know. But if the flood was regional in the sense that it's Mesopotamia and Canaan (let's just widen it) and all up into Asia Minor, well, you still have the sea peoples in the Aegean. They do pretty well with water. They know how to build ships. I mean, it may not even reach that far. I mean, this is all speculative, but you can see how and why people have opted for a local flood as part of a way to handle this.

15:00

Of course, there's another view for this that Scott didn't mention. And I'm not going to mention it here because I've mentioned it a lot before. And if you don't know what it is, please get *Unseen Realm* and read it. But there are ways to approach this and come out on the other side of it. It's an old question. There are gaps in the way this question is asked that provide trajectories for how to answer the question. So I think, for the sake of this podcast, I'll just leave it there. I don't think it was just some sort of spiritual or possession or anything like that. I think we'd see that described. If it was that, then everybody missed it. Everybody in the Second Temple period didn't get it. New Testament writers didn't get it. So I think that's probably not the best way to approach it, but instead one of these other things.

Let me just throw one more thing into it—that the bringing up Noah also misses a detail. What about Noah's family? I mean, they're already there. It *is* possible to read Noah as “carrying” the gene, or something like that. You don't have to read the passage like Noah is pristine. Or the wives of one of his sons, or something like that. There's always a way to get somebody in there, to do it that way, to argue the case that way. But I don't think for a minute that they're thinking genetics and biology, like we think of it. They are thinking about lineal inheritance and genealogy in that respect. But I don't think we should be spending one second worrying about or wondering about or caring about this whole Genesis 6 question when it comes to people today. Because the Scripture has these lines cut off at the time of David. Period. I also think that that's the reason why it's useless (and I think wrong) to talk about Nephilim coming back in the end times and all that sort of stuff.

Now having said that, there is a way to justify at least the kernel idea from Genesis 6:4. It's a grammatical argument. You can read *Unseen Realm* for that. But I think if Matthew wanted us to think that, he actually would have quoted... Isn't this a novel idea? If Matthew wanted us to think of the Nephilim of Genesis 6 in Matthew 24, it probably would've been a good idea for him to quote the passage. He doesn't. You compare the Greek of Matthew with the Greek of the Septuagint in Genesis 6, and they do not match. He is not quoting... The marrying and giving in marriage language of Matthew is not drawn in Greek from Genesis 6. That would've been a really good opportunity for Matthew to do that if that's what he was really thinking. But he doesn't, and so I would say that isn't what he's thinking. I mean, there are other reasons to not go down that road as

well, as far as what Matthew was thinking and not thinking. But we'll just leave it there. We're trying to abbreviate here.

**TS:** Yvonne has a question:

**I am a homeschooling mom and would like to know if you can recommend any biblical curriculum, books, or other resources that would help me teach an elementary level kid the Divine Council biblical worldview. Or should I just hope to teach him Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek someday?**

**MH:** [laughs] Well, regardless, yes, you should teach him Hebrew and Greek. [laughs] You don't have to learn the ancient languages to get a grasp of the Divine Council worldview. I would say... I would hope you could start with something like *What Does God Want?*—this very basic book—and then graduate to *Supernatural* when he's a little older, and then *Unseen Realm* when he's a little older than that. You don't have to be able to read Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic to read those books and grasp the worldview. The worldview is not synonymous with exegetical details and skills. Most of the people who have read *Unseen Realm*, I would venture to guess, are not proficient in the biblical languages. But it's all there. You can get it. For the little kids, we have *One Big Family*. We started down this road of having books for little kids. There are a couple more things that are going to become part of that picture in the future, Lord willing, that we've had presented to us—things for kids, young people (like youth groups)... We've had someone since the conference submit an advent book, taking the content of *Unseen Realm* and creating an advent book (which I'm actually pretty excited about) for next year. So there are things that we will help bring into reality for listeners and people who have read the other stuff who follow the content. So we'll help you a little bit with that. But as far as transmitting the Divine Council worldview, I would say just generally focus on big concepts, like imaging God (that's a big deal), analogies between God's heavenly and earthly families, analogies between the heavenly host and how they partner with God and how we partner with God, the Deuteronomy 32 worldview... You don't need to do the languages for that, or even really extra books. You get the help when you can get it. But hopefully, there's enough in the three that I mentioned (*What Does God Want?*, *Supernatural*, and *Unseen Realm*). They're deliberately tiered. One thing leads to the next. So we're trying to make that possible, but hopefully you will see other things that we can put out to the audience that will make that even more helpful. But don't get discouraged. Just do what you can and keep repeating the process.

20:00

**TS:** Angel has a comment.

"It has made a great whole lot impact. Thanks for what you do, guys! We are confident that the Lord is behind all of this. #thenakednation"

There you go. Naked Nation. [MH laughs] We need to get on those shirts about the naked nations—the old stuff that we used to talk about. So we need to do that.

