

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 322

Dr. Louis Markos

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**Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)**

**Guest: Dr. Louis Markos (LM)**

### Episode Summary

Dr. Louis is Professor of English at Houston Baptist University. He is an authority on C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien and also teaches courses on mythology, Classical Literature and Victorian and Romantic Literature. Dr. Markos recently reviewed Dr. Heiser's book, *The Unseen Realm*, and found its emphasis on the supernatural metanarrative of the Bible not only fascinating, but quite important for contemporary believers, especially millennials. In this episode of the podcast, we talk to Dr. Markos about his work, his review, and the value of literature for theological thinking and apologetics. Enjoy more after conversation at the very end of the podcast.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 322: Louis Markos. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

**MH:** Pretty good, pretty good. Keeping busy here in quarantine. And just like everybody else, wondering when things are going to go back to normal. But staying busy for sure.

**TS:** Yeah. One thing that can help people stay busy is to read your new book that's finally out—the *Demons* book.

**MH:** Yeah, for sure. That'll give people something to do. You know, we were talking off the air that you've got sort of a homeschooling duty now because of the quarantine. Maybe you could read the *Demons* book to your kids. [laughs]

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

**MH:** There you go. Great idea.

**TS:** I'll squeeze that in in between math and social studies.

**MH:** I'm guessing they're going to like it more than math. Just a guess.

**TS:** No, Math is the favorite subject of our household. So surprisingly... Not surprising, I guess. They love math. My son is going to be in sixth grade next year is going to be in advanced math, so we'll get to do robotics and things like that. So I'm excited to get to deal with artificial intelligence and things like that at the sixth grade level.

**MH:** There's some kind of alien joke in there somewhere, Trey, but I'm not going to go there.

**TS:** Yeah, please. I'm interested. I want to hear the joke. What is a Michael Heiser joke?

**MH:** [laughs] Well, this is like what planet are you guys from? Look, I don't like math. Okay? I just don't. I loved algebra because I had a really good algebra teacher. He was fun. But that was ninth grade, and ever since then it's like a death sentence.

**TS:** Oh, no, no, no, no, no.

**MH:** Maybe it just turned me against it.

**TS:** I wanted to major in math. I loved math. I took calculus in college and all of that. And I tinkered with... I'm one or two classes shy from minoring in math. There just wasn't any money, other than being a professor or a teacher of math. What am I going to do with that major? [MH laughs] There's not much you can do.

**MH:** I don't know. But everybody has to take it.

**TS:** But if I wasn't a computer guy, I was going to be a coach. And I wanted to teach algebra specifically because algebra was my favorite math. It was either calculus or algebra. So I figured algebra would be more marketable in high school and whatnot.

**MH:** I know what that looks like because I have two cousins that do exactly that. They both teach math and they're both coaches.

**TS:** Awesome.

**MH:** For real.

**TS:** Do you want to give them a shout-out? Where do they coach?

**MH:** They're in Lebanon, PA. Lebanon High School.

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**TS:** Your hometown, yeah.

**MH:** Yep, hometown. That's where they are.

**TS:** Oh, both of them?

**MH:** Yep, both of them.

**TS:** Teaching at your old school?

**MH:** Yeah, old high school. I didn't get to graduate from there because we moved 20 feet beyond the city line when I was a senior and I had to switch high schools, which, I think you can tell, it still bothers me. [laughs] It's just another reason not to like high school. But I was attached. I had friends at this high school. It was the closest I'd ever lived to the building, but I couldn't go there because of the way they had gerrymandered the city lines. So I had to go to our cross-town rival high school.

**TS:** Ouch.

**MH:** What a mess. You know?

**TS:** That's rough. Well, yeah, I used to love calculus. Derivatives are my favorite ones. It's the ones that take multiple pages. You can just go on and on and on. It takes, like, ten pages to solve. I used to love those problems. Those were my favorite problems. But we'll spare the people of math.

**MH:** Yes. I'm sure that's going to bring a tear to a few people.

**TS:** That's probably... So now I know, I've got... Baseball to me is math to you.

**MH:** [laughs] But so much of baseball is statistics. Well, never mind. We're not going to get into it.

**TS:** That's true, it is.

**MH:** It's the only math I can stand, at least partially.

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**TS:** Alright, Mike. We'll spare people our talking and get into a great interview with Dr. Louis Markos. This guy is great. I love him.

**MH:** Yep.

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Well, we're thrilled today to have professor Dr. Louis Markos on the podcast. And it will become pretty clear why we're having Dr. Markos on the podcast. He is *not* a biblical scholar by training or by profession, but he has a deep interest in the sorts of things that we love to talk about here, especially *Unseen Realm*. And we'll get into how the connection was made. But Lou, could you introduce yourself to the audience a little bit first? Just tell us who you are, where you teach, and what you teach.

**LM:** Sure! Thanks for having me on. My name is Lou Markos and I'm a professor of English and Scholar in Residence down at Houston Baptist University where I've taught, I think, for 29 years now. So I've been here a long time. And my original specialty (what I did my dissertation on) is Wordsworth and Coleridge and Byron, Shelley, Keats—the Romantics and the Victorians. But I also do anything to do with the ancient world: ancient Greece, ancient Rome, epics like Homer and Virgil. I do Dante as well. And I also do anything with C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. So I like to have a wide range of interests here that I've been teaching over the years.

**MH:** Do you do undergrad or grad or both?

**LM:** Mostly undergraduate. We do have an MLA program (Masters' of Liberal Arts) and sometimes I teach there. But my real focus is the undergraduates, and basically liberal arts education is my real focus.

**MH:** Do you do a specific course on Tolkien or Lewis or do you combine them?

**LM:** I do. I kind of cycle these three classes over a three- or four-year period, where I do a class on *The Chronicles of Narnia*, I do a class on Lewis' apologetics, and then I do a class on *The Lord of the Rings*. So those three classes sort of rotate and really dig in it. And the way I teach *The Lord of the Rings* is, that's the only book we actually read, but I spend the first two or three weeks lecturing on *The Silmarillion*. I don't force them to read it because I'm afraid they'll drop the class. Because some people just can't get into that book. I encourage them to, but I said, "Don't worry; I'm not making you read it! But I am going to go over it and talk about it and tell it in the narrative storyteller way so you have the backstory." And it's funny, because I don't know if you know Tolkien people, but you talk to people, "Hey, have you read *The Lord of the Rings*?" "Oh, I love it! I've read it five times!" "Have you read *The Silmarillion*?" And they always say, "Well, I started it." [laughter] And yet, I hear... I know we'll talk about it later, but it's a book that's so rich with ideas. And the more you know it, the more you enjoy *The Lord of the Rings*, basically. And we'll talk about that a little bit later today.