**MH:** [laughs] Are you sure it's about...?

**TS:** Alright, Freaky (I hope I said that right) asks:

**Is there any connection or correlation between Gideon and his 300 men versus King Leonidas and his brave 300? Same question on Samson and Hercules. And if events are connected in some way, are the pagan versions manipulated copies, or are the biblical events reversals on the pagan versions?**

**MH:** Yeah, I don't think there's a connection between Gideon and Leonidas. The events of Sparta at Thermopylae are going to postdate the Gideon events and the Gideon story, even if the story is written later. The Greek stuff is going to come after that. I think the question is a little different when it comes to Samson and Hercules. I think there are some elements of older Greek material that do have touchpoints with Samson. This isn't an episode where we can get into it. We actually need an episode on that, so I'll put that on my list. I think that is a little bit different.

As far as the connections, a lot of this... There are whole books (West's book, *The East Face of the Helicon*, is the monster book for this) that show the Greek mythological stories—the origin stories of civilization in ancient Greece and the way they tell that—a lot of those elements are actually drawn from the ancient Near East. And since the biblical material is so closely related to the ancient Near East, you're going to get this conceptual overlap. And in that sense, you're going to have a mixed bag when it comes to the chicken-or-egg question. Some of the biblical material is going to be before the Greek material and sometimes it's going to work the other direction. So when it comes to the Greek stuff, you can't have... You're not going to be able to have always this neat chronology. And even if it was, they're telling origin stories. They're telling how the world came to be. They might have a memory of a flood and just religious elements—theological elements—to how they look at the world and different people groups and whatnot. So since you have this cross-fertilization (we'll call it), or this developmental path, from the ancient Near East, and the Bible is mixed in with that, it should not surprise us that there are going to be similarities, probably for different reasons because the biblical writers are doing polemic with the literature and the ideas, whether they're just verbal or written, of their own day, to do theology—to teach people about these sorts of things. So we shouldn't be surprised that occasionally you're going to actually get an overlap with ancient Greek material and Old Testament material.



Of course, New Testament... That's a little more obvious as to how that would work chronologically. But it's going to happen a little bit in the Old Testament as well, for those reasons. So biblical material is largely polemic. Some of it is just worldview stuff. But it's largely polemic. The chronology is not always neat. So you can't make a blanket statement about how this would work. But as far as the specifics of the Leonidas thing, I really don't think there's much going on there. But the Samson/Hercules question is a little bit different. So Lord willing, in the future, we'll devote an episode to that.

**TS:** Did you see the movie *300*?

**MH:** I have not seen it.

**TS:** "This is Sparta!"

**MH:** I've seen clips of it. I know, I've heard *that* line. [laughs] And I've seen the T-shirt, too.

**TS:** "This is..."

**MH:** Remember when we were in Greece, in Athens? They had those shirts all over the place. So I knew where they were from.

25:00

**TS:** Awesome. There you go. Well, Freaky also has a comment real quick. He got a spiritual hunger about four years back and was referred to episode 86 of the podcast, which is the head covering episode.

"I was hooked and have listened to every episode, and in most cases, more than once. I have also bought and read most of Mike's books and deepened my understanding of the Bible to a place where I have a need to teach. Big was my surprise when I realized a lot of people are as hungry as I was."

So good.

**MH:** Yep. Absolutely. That's exactly what I want to see happen—the whole paying it forward thing. That's the only way this works, you know? You can have podcasts, you can have YouTube channels, all that sort of stuff. But it takes the audience. It doesn't really grow in a meaningful way, beyond just numbers. It doesn't really... It doesn't spread (let's put it that way) without the audience. People have to get engaged and want to help somebody out that they know, just to understand Scripture better. That's the way it is.

**TS:** Josiah says:

**I cannot find many scholars who agree with your view on the image of God. Is this view controversial in academia?**

**MH:** No, it's not at all controversial. So I don't know where Josiah's looking. [laughs] I'd say, "How many scholars have you looked at?" There are a good number who take this position and include it in commentary discussion. So it's... No, it's not controversial at all. The idea of representation is actually very common.

**TS:** Alright. Mike wants to say:

"A quick thank you for your efforts in making the heavy scholarship material accessible, comprehensible, and practical for all of us who are called to be teachers, mentors, disciplers, and pastors. It has helped me not be ashamed of my drive for content, and I am grateful for it."

So, awesome.