**MH:** Yeah, I would imagine that you don't have trouble filling those classes.

**LM:** [laughs] Thanks, I love doing that. It's just... One of the things I've learned to do as a professor... And Lewis is my first specialty. And C.S. Lewis says that one

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of the biggest problems with academia (and I find this, too, with secular schools: Colgate, University of Michigan) is what he called the historical point of view. And what Lewis meant by that is (it's actually Screwtape who said it) whenever a modern scholar reads an ancient book (and actually, that would include the Bible today), he will ask all sorts of questions. Who wrote it? Why was it written? What were the influences? Etc., etc., etc. But there's one question that's never asked. Is what the writer wrote *true*? Today, Mike, that almost would seem naïve in academia. But if you don't ask "Is it true?" then it will never change your belief and it will never change your behavior. So one of the things that's attractive is when we teach... And it's not just Lewis or Tolkien. When I teach Homer or Virgil or even [inaudible], we're not only reading to learn and understand. We're reading to find truth. Right? And even when we're reading pagan writers, all truth is God's truth. Now, we have to be very, very discerning and use the Bible as our touchstone. But sometimes, we will discern truth (as we'll talk about later when we talk about Tartarus). We will find bits and pieces of truth even in the craziest Greek mythology. But again, we need to hone our mind as it's shaped by the Christian worldview and it empowers us to go searching. So again, when I'm teaching literature, this is a place to change our lives, to change our beliefs, our behaviors—to really wrestle with it. And I love doing that, especially with Lewis and Tolkien.

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**MH:** Well, I can already tell you're the Lit prof I wish I'd had. [laughter] Wow. I enjoyed... I had a British Lit class. We did *Gawain and the Green Knight* and Chaucer. And I really liked it. But I never had a modern, so I never had an actual class on Lewis or Tolkien or anything like that, which was really unfortunate.

**LM:** When we were in school, those classes just didn't exist. This is a fairly recent thing. It's gotten faster and faster and faster. But 30 years ago, you couldn't take a class in Lewis or Tolkien, at least in America. Probably not even in England. So it's changed a lot.

**MH:** Now our connection... I'm sure many out there in the audience are wondering, "Okay, well I love Lewis and Tolkien too. But what's the connection point here?" Lou, you wrote a review of *Unseen Realm* for the Gospel Coalition. And I can't recall specifically how I saw this. Somebody sent it to me and then I sent you a thank you, and that led to our connection. But let's just start off this way. How did you hear about my book, *The Unseen Realm*? What was the point of contact?

**LM:** It really is a wonderful story. I'm part of an international fellowship that meets at my house once a month. And we've actually been doing apologetics. I've been leading apologetics stuff over the last couple of years. And I've got a fellow member there named Lyric (Greek like I am). Real nice lady. And my birthday was in January and for my birthday she got me a copy of *The Unseen Realm*. And she said, "You've got to read this." Because she's heard me lecture and read my books and she said, "This is something you need to factor in to what

you're saying." And I thought, "Well, okay. What the heck." And I read it and immediately I thought, "Okay, this is something great." And Mike, I am so glad that you just came out with the new paperback in 2019 or whatever. Because sometimes publishers don't like to publish reviews of older books. But this was just a perfect thing. So I said, "Look, it's a new book, right? It just came out again. So let's go for it." And when I read it, what amazed me was that... I mentioned before, I teach *The Lord of the Rings* and I really teach a lot about *The Silmarillion*, which is the whole backstory to *The Lord of the Rings*. You only get bits and pieces of it in *The Lord of the Rings*. And even the movie gives you a few pieces of it. And I said, "Oh my gosh! This view here of the Bible that I'm seeing in the book actually matches up with a lot of stuff Tolkien's saying!" And I don't think Tolkien is necessarily *meaning* to say that or has exactly that understanding or view. But I said, "This is kind of bringing the Bible to life in so many ways." Specifically for me. I teach Greek mythology. It's one thing that I teach. And one of the things I've always told my students that is so fascinating to me, is that when the Titans and the giants rebelled against the Olympian gods, they had this huge cosmic battle called the Gigantochy. And when was done, the rebel giants were in prison. Now in Greek mythology, the underworld is called Hades. But Hades is kind of like Sheol. It's not necessarily a place of punishment. It's just sort of a miserable place. People walk around in a daze. There's no hope.

**MH:** A cadaverous existence.

**LM:** Yeah. It's actually kind of like living in Detroit, Mike. [MH laughs] It's just a place of low-level misery. There's no hope. You just walk around. So...

**MH:** [laughs] Our apologies to anybody from Detroit.

**LM:** [laughs] I couldn't resist. I went to the University of Michigan, right near Detroit. But anyway, what's amazing is that those rebellious giants are not put in Hades. They're put in a place called Tartarus. And all the way back to Hesiod and Homer, Tartarus is as far under Hades as Hades is under the sky. It is the bottomless pit. That's where the *real* bad sinners were, having those terrible... Like Tantalus and all these people that had these special punishments. And that's where they're locked up. If any of your listeners watched Hercules (Disney) when they were a kid, it's even mentioned there, where the bad guys are locked up in Tartarus. It's in Percy Jackson too. Okay.

Now, whenever I teach my students, I tell them what's amazing about that word Tartarus is in the New Testament, generally speaking, there are two different words used for hell. Often they just use the word Hades, which is a substitute for Sheol. It goes back to the Septuagint. But when Jesus is speaking about hell, he often uses the word Gehenna. I won't go into that, but it's that pit where they put the babies and all that. But one time and only one time in the whole New Testament is the word for hell "Tartarus." And you only know that if you have a

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Bible that has notes that say “Greek: Tartarus”. And the only time it uses Tartarus (because I’m always looking for these connections with my students) is when it’s talking about the imprisonment of these angels. Now I’ve always liked to think that that’s a reference to the rebellious angels and how they were put there. And you can read about that in the 67<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, right? [MH laughs] But even though I told my students that, I knew, because I’ve read it so many times. And it’s like, “You know, that’s really not what it’s about. It’s linked to this Book of Enoch thing. It’s linked to the sons of God and the daughters of men.” But I didn’t quite know what to do with it. So usually when I would tell my students, I would say, “Well, it’s one or the other.” But when I read your book, that was one of the first connections that, “Okay, *now* this is making more sense.” And that deeper spiritual backstory... Just like kids use it today when they’re watching Netflix, this whole idea of a backstory that gives greater meaning. And in the same... You can read *The Lord of the Rings* without any knowledge of *The Silmarillion* and you can still get a whole lot out of it. But if you know it... And it’s the same thing. We’ve been reading our Bible without the full *Unseen Realm* worldview. We can still understand... Certainly we can still understand the gospel and all of that. But the more we understand, I think it gives more... It adds flesh to the bones. It gives a wider perspective. It gives an understanding of a spiritual warfare that’s different than all of the Sci-Fi and the devils hiding behind every stone. There’s something here that’s older, more ancient.

**MH:** Do you find, like with your students... Because you obviously... Let’s just take the Tolkien class. Because you spend time on *The Silmarillion* to give them context. I still... It does surprise me, but it shouldn’t surprise me, so it’s one of those does-but-doesn’t surprise me sorts of things. But I still get people who will ask me or send me emails from someone they’re trying to have a discussion with about *The Unseen Realm*. Because I beat the context drum all over the place in that thing. And they’ll ask questions like, “Well, why would I bother reading the Bible like an ancient person would? Why would I bother reading the Bible this way?” Do you find that because of what you do with your students that they are able to see the point and then sort of map it over to how they think about Scripture?

**LM:** Yeah. It *is* hard, but unfortunately, it’s been made harder even today. I don’t know about you, Mike, but unfortunately, even though I agree 100% that we need to know the context, even I am sometimes a little bit suspicious when I hear that, because it’s so often used by liberal theologians to make the Bible say whatever they want to say. See what I mean? That’s not the way it should be used. It’s sort of like the way I feel... I don’t know if when you were in college you heard the phrase *interdisciplinary*. *Interdisciplinary* should be a word that’s absolutely traditional liberal arts, great works cannon. But it was kind of stolen when I was in school by the sort of crazies who basically wanted to throw out ...

**MH:** Like, “Let’s filter it all through the weirdest trend.” That’s their definition of *interdisciplinary*.

**LM:** That’s what I mean. So they’ve given a bad name to that. But no, we *need* to know the context. And to me, the best way to explain why we need to know the context is this. Look, I’m a Baptist. Very high view of Scripture. I have no problem with the Word’s inerrancy and all that stuff. But unfortunately, a lot of times when real strong conservative, Fundamentalists, whatever Christians... When we speak about inerrancy, we make it seem like God dictated the Bible to the writers. And that is not only *not* what we believe as Christians, that’s actually what Muslims believe. And so often (and it kind of scares me) a lot of real strong evangelicals (like my friends) without realizing it, we almost become Muslims. It’s that idea that Paul was just the secretary and God dictated the Bible. No, I think the easiest way to understand it is that the Bible, like Jesus, is incarnation. Remember, both Jesus and the Bible are called the Word of God. And in the same way that Jesus is fully God and fully man, the Bible is fully divinely inspired, but it’s fully written by human people. Right? And so it’s important to know the context because Paul is in there. That doesn’t take away from the full inspiration of it. Here’s another way of putting it that’s sort of wonderful. C.S. Lewis in his book *Miracles* says that when God does a miracle, he suspends for a moment the laws of nature. But immediately after he does the miracle, the laws of nature come right back in and domesticate it. So the virgin birth, God intervenes. He puts the seed directly into Mary. But as soon as he does that, nature takes over. Jesus was gestated for nine months. It’s not like he was born after three months. Natural processes take over. And in the same way, the Bible was divinely inspired, but once it’s there it can easily fall prey to textual decay. That’s why we have to work so hard to understand it—to understand the context. To understand who these people are. And again, that should be what conservative traditional Christians are doing. We need to take that back.

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**MH:** When we do... Yeah, I agree completely. I have... You can find me on YouTube a lot with a lecture of this nature. Because really, anything, whether we use a word like “dictation” or whether we avoid the word dictation but still articulate the same idea, it really makes Scripture vulnerable to all sorts of criticisms.

**LM:** It does, yes.

**MH:** You know, the people out there online and on the internet who love to attack Scripture, this really gives them a lot of fodder to show the fallacy of this understanding that they presume that Christians believe, because a lot of Christians articulate it that way. So it’s really a harmful thing.

**LM:** You know, what happens when we teach this false notion is we produce more Bart Ehrmans. Because that’s what a Bart Ehrman is—somebody who grew up with a false understanding of inerrancy. He got to university. Some hot

shot showed him a contradiction and he was gone. And we have to... I was just talking to my son who's doing a... HBU has a cultural apologetics masters online that my son is doing. And he's reading Voltaire and all of these people. And he's seeing what I've been trying to tell him, that these crazy people that attack the faith... Like when the famous Lisbon earthquake happened, suddenly Voltaire writes *Candide* and everybody says, "Ah, proof that God is not a loving God!" And these people act as if there's never been a natural disaster before. It's just weird. They're just going back and grinding the same axe over and over again. And it's like, "No. No one ever said this. No one ever said that God promised health and wealth and stuff like that. That's a heresy (or at least a soft heresy). That's not what God said." Again, we're our own worst enemies when we lift people up to be dashed down. Because we're trying to use an Enlightenment idea of inerrancy rather than a biblical idea.

**MH:** Let's go back to contextualizing Scripture, either in terms of... I'll let you take this where you want to go, either in terms of methodology or some specific drilldowns. But when you read *Unseen Realm* (and I'm basically making the same arguments in all sorts of passages as you just articulated)... How would you characterize the worthwhileness (which is a terrible word—it's not even a word) [LM laughs] but the merit of thinking that way? How would you use something like Tolkien or Lewis to illustrate "this is why we do this"? So that's a question of moving from one to the other. Or you could tackle this by... We could talk about specific things that you saw in *Unseen Realm* that kind of to some degree map over to the sorts of things that you see in the writings of Lewis and Tolkien. However you want to approach that.

**LM:** Let me set some context and then let's move in and talk about Tolkien. Just a little bit of context. Why do people not believe in miracles today? I think there are two basic reasons. One reason (this is more the secular, materialist view) is that miracles violate the laws of nature and you can't do that. And, of course, we could talk about that forever. They don't violate them. They suspend the laws of nature. But there's another problem. And this often affects believers. And that's the idea that, "I don't believe in all these miracles because doing miracles is beneath God. If God was a logical, ordered, rational person, he wouldn't have to keep intervening all the time." So what drives me crazy is I know so many good evangelicals (particularly like Calvinist or Reformation people) who believe literally every single miracle in the Bible. They have a high view of Scripture. They believe it all. But when a miracle happens today, they immediately dismiss it. Now we do need to be discerning. We have to discern the spirits. We don't just accept anything. And even the Catholic Church doesn't accept just anything despite what we sometimes say unfairly about them. They also investigate things too. But for instance, here's a good example of this. I'd actually always respected the proper Catholic understanding of exorcism. And the proper Catholic understanding is if you bring your daughter to a Catholic priest and say, "I think my daughter is possessed," the Catholic priest won't immediately do an exorcism. They will try to rule out every natural explanation. And if they've done

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that, then they will do an exorcism. I don't know if they always do that, but that's the way they're supposed to do it. And I think as a hermeneutic for us... God did create the laws of nature. It works that way. But again, we're just so Enlightenment-minded that we are embarrassed almost. Just like Baptists are embarrassed by people speaking in tongues. They don't know what to do with it. They're afraid they're going to get cooties or something like. I'm serious. I think it comes down to that. Forget about theology, we're uncomfortable and then we use our theology to save us from what we're uncomfortable about. And I'm not talking about heresy here. I'm just talking about a little bit of self-protectiveness. And you say it in your book, too. Unfortunately, since I've been a kid and since you've been a kid, a lot of the people that start talking about spiritual warfare are really, really goofy and go a little bit too far and look for a demon behind every stone. So that also scares people away.

But we need to understand that, first of all, Christianity is not deistic. We don't believe in a God who created the world and then let it run on its own. That's deism. That's unfortunately what most American writers (the major ones, over the years) are into. But what we believe is a God who is active in the world—is doing something. And we need to see that. He actively holds everything together. That's the same... I won't get into this, but one of the reasons I'm driven crazy by so-called theistic evolution is I call that "deism in science." Deism is in everything, where suddenly our God is inert. He started everything off and then he's not there. That's not the God of the Bible who is incredibly active. In fact, I like to think of the Bible as a record or chronicle of all of God's actions and interactions in human history. God is coming down again and again. He does it supremely in his Son. But he's coming down again and again. Your book, of course, focuses on the Flood and the Tower of Babel, the burning bush, giving the law at Sinai. God is a God who is actively involved in the world.