**MH:** Good. Absolutely.

**TS:** Lynn wants to know:

**What other books do you recommend for the non-scholar but deep Christian who understands the spiritual worldview you communicate?**

**MH:** Yeah, this is actually a difficult question. Because the real answer is, "This is why I write the books." I spend my time reading scholarly material. I don't read really any popular books on angels or demons. They're just not worth the time because they don't engage the text. So what I spend my time doing is I read peer-reviewed material. I read journal articles. I read the high-end stuff. And then I try to transmit that to the person who doesn't have access to scholarly journals and all that kind of stuff. This is what we do. This is just fundamentally what we do. And for that reason, it's really hard for me to recommend a book that you just get off Amazon that does that. Because they don't. This is why we do what we do.

Now there are... I'm going to mention a few that, if you read them, they're not going to be at the level (in terms of the worldview kind of stuff) that *Unseen Realm* is at, or *Angels*, or the *Demons* book when that comes out. Especially the *Demons* book. That's going to be unique to anything ever published, only because I approach the issue of the powers of darkness from the perspective of the three rebellions. *No one* does that. That happens in scholarly literature and dissertations. *Nobody* has published a book like that. So that's part of the problem. But having listed out all those caveats, C. Fred Dickason... For many years, *Angels Elect and Evil* was the standard book. If you went to Bible college

or seminary and you had a course that included angels and demons, you're going to read Dickason's book. It's good, but it's English Bible based. I don't know any other way to put it. It's not trying to contextualize these topics in terms of the ancient world. It just doesn't—it's English Bible based. But there's still good stuff in it. So that's an accessible book. But that's what it is.

Clinton Arnold's book, *Three Views on Spiritual Warfare*, I think, is good. I think Arnold is really on the right track there. So there's one topic within this larger picture. A book that's very accessible and readable, and Clinton Arnold is a good scholar. He's doing something intentional there for the lay community. It's good, but it's limited. It's just about the spiritual warfare question.

30:00

Stephen Noll's book is a little more academically flavored, *Angels of Light and the Powers of Darkness: Thinking biblically about Angels, Satan and Principalities*. He's got a couple of pages that include the Divine Council, which is nice, because a lot of these books don't—the older ones. So this is a book that you could read and get some good nuggets—good details—out of it. But none of them are at the detail level of *Unseen Realm* or the drill down books (*Angels and Demons*). That's why I feel like I'm supposed to produce them. But there are things out there that are worthwhile, and these things I've just mentioned are definitely worthwhile. So this is actually a tough question, because I don't spend any time reading (I hate to put it this way) *normal* books. [laughs] I am reading dissertations. I'm reading journal articles. Because I view it as my task to take that material and make it decipherable to you guys, to the audience here. So there just isn't much that does that. So it's really hard to recommend anything. But again, with those caveats in mind, there are... I just gave you three titles there that are definitely worthwhile to pick up. But just realize what they are. And sometimes they're focused. They have limitations and whatnot.

**TS:** Chris says:

**I was just wondering when church images began to emerge (like murals and statues). Was paganism part of its beginning?**

**MH:** I really don't know. This is a Church History question. I'm not a Church historian. I can tell you, though, that images of angels are very old. And we're talking about here within the believing community. Obviously, in the pagan community you're going to have images of things. If it's a thing in heaven like cherubim, well that goes back to the biblical period because you have cherubim in the Temple and on top of the Ark—so on and so forth. But this question is something a little wider, obviously, in this question. If you're looking at something like murals or... The example that pops into my head are zodiac mosaics, like in Jewish synagogues. These are all 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> century and later. So late antiquity. You're going to have icon images in the Eastern Roman Empire—Byzantine, late antiquity is going to be the period. So chronologically, that's about the best I can do. In the zodiacs, you actually even have depictions of God in human form. The

one I'm thinking of is of God in his heavenly chariot, which... And it uses... This is a Jewish synagogue. It uses *Sol Invictus* (the conquering sun) imagery for how... Sort of the imagery that pagans would've used, but in this case, it's the God of Israel that they're using it for. You say, "How in the world could that appear in a synagogue when they have the commands about not making a graven image?" Well they didn't consider it a graven image, because a) they're not worshipping it, and b) it's not an idol. It's just a picture. So they looked at pictures differently. They're still transmitting correct theology about Yahweh. He is the one who made the sun and the constellations. No other deity did that. So they're still transmitting good theology through it. But that's the thing that pops into my head about, at least images of God being pretty early. Late antiquity, I think, is the evidence we have for that. But ultimately, I'm not a Church historian, so I couldn't tell you when the kind of thing that you'll see occasionally in a synagogue moved over into the churches. I don't know.

**TS:** Alright. Wayne has a comment here. He says:

"Keep up the good work. I am a late-comer to the podcast. Up to 240 and really like the content. Have also read *Unseen Realm* and *Reversing Hermon*. As a truck driver, I can say the podcast has been a feast while running the highways."

Alright. There you go, Mike.