Let's talk about Tolkien. Once you understand the backstory of Tolkien, it just opens up beautifully. I don't see any direct evidence in his letters that he had a full understanding of what you call the Unseen Realm, but it's amazing how much it overlaps. First of all, anybody, if you love Tolkien, at least read the first part of *The Silmarillion*. That is the creation story. The Ainulindalë is what he calls it. In this beautiful creation story, like God, he calls him Ilúvatar or Eru. It means the One. And that god creates these angelic beings that he calls the Ainur. And he actually sings creation into being. Lewis kind of stole this idea in *The Magician's Nephew* where Aslan sings things into being. And one thing you need to understand is that whenever Tolkien quoted Lewis, Lewis was very happy. But when it was the other way around, Tolkien got upset. He was a little bit of a curmudgeon. But anyway, this idea. And I think it all goes back to Job, when the sons of God, the sons of the morning, sang. This beautiful, beautiful image of Ilúvatar singing the song of creation and allowing these angelic beings (this angelic council, if you will) to participate in that song. Again, they are created beings but they're spiritual.

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**MH:** Yeah, very obvious connection points there. Yep.

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**LM:** Yeah, you know, like you said, *elohim*. “Ah! That makes sense! Once I got this idea, *elohim* is like “sheep,” right? It could be singular, it could be plural. All of that stuff. God is an *elohim*, but not all *elohim* are God. So what happens now (and this is where it’s really amazing) is while they’re singing, one of the head Ainur (he’s sort of the god of fire, if you will), whose name is Melkor, decides he wants to sing his own song. He will not follow the pattern laid down by Ilúvatar. Pride seizes control of him. You think about those passages in, what is it? Isaiah 7 and Ezekiel 14? Or is it Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28?

**MH:** Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Yeah.

**LM:** That’s it. I couldn’t remember—14 & 28, those amazing passages. He decides, “No, I am going to sing my own song.” And so he starts breaking up the song, bringing this discordancy, this cacophony. It’s sort of like modern atonal music, I would say. Because people don’t understand. It’s not just rap and stuff like that. Even a lot of classical music has gotten ugly. It’s like we’ve embraced this atonal ugliness. I don’t know what’s going on with that. I think it’s spiritual.

But anyway, he starts singing this ugly song and it starts breaking up the beauty of the song. But look what happens. And this is amazing. Rather than Ilúvatar zapping Melkor and killing him or destroying him... (It’s an angelic being. I don’t even know if he can do that.) Instead of zapping him, what he does is he comes in and rescues the song, uses even some of the ugliness injected by the fallen Ainur (the rebellious Ainur) to make a more beautiful song—more painful, more poignant, but somehow even more beautiful. This is amazing what he does. And then it happened that Melkor tries again. And again, Ilúvatar takes it and makes into something more wonderful, more powerful, more beautiful. The Medievals had a phrase: *Felix culpa*. It means “happy fall,” and it’s a reference to the fall of Adam and Eve. How can you call that happy? Well it’s only happy because God used it to bring about a greater outpouring of love in the incarnation. We’re talking today on Good Friday. Were the Fathers of the Church insane? They called this Good Friday! The worst day of human history? And yet it’s good because out of it, God brought the triumph of Easter Sunday.

So the song is saved. And then Ilúvatar also sings the song of men and elves (elves first, men second). But actually, that song is only his. The Ainur do not participate in that song. But they love the elves. It’s sort of like the Bible when it talks about how the angels long to look into these things, these things that they don’t know about, but they know they’re beautiful. And the good Ainur love the song of the elves and the men. Melkor hates it, of course. Well, finally they finish the song. And it’s kind of wonderful because the song at that point is only abstract. It’s kind of in the air. But then Ilúvatar (God) makes it real and incarnates it on the earth (what Tolkien calls Arda). And he creates the earth. And after it’s created, he asks if any of the Ainur want to go there and be

guardians (spirits, whatever you want to call it). And a lot of them so love the song and so love that the song of elves and men (they don't fully understand it) that they willingly descend and they become what Tolkien calls the Valar. And they are, in a sense, the gods. And then some of them can be linked up to Zeus or god of the water, god of the air, all that sort of stuff. But they become the tutelary spirits. They are spiritual beings, but they can take on physical form if they want as they wander on the earth (on Arda). And they watch over it.

But unfortunately, Melkor also descends and does what he can to corrupt and rebel against everything. And he works this whole thing out. It's so beautiful. And to make it a little more complex, the Valar are the higher spiritual beings, but he also creates lesser spiritual beings. Think about archangels as opposed to angels, whatever. He creates lesser spiritual beings called the Maiar. And they're partly there to serve the Valar. And many of them are good. But some of them go bad. And Melkor corrupts a Maiar named (guess who) Sauron. Now we have a name we recognize. And Sauron is a corrupted... And the Balrog is a corrupted Maiar. Shelob goes all the way [back] to this hideous spider named Ungoliant who is another corrupted form of a Maiar. But the wizards Gandalf and Saruman are also Maiar. They're called Istary or wizards. So there's this whole spiritual realm behind it.

35:00

Now pretty quickly in the *Silmarillion*, he introduces the elves and later on introduces the men. And most of the battles are fought by the elves or the men or both together. Dwarves come a little bit later. But there is always that Unseen Realm—that spiritual realm—behind it. And Ilúvatar even allows some of the higher elves and higher men to help fight against Melkor, whose name was changed to Morgoth, the dark lord. And this is going on, back and forth, and it's often in the background. And what's really interesting is while this is going on in Middle Earth, generally speaking, the good Valar are not interceding. They're there in the back. Some people will know that sometimes Frodo calls on Elbereth. She is sort of the Hera character. She's sort of the consort of Manwë, who is the Zeus character, the god of the air. And they're there in the background, but they very rarely get involved directly. But sometimes they do. And at one point, there's a great war that leads to a great flood (a great deluge) that destroys Númenor, which is where the Númenorians like Aragorn are from. And that's really Tolkien's version of the Atlantis story.

So all of this backstory helps to... This is why... I teach film as well, Mike. And everyone has students over to watch movies. And everybody talks about, "Oh, let's do a Star Wars marathon," or this or that. But those things always peter out. But whenever I do a *Lord of the Rings* marathon, even though it takes 12 hours, I always get people. [MH laughs] And the reason why... I've never done a marathon of the *Hobbit* movies. They're well made, but... The difference between *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* is... Poor Peter Jackson. He tried to make an epic out of *The Hobbit* but it's not. It's a kids' story. It does not have the menace. The reason you can watch *The Lord of the Rings* again and again and

again and be part of it is because the stakes are so high. And the reason the stakes are so high is because there is a full war going on here on every level (the physical and the spiritual). And when you realize that it's just like the Bible, you can understand it without the unseen realm. But the more you understand that, the more it opens up to you and you realize what the *real* stakes are, you also realize that we are part of a story. Don't the great stories never end? We're part of a story that's going on.

**MH:** A lot of people that I talk to come back to this point, that they really value that fact that *Unseen Realm* helps them to see the Bible as story, as opposed to kind of a textbook that, "Oh, okay. These three or four chapters are this, and these three or four chapters are that." In other words, if you approach the Bible without the metanarrative, you get the parts, but you don't get the connections.

**LM:** Right.

**MH:** It's just not story form. So do you think that... Why is this? I mean, [laughs] maybe you can't answer this. But how did we get to the point where we started thinking about Scripture not as story?

**LM:** Here's the best story I can tell that explains this. And I talk about this quite often. Many years ago (because I'm a Lewis guy) there was a radio evangelist in Florida (a very good godly man—he's since passed on) who led a lot of people to Christ. But he was telling people not to read C.S. Lewis. And I happened to be in Florida because my parents live in Tarpon Springs, near Tampa. And so I got to talk with this man (sit down with him). And as I expected, he'd never actually read anything by C.S. Lewis. He read something he saw online about C.S. Lewis being a heretic—all of that. You expect that. What took me by surprise was when I said, "Well, sir, tell me. What have you read by C.S. Lewis? Have you read *The Chronicles of Narnia*?" And his answer was amazing. He said, "Ever since I became a believer 40 years ago, I have not read a single work of fiction." Now when he said that, he didn't even read Christian... He didn't even read the *Left Behind* series (which actually is probably a good thing). [MH laughs] But anyways [laughs], sorry about that.

**MH:** [laughs] No, I'm with you there.

**LM:** But okay, here's the point. This man was a lot older than me, so I wasn't going to be a hotshot. So if I were wanting to be, I would have said to him, "You do know that the parables of Jesus are short stories. There wasn't an actual man who had two sons," and all that. But I didn't say that. But what I realized when I came away from that was one of those moments in my life that if you asked this man, "Why don't you read fiction?" he will answer, "Because I'm a Christian." But I would argue, Mike, that the *real* reason he doesn't read fiction—the reason he doesn't know himself—is that he is a *modernist* and doesn't know it. Without realizing it, he, like so many of us, has bought into what's often called the

Enlightenment Split—that there’s facts on one side and values on the other. History versus myth. Science versus religion. Reason versus emotion. Logic versus intuition. Reason versus revelation. And never the twain shall meet. And that’s why we have bought into this modern “scientific” understanding of the narrative rather than a biblical understanding of how God speaks. And we want everything to line up. And here’s a good example of this. Because I’m sure a lot of the people listening to this podcast are probably a little bit of nerds and so they probably grew up with Star Trek like I did. And one of the wonderful things about Star Trek is...

**MH:** And proud of it. [laughs]

**LM:** I’m proud of it, too. If you ever get together... Maybe not as much now, but when we were kids, you would get together with Star Trek and we would discuss why it is in one episode they send a message to Star Fleet and get an answer immediately, yet other times they sent an answer and it says, “Oh, it’s going to take a week to get an answer from Star Fleet.” “What do you mean?! You’re in the same quadrant!” Right? [MH laughs] Or sometimes, somebody will shoot their phaser at someone and they’ll die, and the next episode, they’ll shoot a phaser, the thing will turn into pure energy and then dissipate. Right? Now, the reason I bring this up is because if you’re a Trekkie (if you’re a real nerd) then you have accepted the fact that there are no contradictions in the Star Trek world. [MH laughs] And so we used to come up with the most bizarre explanations for why this was. And you know what I’m talking about, Mike.

**MH:** Yep.

**LM:** Sometimes we take that into our reading of the Bible. Now again, if by contradictions you mean spiritual contradictions about the truth, then no, there are no contradictions. But if you mean it in a modern what they call “logical positivism”—that sense of verification—then there are... One of the Gospels says that both thieves were making fun of him. But the other Gospel says... We’re getting different eyewitness accounts. People standing in different places. That’s not a contradiction for anybody living before the Enlightenment. But we have bought into this and we can’t see beyond it. When we hear “story,” Mike, we hear “untrue.” That’s why we need Tolkien and Lewis and their great-grandfather, G.K. Chesterton, to teach us that Christianity is a “true myth.” No truer words have been spoken.

**MH:** Yeah, when I... I often... “Often” might be saying too much, but I’ll go with it because it does happen to me with some frequency. I’ll be reading something and it is typically... I read a lot of academic literature. It’s really the only thing I have time for. I’ll *listen* to books that are nonacademic. But I’ll be reading something along in biblical studies and it’s typically where I sense that I’m getting the Either/Or fallacy. And I find myself thinking, “If you just had a little more imagination, this wouldn’t be such an impediment.” It just seems to me that a lot

of biblical scholars (and even a lot of theologians) just really don't have much of an imagination. And I don't have a lecture on this or anything, but I know if I would say that in some gathering or, "Oh, well then let me just make up everything." [LM laughs] No, the whole point is that if you have a good imagination (I think fiction exercises it), you can take something apart and put it back together again in different ways. You will see the variability in *how* to think about something. Because otherwise, the two most obvious contrary positions are going to occur to you. And that's where you're at. Your mind just can't take it any further. And I think it's a real shame that... What you're describing, I think, is a terrible weakness.

**LM:** It is.

**MH:** I think having a really active imagination is really a good tool for doing Bible study. It doesn't mean that you've just been given permission to run wild.

**LM:** Right. It doesn't mean what you want it to mean.

**MH:** Right. Now you're able to ask good probative questions that would not occur to the person standing next to you that just doesn't have any imagination. It's really valuable.

45:00

**LM:** I'll tell you, the best definition I've heard for inerrancy (I don't really exactly where this comes from) is "The Bible is true in what it affirms." And what that means is when the Bible is being historical, we take it as historical. When it's being poetic, we take it as poetic. Now sometimes we can disagree. Like I do think you can make a case that Genesis 1 is being historical, but I think you can make a very, very powerful case that Genesis 1 is being poetic. I do think there was a real Job, but I think that you could make an argument *within* biblical inerrancy that Job is a parable writ large. I mean, it does basically begin, "Once upon a time there was a man named Job." I think there was a real person. But I think you could make that argument and still be a conservative, committed, orthodox believer.

**MH:** People don't understand what myth is, or better: what mythic interpretation is, or mythic material is.

**LM:** Literary genre.

**MH:** Right. And at the risk of oversimplification, the way I often define it for people is, like... And I'll use a story from my own life. Like, "Okay, here's how I got a job. Here's how I met my wife. Here's how this happened." And I can give you the real-time historical nodes (the points) that you need to understand historically where I was, what I did, who said what, all that stuff. But then if I transition from that to telling you how I think Providence—how I think God was behind this... In other words, I theologize the events. What I'm doing is I'm doing

myth. What I'm doing is I'm putting theological spin to events. It doesn't mean the events didn't happen. They have to have happened in order for the "spin" (the theologizing) to be coherent. But we've trained people to, if they hear that... You know, a lot of people would be revolted by it because they can't imagine how these two things go together. But if you think about your own life... And I think if you're a Christian who actually believes God *does* something, you theologize (you put theological spin) into your life all the time. When you give a testimony. When you have a conversation with a friend. You just do it. And there's nothing wrong with that. It doesn't mean that the events (the things that actually happened) didn't happen. You're not denying those things. But you're trying to figure out where was God's hand in all of this. So I agree with you. I think Scripture can actually do both things. And one isn't false and the other true. They're both true. They're just true in different ways and sort of by different means.

**LM:** Have you seen the movie *The Sixth Sense*? Do you remember that movie by M. Night Shayamalan?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LM:** What's wonderful about that movie is you watch the whole movie and when you get to the end of the movie, you get the twist... Hopefully everybody knows it by now. You get the twist and it makes you go back and it changes the meaning of everything you've seen. Right? You've seen it and you thought you understood it, but you didn't understand it. You have to go back and look at it again. I tell my students (especially if you're somebody who became a Christian a little bit later in your life) you must sit down and write your testimony. Because when you're forced to sit down and write your testimony, you will suddenly realize how God was working in your life before you knew him. Before you were even seeking after him, he was there. Then you'll get that double vision that we're kind of talking about. That mythic vision. You'll understand what God was doing in your life before you knew him.