**MH:** [laughs] Good. I love... Truckers are awesome, man. [laughs]

**TS:** Yeah, absolutely. I could be a trucker. I would love that. Just sit there and listen to the podcast or Coast to Coast late at night... And just cruising.

**MH:** See, that's why I like it too, because I did the late-night paper routes and I like to drive—road trips—and you get to listen to stuff. So yeah, I'm into that, too.

**TS:** Alright. Terri wants to know:

**Prior to Abraham, was Yahweh worshiped by other polytheistic people groups? Was he referred by them as a God of war?**

**MH:** Ah, this is something that I've talked about probably in other Q&As. Every civilization had a god of war. But there's no evidence that Yahweh was part of a pantheon that is non-Israelite. And I think the easy reference here is *DDD* (*Dictionary of Deities and Demons*). And I quote this passage, like on the website for "More Unseen Realm" extensively because I get this question a lot. I think you might also even find it on my homepage, on the blog at some point. Because this comes up a lot. But I'm just going to read a few sentences. This is *DDD* (*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*). The entry on Yahweh is by Karel van der Toorn, who is nowhere near evangelicalism. He says:

35:00

Outside Israel, Yahweh was not worshiped in the West Semitic world.

**And then he goes into claims that he was and basically dismantles them.**

Yahweh was not known at Ugarit either; the singular name Yw (vocalisation unknown) in a damaged passage of the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.1 iv:14) cannot convincingly be interpreted as an abbreviation for ‘Yahweh’.

**So he discusses that. He writes elsewhere:**

The earliest West Semitic text mentioning Yahweh—excepting the biblical evidence—is the Victory Stela written by Mesha, the Moabite king from the 9th century BCE.

**This is the Moabite stone. So he mentions it, but Yahweh is the deity of Israel. But there you have the name in it. That’s the earliest West Semitic text that even mentions the name—9<sup>th</sup> century, so the 800s B.C. Further on, he says:**

The absence of references to a Syrian or Palestinian cult of Yahweh outside Israel suggests the god does not belong to the traditional circle of West Semitic deities. The origins of his veneration must be sought for elsewhere.

**Now here, he starts to get into Edom and Midian. So Edom and Midian:**

A number of texts suggest that Yahweh was worshiped in Southern Edom and Midian before his cult spread to Palestine or Canaan.

**And here he’s referencing things like we’ve talked about on the podcast in relationship to the location of Sinai with the Exodus, so those episodes—the March from the South passages that link Seir and Edom and Moab and so on and so forth. And lo and behold, the descendants of Abraham were there! Oh, who’d have suspected that? So it’s not non-Israelite points of origin. These are sites—these are places—connected in some way with the descendants of Abraham still. Now van der Torn goes on:**

There are two Egyptian texts that mention Yahweh. In these texts from the 14th and 13th centuries bce, Yahweh is neither connected with the Israelites, nor is his cult located in Palestine.

**So these are sort of... What they are are toponyms (place names). So the texts speak about Yahu in the land of the Shasu Bedouin—something like that. So they’re either referring to places that bear the name or just a generic... The Shasu Bedouin. These are generic references to, “Yeah, this is a deity worshiped over in these parts of the world that we’ve already talked about (Palestine,**

Canaan, Edom, Midian, these areas).” And we discussed those in the Exodus series because those two texts can actually be dated to either the early or the late date of the Exodus. Isn’t that a wonderful coincidence? Van der Toorn comments:

In these Egyptian texts, YHW (Yahu) is used as a toponym, yet a relationship with the deity with the same name is a reasonable assumption.

So I’m going to stop there and basically say, you don’t have Yahweh worshiped in a foreign pantheon. That felt like the trajectory of the question. So I would just google some of that. Maybe “Yahweh” and “Ugarit,” “Dictionary of Deities and Demons,” “drms.com” or “MoreUnseenRealm.com” and you’ll find a longer portion of the entry there.

**TS:** Timothy wants to know:

**1) What happened to casting out demons? 2) Which Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls were for casting out demons?**

**MH:** I don’t understand the first part, because demons still get cast out. So I’m not sure what he means by “what happened to casting out demons?” so I can’t take that any further. I don’t know. [laughs]

**TS:** Maybe “what happened to the demons that did get cast out?”

**MH:** The Gadarene account, we know; other accounts, we’re not told. So I’m not going to exegete the question, because I’m probably going to be wrong as to what was really behind the question. The second part is a little easier. Which Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls were for casting out demons? The best thing to look at here is episode 87 of the podcast. This was the episode where we talked about how the exorcism of demons was part of the messianic profile. This is actually going to be traceable to a couple of Qumran texts—one of the Qumran psalms and the language in one of the biblical psalms that made this part of the messianic profile that he would have power over demons... Let’s just say it a little more generically like that: power over demons. Because it depends how you take certain words in the psalm about spells and whatnot having power over the powers of darkness. And incidentally, this is another element. For those out there (and this is common, even in evangelicalism)—this notion that the demonology of the New Testament is foreign to the Old Testament. It depends how that question is framed. If you’re asking, “Well, is the demonology of the New Testament articulated in the Old Testament?” Well, the answer is no, in many respects. It’s just not spelled out. If you’re asking, though, on the other hand, are the data points that are used by Second Temple Jewish writers and New Testament writers to articulate demonology and a theology of Satan, are those data points that they use, can they be found, maybe not together, but disparate data points

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for all of that in the Old Testament? The answer is yes. And you won't find a lot of people say that or pursue it. This is why the *Demons* book... (When it comes out. And yes, I'm as frustrated as you are. Because for me, this is 18 months that this thing's been written. But let me try to contain myself here.) When that book comes out, it's going to be unique. It's going to be unique. So yes, buy it. Distribute it. Market it for me. Just get it out there, because this is going to be a different book.

My view is that while you don't have something like this, this is a good example. Where in the world do New Testament writers get this idea that the messiah can cast out demons? When Jesus runs around doing this, why... "Oh yeah. He's the Son of David. There he is. Right there." You look back in the Old Testament and you wonder, "Where's that at? Because we don't see demons being cast out in the Old Testament." And we don't. So how did they get it? In most of the scholarly world, "Oh, this is just foreign. It's something invented. It's a new idea." No, no. Okay? It's new in terms of the way it's articulated and the development that it gets. But the data points are in your Bible. Because Second Temple writers... Do you know what they're doing? They're not sitting there at their desks wondering what kind of stuff they can make up so that their people read it. They're trying... They're writing about the Old Testament. They're writing about their Bible. They're doing what scholars do today. They're looking at the sacred text and they're doing exegesis. They're writing about the Hebrew Bible. They're looking at the data points and they're asking, "Well, how do these things fit together? I mean, I see these data points here. What do we do with that? What does it mean? How do we think about it? Let's noodle the problem." That's what they're doing. They're not inventing things out of whole cloth. They're not sitting there wishing, "Oh, I wish I had a better grasp of Zoroastrianism, so I knew what to write here. And again, I'm not saying that Zoroastrianism isn't a context for something. I'm not completely divorcing that. But the notion that they have to use that or some other pagan source as a pool from which to get data to write something is not true. The data points are in their Bible.

And so this is a good illustration of this. And this is what distinguishes me from other even Old Testament or Second Temple or New Testament writers. I think a lot of scholars in the evangelical world are too quick to bail on the question. They're not quick enough to really think about, even asking the question, "Well, are the nuggets that form this thing in the New Testament, can they be found in the Old? Where would they get that?" And the answer is, "Yeah, they can. They really can." Where these trajectories end in the Second Temple and the New Testament is part of the Second Temple world, so this is why the New Testament writers will pick up on Second Temple material, because it's part of their world. It's part of what they're reading. They're reading this stuff. And under Providence, it's useful. A lot of it's useful to articulate things about demons and Satan and so on and so forth. This is why there's similarity.

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But at the end of the day, what those writers are doing is looking at their Hebrew Bible. They're trying to struggle with the Hebrew Bible—the data of the Hebrew Bible—trying to answer questions based upon what they find there. And it's not... Honestly, this isn't like a rocket science kind of thing. But I'm glad this question came up, because it's a good illustration. You can have scholars that just look at a question and look at what basically everybody has said to that point, and they don't probe the answer sufficiently. They think it's a settled issue. And I'm just not prone to do that. I'm just not prone to do that. If there are things about the answer that are unsatisfactory, if there's some reason to wonder, "Well, how does that make good sense?" Just putting yourself in their world. Boots-on-the-ground kind of thing. How would this make good sense? That's just... I can't help it. That's just how my mind works. And so I will think about it. I will be willing to think about it. And I'll be willing to say, "You know, I don't know, but I'm still thinking about that." Rather than just say, "Oh, here's the answer. Because this is what everybody else says." And I'm not saying I may not end up there, if I exhaust something. "Well, okay, that does look like the best answer." But in many cases, it isn't.

So this is what we try to do. But this is a wonderful illustration about this, where some scholar could look at the Old Testament and the New Testament and say, "Meh, that's just not in there anywhere. Well, then how did they get the idea? Because they never question it. The casting out of demons actually is part of the messianic profile. And it's not anywhere overtly (that's a key word—overtly) in the Old Testament. So where are they getting it? And it's not satisfactory, to me anyway, and it wasn't to them. Just to advertise here. It wasn't satisfactory to them to just sit there and make something up. They're not going to do that about messiah. They're not going to get information about messiah from a pagan source, like, "Oh, we don't have this data point anywhere, so the profile is incomplete." Or, "Eh, we'd like to give him another superpower here, so let's go to..." No, that's not what they're doing. It's not what they do with anything else. Why would they do it here? So that's my little commercial for the *Demons* book, when it comes out. Again, this is a good question. This topic is kind of close to me, because I just think it ought to make sense. [laughs] You know? Pardon my naïveté. Pardon my view of Providence here. But I just think the thing ought to make sense. So, you know. That's where I'm at.