**MH:** And that's the point where, by definition, an Enlightenment view of history implodes. Because you could bring an atheist Enlightenment materialist guy into the room and say, "Tell us your life story." And then you start questioning them using the means that they used to question everything else.

**LM:** [laughs] Right!

**MH:** "Well, were those conversations recorded? Did you speak to women? Did you include this group?" And they can't deny that. And so you look at them and say, "Well, I don't have any reason to believe you," which is an absurd conclusion to draw. But that's what you have. That's exactly what you have. So this whole approach, I think, is ultimately sophistry. That's really what it is.

**LM:** It is.

**MH:** It has this academic veneer, but it is ultimately unlivable and really is...

**LM:** Oh, one of our professors who teaches in our Master's program is Mike Licona, the writer on the resurrection.

**MH:** Yeah, I know him.

50:00

**LM:** He wrote a really good book recently where... A lot of people look at the Bible, they look at two different stories, say the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead. And they look at it in two different Gospels and they say, "Ah, there's a contradiction. We can't believe this." And I love Mike's answer to that. He looked at the great biographies of Plutarch. And Plutarch is writing in the same century that the Gospel writers are. And Plutarch often writes lives... Let's say he's got a life of Mark Antony; he's got a life of Brutus; he's got a life of Caesar. And a lot of his lives overlap. In other words, we're looking at the same event. And even though it's the same author (Plutarch, who is a historian), when he retells the same story in a different life (in a different focus—on Brutus as opposed to Antony or whoever it is), it suddenly changes. And it's the same person. Because this is the way you tell these different accounts. We always have a perspective. There is no such thing as no perspective. The only history that would have no perspective is if I put a camera in my front yard and just let it photograph everything that happened. That would be mishmash. We couldn't understand it. Everything has to have a story or we can't understand it. So he shows, "No, it's not a contradiction. It's the different focuses of the different Gospel writers." And in fact, as most great apologists show, the fact that the accounts of Easter Sunday are not exactly the same is what proves them to be right. Because if the four Gospel accounts were exactly the same, any judge would think collusion.

**MH:** So you'd suspect plagiarism. Or you'd expect collusion. Yeah.

**LM:** Yeah. And it's thrown out.

**MH:** That's what I tell students. "Look. If I get four copies of the same paper..." [laughs]

**LM:** Yes!

**MH:** "...I'm smart enough to know that there's something going on here." You know? [laughter]

**LM:** Right!

**MH:** You just... The differences just really speak so much more loudly.

**LM:** A good way to pull some of this together with apologetics and everything we're saying is that, if you go online and search the atheist websites or whatever, one of their favorite attacks on Christianity these days that I see again and again is they start talking about figures like Baldr and Mithras and Tammuz all of these stories of dying and rising gods that we see in antiquity sometimes around the time of Jesus, and they say, "Look, Jesus is just a myth." Now the reason that this is such a great analogy, Mike, (and you may know where I'm going) is that the greatest apologist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, C.S. Lewis, partly became a Christian *because* of that. I'm sure almost all your listeners know that C.S. Lewis was an atheist who became a Christian. But he's not like Lee Strobel or Josh McDowell or Chuck Colson who went from being an atheist to being a believer. Lewis went from an atheist to being a *theist*. He spent about a year and a half as a believer in God until he was able to believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Now what was holding him back? What was preventing him moving from a belief in God to a belief in Christ? It was because Lewis, like myself, was an English professor, loved mythology, studied it all, and he knew from reading a book called *The Golden Bough* that throughout the ancient world, there's this character that James Frazer called the Corn King. This character (Osiris, Tammuz, Balder, Mithras—all that)... And Lewis said, "Oh! Well that sounds like Jesus. Jesus must just be the Hebrew version of the Corn King myth. It's all only a myth and that's it." And then one day (some people know this story) when Lewis was about 32 years old, he was taking a long walk along the grounds of Maudlin College, Oxford, this beautiful walk called Addison's Walk (my favorite place). And he was talking to his friend Tolkien, who was a believing Catholic. And Tolkien said to him, "You know, Jack? What if the reason that Jesus sounds like a myth is that he's the myth that became fact? The myth that came true. That he was a true myth." And suddenly, the scales fell off Lewis' eyes.

Okay, look at it. There is a difference between data and the interpretation of data. Let's step back just for a second, okay? You're about the same age that I am. I'm sure you had that experience when you were in school and you had a class in Social Studies. See they haven't taught History in our country for about 50 years. Social Studies has nothing to do with History. Anthropology, Sociology... I don't even want to go there. [MH laughs] But I'm sure during your Social Studies class, maybe in sixth grade, you learned about the wonderful Epic of Gilgamesh, right? And the Epic of Gilgamesh includes a flood story. And then if you had the typical secular humanist teacher, she said to you, "Now children, we now know that every ancient culture has a story of a global flood. Therefore, the Bible is just a myth." And I remember even when I was kid thinking, "You know, there's another way to interpret that evidence! If every culture has this story, then maybe it actually happened. And maybe in every other culture, it *only* retained mythical value; only in the Bible does it have some historical value." Okay.

Now let's come back to Lewis here. If all these different cultures scattered around the world have this same story, what is that telling us? Why do they all have that same yearning? Well, perhaps if we were indeed created by the same God, he

put that yearning in us. And so if that's true, then it makes sense that when God enacts his salvation in human history, he will do it in a way that not only fulfills the Jewish prophets and law but also fulfills the highest yearnings of the pagans. Because as Christians, we believe Jesus is the messiah of the whole world. Not just the Jews. And it bothers me to think, "Okay, are you saying that God only spoke to the Jews and ignored all the rest of the world until the coming of Christ?" Well, only the Jews got what we call "special revelation." He only spoke directly to them. But he still spoke. He spoke through his creation. He spoke through conscience. And he spoke (I'm going to quote Lewis now) "through the good dreams of the pagans." They knew. They understood these stories. Just ask... Going back to the beginning of this interview, just as the Greeks understood the rebellious giants are locked up in Tartarus.

**MH:** Here's another one. I didn't put this in *Unseen Realm* but it's in the *Demons* book that's going to ship on Amazon at the end of the month. And I'm curious if you found in Tolkien (because I have no idea if this idea is in Tolkien or in some other source). Here's a passage from Plato. [laughs] Just listen to see if this sounds familiar. This is from the dialogues of Critias. He says:

In the days of old, the gods had the whole earth distributed among them by allotment. There was no quarreling. For you cannot rightly suppose that the gods did not know what was proper for each of them to have, or knowing this, that they would seek to procure for themselves by contention that which more properly belonged to others. They, all of them, by just apportionment, obtained what they wanted and peopled their own districts, and when they had peopled them, they tended us, their nurselings and possessions, as shepherds tend their flocks, excepting only that they did not use blows or bodily force as shepherds do, but governed us like pilots from the stern of the vessel, which is an easy way of guiding animals, holding our souls by the rudder of persuasion according to their own pleasure. Thus they did guide all mortal creatures. Now different gods had their allotments in different places, which they set in order.