**TS:** Seems like Jesus did it, and that's the end of the story.

**MH:** Yeah. And why would they associate *that*? I mean, if it wasn't part of the messianic profile, based upon their own sacred Scripture... If it wasn't in there, you would think when Jesus does this and sort of, "Ah, look at this. The kingdom of God has come. Watch the demons fly," they'd look at him and go, "Are you nuts? This isn't part of what messiah does. You just invalidated yourself, dude." But that's not what they do. That is not what they do. And I'm sure there's a reason that they don't do it, and there is. So it's a good illustration.



**TS:** Well, we'll be looking for that book someday, Mike. Someday. You say you wrote a book, but I don't know that you did... [MH laughs] I don't see it anywhere, so.

**MH:** [laughs] Ah, yeah. I know, I know. It's a tragedy. [laughs]

**TS:** Alright. Dylan would like to know:

**What is going to happen after Dr. Heiser finishes going through every book of the Bible?**

“Thank you guys so much for your ministry. It has helped me and those around me very much.”

Well, Dylan, we ain't going to get through all of the books of the Bible. [laughs] We should have started...

**MH:** Yeah, that isn't going to happen. And then the end will come. World without end. Amen. It's just not going to happen.

**TS:** Right. No way. But we *will* take a break from the Bible after Exodus and you've got some pretty neat content to cover after that, right?

**MH:** Yeah. We have plenty of topics. We've actually gotten at least two or three here that we need to drill down on, so that's not going to be a problem.

**TS:** Alright. Jamie has a comment here. I want to read this. This is pretty good, Mike.

“I would like to leave an exhortation for you and the whole team. So here we go. For the first four, almost five, years of my marriage, I watched my husband get pulled into a world that seemed to not only drag us both down, but caused a pain in him to pull away from God. I understand the false argument of being raised in the Church and already knowing everything. We both were raised in the Church and knew a lot, but we used that to defend ourselves from needing anything deeper. Long story short, my husband found the name of your podcast and our lives have been changed ever since. My husband has had a revival in his heart to learn more and has challenged me to learn more, and that has made our marriage stronger and our family happier. Thank you for challenging us to go deeper, to look for more to read really what's there and to understand the Bible and not just listen to the stories.”

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That's pretty awesome.

**MH:** Yeah, it is. That's why we do it.

**TS:** Yeah, absolutely.

**MH:** That's what drives the bus, right there.

**TS:** Mm hmm. 100%. Alright. Derek wants to know:

**What is the best way to understand biblical tongues? Please recommend resources for it.**

**MH:** Well, you know, for me personally, I think it's very clear in Scripture that tongues are known languages. I'm in the cautious-but-open category. So to me, when you have the same context today as you did in the New Testament (in other words, people aren't going to get Scripture or the gospel any other way), I think God *can* do this. I know missionaries that were in tight spots and somehow were able to speak the language that they needed to speak at the moment, either to do ministry or get out of a real jam. And they had never studied it, didn't know a word of it. So this kind of thing *does* happen. So I look for a similar context to the New Testament and known languages. But those are the two rules of thumb. I know people do the prayer language thing, and I have to be honest, that never made sense to me. But I don't pick at it. If that's something that draws people to the Lord more closely, that's a good thing. It didn't make sense to me, because God knows every thought of your mind anyway, so why do you need a special language for it? God knows already. But if it helps you—the practice helps you—I'm not going to worry about it too much. I would suggest as far as just getting the lay of the land for the kinds of things that need to be thought about, the book *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today: Four Views...* I think it's Zondervan that put this out. It's fairly old. It's been around probably 20 years. But it's a good book to give you an overview and then responses of all the other authors to the other views on this issue. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today: Four Views*, I think, is a good resource.

**TS:** Brad says:

**I would love to hear Mike's thoughts on the agrarian nature of Genesis 2 and following and/or archeological evidence of early humans (Adam types) as using stone tools and being hunter/gatherers. Is Adam picked like Abram was? Genesis as theological polemic treatise without the historical? A bit of both? Up to 4% of Neanderthal DNA is in some populations today.**

**MH:** Yeah, I would say Genesis and the writers has nothing to do with Neanderthal. The writers aren't think about Neanderthals. So I don't see that as germane to the question. The rest of the question, though, I do think is worth thinking about. I mean, when it comes to Scripture, metallurgy is credited to the era before the flood, so prior to that, well, they would be using non-metallurgically created tools. So we would expect that people would be using stone tools. So using a stone tool doesn't mean you're a Neanderthal. There are primitive tribes in the Amazon today that are completely cut off and uncivilized (by our terms)

and they use stone tools, but does that make them Neanderthals? Well, of course not. So these two things often get discussed in tandem, and they may or may not be related. Just the mere use of a stone tool doesn't say that everybody was a Neanderthal or make any comment on the Neanderthal genome and the homo sapiens genome and all that sort of stuff.

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So I think that's the quick way to do it. I don't see the content of the early chapters of Genesis divorced from history. They're not trying to do science. I've said that many times. They're not trying to articulate science itself. And I think even despite that, though, that we are dealing with things that did occur. So there are events. There was a first human pairing, in my mind. I realize that some evangelicals don't like that, because, "Oh, the genetic data says that there had to be a couple hundred pairs instead of just one. Blah, blah, blah." So in other words, it depicts the conditions we'd have after a flood? Is that what you're saying? You know. So that's a bit of a jab, that I think there are people who retroject the science back too early, and they miss what it might point to that's actually part of the scriptural narrative anyway. But at the end of the day, I don't worry too much about these things, because the enterprise of Scripture is not to give us science. Yes, it's true that statistical genetics is in its infancy as a discipline. That's fair to say. The work that Pete Enns refers to to articulate his view of this has been criticized by other people in the statistical genetics field. It's not, like, immune from criticism because it's a discipline that's still in its early stages. However it pans out, I'm fine with it, because I don't view the articulation of science as being what God cared about when he prompted people to write books like Genesis. If he did care about it, God would have made better choices of writers. By definition, if he's picking someone in the second millennium B.C., that person's not going to write content that is amenable or would satisfy a 21<sup>st</sup> century scientist. I can't think of many more things that are more obvious than that. So let's honor God's choices. God must have had something else in mind that was the real concern for what he wanted written down. But that doesn't mean that it's divorced from things that actually happened.

**TS:** Alright. A couple of comments here. The first one's from Brian. He says:

"First of all, you guys are great. I anticipate your podcast every week and can't wait for it to drop into my podcast app. I purchased and read the *Unseen Realm* for myself and purchased *Supernatural* for my mom and sister to read. I teach an adult Sunday School class and have begun to work in the Divine Council approach in our studies and minds are being blown by it. I've introduced it to some of my friends and they've begun to study it as well. The biblical worldview you guys present makes so many things click into place, not only in the biblical past, but also what is going on in the world right now. Thank you so much for all that you do. It is greatly appreciated and more importantly, you guys are making a difference." – Brian in Goodman, MO

So thank you, Brian.

**MH:** Yep. Thank you.

**TS:** Tom also says:

“Mike your books and the podcasts have led me into a deeper, freer, happier, and more meaningful relationship with the Lord. Thanks to you and Trey for all you have done for me, by his leading.”

Alright, Tom. There you go.

**MH:** Mm hmm.

**TS:** Alright, Laura asks:

**If a deceased loved one appears to you, is it 100% for sure an evil spirit in disguise?**

**MH:** No. I think the best thing for this answer would be to go to Google. Put in “drmsb.com” and put in the phrase “discerning the dead.” That will take you to the series I did years ago on the vocabulary for (for lack of a better way to put it) the entities that exist that are in the afterlife or the underworld. Because the short version here is that I think that terms like *metim* (the dead) refer to the spirits of human dead—the spirits of people who have died—and that’s different than evil spirits (evil nonhuman spirits). I think Scripture actually does distinguish this. If you’re the dead, you would have had to have lived and then died. And you can’t really say that about a nonhuman spirit. They don’t die. So the vocabulary is a bit different. And in that series, I talk about some of these sorts of things. So the short answer is no. The longer answer is what I just gave you, but ultimately, just go google “drmsb.com” and “discerning the dead” and you’ll get a series that I think will be a little more helpful.

**TS:** Alright. Cara has a comment here. She says:

“Your show has really helped me to understand the theme of believing loyalty through Scripture after spending about a year of being pulled into legalistic performance-based Christianity, where I never knew if my salvation was secure. After being suspicious for some time that the continual fear and stress I felt over my salvation didn’t seem in line with the heart of God for his children. Your podcast was just what I needed to feel free to bury some misguided doctrine in the ground for good. It has felt like coming home again, and I can see the fruit of resting in the finished work of Jesus again in my life. No longer striving to be secure, but free to serve God from a thankful heart and see my sanctification as a gift and not the hinge on which my salvation hangs.”

Awesome.