**MH:** That is the Deuteronomy 32 worldview.

**LM:** That is amazing.

**MH:** You know? And there it is in Plato, who of course is centuries before the New Testament. So... This is sort of fresh in my mind for another reason. I've been tasked to write the... Intervarsity Press has this series of dictionaries. They have five Old Testament and five New Testament. And they're redoing the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. So I'm tasked with doing the entry on Principalities and Powers. And I liked the old one because Dan Reid who wrote that (he's an editor at Intervarsity) very clearly saw what I would call in *Unseen Realm* later this "Deuteronomy 32 Worldview." So I was thrilled to get this assignment because I appreciated his work so much. But going back into all this

stuff, there are so many scholars that, “Ugh, where is Paul getting this idea? All this would be so foreign to his thinking.” They can’t even see it in *Jewish* writings, much less in the Roman world.

**LM:** Yeah, that’s true.

**MH:** And it’s in *all* of it. Paul could walk into a city and start talking about the Most High, and “The Most High becomes incarnate,” and “It’s okay if you abandon your gods and come over here because the Most High became flesh and died on a cross.” I mean, they just get it. It’s just part of their world to think in these modes. And so there you have the revelation that has nothing... Plato’s not quoting Deuteronomy 32. It’s just there. It’s just there.

**LM:** Have you ever read a book called *Eternity in their Hearts* by Don Richardson?

**MH:** No, I have not read it, but I’ve seen a film about it and I’ve read *about* the book.

**LM:** Oh, amazing. And I’m sure you’ve heard of *The Peace Child*.

**MH:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**LM:** And I should tell you before I forget. Sometime within the next six months, Intervarsity is going to be publishing my new book, *From Plato to Christ: Ascending the Rising Path*. It’s kind of a follow-up to my book, *From Achilles to Christ*, about Christians who read the pagan classics. And another publisher, Classical Academic Press, is bringing out a book I just wrote called *The Myth Made Fact: Reading Greek Mythology Through Christian Eyes*. So you can see, I’m always... What can we learn? And just think of, what you just read to us... And that’s very closely allied to Lewis’ Atlantis myth, which comes from the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*. Also with the Atlantis myth is linked to what you read. It’s just amazing. And anyway, think about how close that is to Paul at the Areopagus telling the Athenians that “out of one man, God created all the races and then he apportioned their times and places so they might reach and grope after him, though they are not far from him. For...” (and then he quotes a pagan writer) “in him we live and move and have our being.” Epimenides from Crete. So it’s just... Oh my gosh.

1:00:00

And then... Here’s something, too, that as I was preparing for this interview I was thinking. I really teach Homer a lot. I don’t mean Homer Simpson. I mean *the* Homer. And my book, *From Achilles to Christ*, the original title was *From Homer to Christ* until they changed it one month before publication. I’m not making this up. Because when most people in America hear Homer, they think Homer Simpson. But anyway, the *real* Homer. And I often lecture on the sort of historical background to the Trojan War, the oral tradition, all that stuff that I really, really

love. And okay, these Mycenaeans—Achilles, all these incredible people who are described like giants (the great heroes of old)... What happened to them? Because in the 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C., over a period of hundred years, Greece fell into a dark age. Actually, almost everybody did. They all fell—the Canaanites, the Hittites. Everybody fell. There was this global... They sometimes call it the Aegean Apocalypse. The Mycenaeans sort of disappear. What happened to them? Well, I believe (and I'm not the only one who thinks this) that a lot of those Mycenaeans became the Philistines. Because the Bible tells us that the Philistines came from Castor, which is another name for Crete. And it makes perfect sense that the Mycenaeans...

**MH:** Yeah, there are a lot of connections there.

**LM:** Yeah, a lot of connections. But what I was just thinking about then... I think the Mycenaeans became the Philistines. But let's put it in terms of your book. Maybe the... Is Goliath the last of the Nephilim? What do you think? And there might be *some* after him. But he's certainly one of the last that we hear about.

**MH:** Right. Goliath and his brothers and then there's a random Egyptian that's mentioned.

**LM:** A few, yeah.

**MH:** I see where you're going. There are a *lot* of connections. For my audience, this is *Unseen Realm 2* material. There are a lot of connections with the people group names in the conquest accounts, whether they are targeted for destruction or whether they just sort of pop up in the narrative. But there are probably a dozen that have connections to the Aegean or the Mycenaeans specifically. It's not just the Philistines. There's a lot...

**LM:** What does it say in Genesis 6? "Those are the mighty men of old," and the heroes and stuff. One of the reasons why you can see the connection between Homer's Mycenaeans and the Philistines is when you read the description of Achilles putting on his armor, it sounds exactly like Goliath putting on his armor and taking up his spear. These are the mighty men. A lot of people don't know this or realize this, Mike, but everybody knows (I hope) that when Achilles pulls out of war, he allows his friend Patroclus to wear his armor and then he's killed by Hector. What a lot of people don't realize is that even though he wears Achilles' armor, he's not able to carry his great ash spear. Because only Achilles (the giant, if you will) can wield that ash spear. So again, that makes us think about the spear that Goliath has.

**MH:** Yeah. I want to read... You did another essay. Has this been published (the essay called...)?

**LM:** I'm still waiting. I was hoping Gospel Coalition would publish it, but they're like, "Oh, it's too much like the first one." "Well, that was the whole point." But anyway. They're also... Everybody's swamped with...

**MH:** Have you put this out anywhere? Because I want to refer to it here.

**LM:** I guess you can. I was hoping... I tried *Christianity Today*. I haven't found the right venue for it.

**MH:** Okay. I just want to read a couple of sentences. The title of the essay (and again, it's not publicly available) is *How to Bring Millennials Back to Church*. And it gets into both *Unseen Realm* and then another book. But I want to read this one paragraph. Actually, I'll read a couple of sentences from two paragraphs. We'll mash them together. So you're talking about millennials. And we're all familiar with the characterization.

They're just tired of just doing church. Yes, they are turned off by the back-biting, the hypocrisy, the cliques, but they perceive that those things are manifestations of a more foundational lack of unity and vision for what God can do through the local congregation.

And so you go off on that trajectory a little bit. And then you mention *Unseen Realm*, how presenting the Bible (really the Bible as story with supernatural metanarrative and all that)... Then you write this:

1:05:00

I can't emphasize enough how galvanizing this vision of spiritual warfare has been for many young evangelicals. Not in the negative sense of fostering a morbid curiosity about dark forces, but in the positive sense of realigning the Church as a center of resistance to those dark forces, rather than just a safe space for Christians [MH: I love that line] [laughter] and for their friends.

**MH:** So can you talk about that a little bit. Because I did this little book, *Finding the Gospel in Stranger Things*, where I essentially followed the metanarrative of Scripture that I have in *Unseen Realm* and *Supernatural* and the little book, *What Does God Want?*. And then just mapped it over to *Stranger Things*. When I'm doing that... Even in the process of doing that, I'm thinking, "You know, somebody needs to do this for Tolkien, for Lewis, for the Marvel universe, for the DC universe."

**LM:** Right, right.

**MH:** Because story-telling just maps, especially if you're paying attention to the spiritual worldview. So can you talk a little bit about that sense, that this is important for millennials to talk about Scripture this way?