**MH:** Yeah, that's well said.

**TS:** Awesome testimony, absolutely.

**MH:** Yep.

**TS:** Alright, Tom... We'll wrap it up here, Mike. We've one more question and one more comment. Tom's question is:

**What's it like being a celebrity among the Bible nerds?**

1:00:00

**MH:** [laughs] Yeah, I just... I don't even know how to answer that. I don't feel like a celebrity. It's just... I don't know what to say. Because for me to say it feels good or bad almost requires me to assume that it's true. [laughs] I don't know what to do with that one.

**TS:** Do you get recognized...? Before the podcast, did you get recognized, every time you went to ETS and SBL, would you get recognized more or less after the show started?

**MH:** Okay, that's a fair way to put it. No, like this last ETS/SBL, seven or eight times people would walk up, "Are you Mike?" Yeah. So that happens now and it didn't happen earlier. I've had people recognize me in airports twice. And it's just the voice, if they ever hear me talking or something like that. Well, maybe it's... I think in one instance, it was me because of SkyWatch or something like that. So yeah, it happens. But I'm not a celebrity. When I think of celebrities, I'm thinking of people that have difficulty living their lives, just normal day-to-day things. So I don't think about it.

**TS:** He did specify "among the Bible nerds," so...

**MH:** Bible nerds? So like if you filled a room with Bible nerds? Yeah, I guess that's fair. I used to tell my kids, "I'm nerd famous." So okay, I guess that fits. [laughs] Good wording, I guess.

**TS:** Nerd famous, or infamous.

**MH:** Yeah, there you go.

**TS:** Well, we're going to end this with Richard. He says:

“Thank you, Mike and Trey, for this podcast. The content is so vital to us Middle Earthers. And congratulations to 300 episodes of getting Naked.”

There you go, Mike. Getting naked 300 times.

**MH:** I think you planted that one. I think you planted that one. [laughs]

**TS:** I didn't plant it, but I made it last, that's for sure. You still have to make the shirts that say, “Get Naked.” And then, “Bible Podcast.”

**MH:** There's a great philosophical question for you. Because if you're wearing something, then you're not... Oh, nevermind. Just forget it. I don't want to do anything to help you. So... [laughs]

**TS:** [laughs] I don't need lots of help, Mike, as you've learned over these five years. But that's it, Mike.

**MH:** I'll tell you. It was funny at Naked Bible to hear Carmen Imes tell me about a conversation where she had to explain to someone that she was speaking at something called the Naked Bible. That was funny. I did get a laugh out of that.

**TS:** Even the other day, my wife's grandmother is here, she's like, “Why do you all have to call it Naked?” You know, after I explained that. “Why do you have to call Naked?” Just still... Well, that's the whole point.

**MH:** Yeah. Yep. It's memorable. That's the point.

**TS:** Alright, Mike. Well, any other thoughts? I got you a gift, actually, but since we weren't there in San Diego for the conferences, I didn't give it to you.

**MH:** Should I be frightened? [laughs]

**TS:** No, it's a good gift. I got you a good gift, for 300 episodes. And you owe me a party for the next time. And then also, Christmas is coming up, Mike, so I want to remind people to go to [NakedBiblePodcast.com](http://NakedBiblePodcast.com), go to the store, and get you some Christmas gifts for your family.

**MH:** Yeah.

**TS:** That'd be good.

**MH:** Yeah, absolutely.

**TS:** Yeah, I love the magnets. What's funny is, people have come (some of my children's friends, they're like in sixth grade) and have walked by the magnets

and said, "Is that Trey?" In my skinnier and younger days, I used to look like Jesus with my hair, and now I've graduated to Moses with the beard and stuff. And I was, like, "No." And my wife was, like, "No, that's Moses. That's not Trey. He looks like him. But that's Moses."

**MH:** You need a staff? Is that what you need?

**TS:** I don't know, Mike. I might.

**MH:** Yeah.

**TS:** We appreciate it. Everybody listening is important to us, over these five years. So I'm patting my back here. [MH laughs] Pat, pat.

**MH:** Yep, yep, it's a lot of work. A lot of work. But it's good. You know.

**TS:** Hopefully we can keep doing it for another five years.

**MH:** Yeah, absolutely. That would be great. It's hard to imagine, but yeah. *This* is hard to imagine. [laughs] To be honest with you.

**TS:** Let's just sit here and take a moment of silence and imagine it. [three seconds of silence]

**MH:** [laughs] There you go.

**TS:** Alright. Well, we appreciate everybody listening for this for five years. And we expect y'all now to listen for the next five. We're going to guilt you into it. With that, Mike, I want to thank you for everything you've done, and I want to thank myself. You're welcome.

1:05:00

**MH:** Thank *you*, thank *you*.

**TS:** [laughs] Alright.

**MH:** Seriously, thank *you*.

**TS:** You're welcome. Appreciate it. And we want to thank everybody else especially for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.