**LM:** It really is. And I'll tell you, Mike, even though I didn't know about your book until it was gifted to me a few months ago (it seems like forever but it's only a few months ago), I was aware of the Bible Project. And I'd seen some of them. And again, it was all of those people between 18 and 35 who had been telling me about it, sending me links. I'm like, "Wow, this is incredible stuff!" And I really do see an excitement amongst young people, people who are feeling burned out by church, and "it's not relevant," all that sort of stuff. They are galvanized by this unseen realm, by this sense of... You've heard this many times, that this group of millennials want to be part of something bigger. That's kind of become a cliché. But it is true. Unfortunately, oftentimes being part of something bigger means becoming like a socialist or Marxist. Because Marxism is a perversion of biblical Christianity, ultimately, "Let's make you part of this," or "let's join liberation theology," or something like that. So unfortunately, they get sucked into that, or into a bad understanding of social justice. There's a good understanding of that, but most of them are getting sucked into an almost cultic version of that. But they *want* to be part of something bigger, but when they see this, when their eyes are opened to, "Oh my gosh, this is much bigger than I thought, much more expansive than I thought. It's not just about 'Do this and don't do this' and legalism and things like that. It is about power. There's a war going on out there".

I'll tell you what really excites young people and excites me, too. You and I are young at heart, right? But what excites me (and you talk about it in your book) is that moment in Daniel when the angel comes to Daniel and says, "I'm here in answer to your prayer." And Daniel's like, "Uh, Buddy, I prayed that six months ago." And he's like, "Well, I was on my way, but I got stopped by the Prince of Persia." And we're not talking about the silly video game Prince of Persia. We're talking about a spiritual being. And suddenly, it goes back to what we said before, Mike, about these two levels, about myths and stuff like that. Oh my gosh. When our prayers go unanswered, there might be a bigger reason than we have any idea of realizing—a spiritual framework behind this. And again, I think it's the same reason they're attracted to the Marvel universe and superheroes. They want to understand that they are part of something. And I love it, this idea of the Divine Council being ultimately peopled by spiritual beings and human beings at the same time. And wanting to be part of that is... It opens up eyes and not necessarily negative. This is not, "Oh, I'm going to have power over you," it's...

**MH:** It's not hierarchy. It's partnership, at the end of the day. I get this question, "When we inherit the nations, and we rule over angels, we displace them, we judge them, and we get the nations, what does that look like?" And what they're really asking is, "Who works for me and who do I work for?" [laughs] It's like, "You've got to throw that out of your head." It goes back to the original vision of family and partnership. It's partnership. It's not hierarchy.

**LM:** And what's interesting is the review that I'm still trying to get published is of a book that talks about the Church as ecclesia. And it talks about prayer... It

doesn't mention this, but my guess is... I don't know if you were part of this, but I'm sure you were excited by what they call the 10/40 Window. Are you familiar with that?

**MH:** Yeah.

1:10:00

**LM:** The 10/40 Window is basically a longitude/latitude kind of thing. And it's the idea that there is this spiritual darkness over a large portion of mostly the Muslim and atheist countries. And that galvanized to me as a younger Christian—the idea of prayer as spiritual warfare. So a lot of people were not just praying for individuals (as we should) but they were to break down that wall of darkness, that window, and to try to break the communication of the enemy and allow some of that light in. And that was one of the first times I got a glimpse of the wider spiritual worldview of what's going on here. And I think the students understand that. And when I say students, I mean people that are in their 30's who have maybe graduated with a seminary degree, they're at a church, but they're just not feeling fulfilled. It's like they're going through the motions. They don't see how we're really engaging the culture, engaging what's happening. We've just become a club. And when we don't realize...

Let me add one more thing. I think it's important because it's about story. Two things. First of all, one of the greatest things about... When we were kids, sometimes you heard people talk about creation, fall, redemption. But what I like is, over the last 20 years, we've realized that the story is creation, fall, redemption, *restoration*. So first of all, let's understand that God will... My favorite verse in the Bible: that God will restore even what the locusts have devoured. We're talking about not just, "Alright, we made it." We're talking about, "Things are going to be even better." We're going to be back where we started, back in the Garden of Eden, but now it's a better place called the New Jerusalem. It's restoration. But we're part of this story that's taking us from the... I was a big fan of... Are you a fan of John Eldridge? I don't know if he's got any connection with you guys.

**MH:** Now that's a name I don't know.

**LM:** He's the one that wrote *Wild at Heart*. You might have heard of that book.

**MH:** I've heard of the title, yeah.

**LM:** He doesn't talk about the unseen realm, but he does talk about the story that we're part of. Of creation, fall, redemption, restoration. And once we realize we're part of that... Oh, the other thing I want to say real quickly is about story. Again, a lot of Christians debate. Is the earth 6,000 years old? Is it 6 million? Is it 6 billion? 4 ½ billion? And that causes a lot of cognitive dissonance for people. And what I like to say... And in many ways it fits with what you're talking about in your book. I tell my students, "Look. I'm not sure how old the earth is. I don't know how to

date something like the Flood or whatever. But we *can* date Abraham, and Abraham is about 4,000 years ago. And even though we need to understand” (as you explain in your book) “about the Flood, the Tower of Babel, when we look at the Bible, the redemption plan that God is doing in human history, yes it begins with Adam, but in some sense it begins with Abraham. That reclamation project after the Tower of Babel begins with Abraham. And I want to emphasize this because Abraham is only 4,000 years ago. What that means is, if you live to the age of 80, your lifespan will make up 2% of that time frame. That is incredibly significant. Because so many are just, when they hear millions of billions... No, your life, even if you die at age 40, 1% is incredibly... I’m a Baptist. I don’t gamble. But I would gamble on that. 1%!

**MH:** Yeah, it’s a lot larger percentage than the other. [laughs]

**LM:** Yeah! We just need to understand that we are part of a historical story that is not so [inaudible]. So no matter how you want to date Adam and Eve, starting with Abraham, this is something that we can hold in our mind and our lifespan is incredibly significant, just numerically speaking, in what God is doing. And God is in control of history. I love that A.D. and B.C. and get tired of that B.C.E. nonsense. [MH laughs] I don’t know where these people come from. But they know what they’re talking about, right?

**MH:** It’s a good thing you don’t do biblical studies. [laughs]

**LM:** Oh, I know. That drives me crazy. So many people just give in to that. I don’t give in to anything, man. You won’t hear me say “humankind” either. None of that nonsense. [MH laughs] Man and that’s it. We are Adam and that’s it. Anyway... I don’t know what it is. But again, the coming of Christ has split history in half. And it’s just kind of cool that Abraham is almost exactly as far before Jesus as we are after him right now. And I don’t know when the world’s going to end or anything like that. But what I’m saying is that I think it’s important to realize this so we don’t feel we’re an insignificant part of the story. We are a very significant part of the story. And that’s Tolkien as well. This story is going on. That starglass... It’s unbelievable. The whole story of that starglass of Galadriel. It’s because Galadriel caught that light in her mirror because it was coming down from a star. But that star is actually an elf called Eärendil and in that boat is the last of the last of the Silmarils that goes all the way back to the light of the two trees. And we’re going to have fun today. I’m going to talk like a nerd. [MH laughs] It would take too long to explain this all. But what I’m saying is that that... And suddenly that’s what Sam realizes. That the light in this glass connects us all the way back to the very beginning of creation and to spiritual warfare that we don’t even know about—all the way back to when God created the two trees that gave light. And then that evil spider devoured the trees. But the light of the trees was kept in the Silmaril. But the evil elf wouldn’t give them up. I mean, it goes on and on and on. And it’s in the crown of Satan. I mean, it’s unbelievable. But we are still in this same story in the same narrative.

1:15:00

**MH:** The story, yeah. We're going to have to have you back either for more of that stuff... And your comment early on about Milton—the 67<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible... [laughter]

**LM:** Yes!

**MH:** But I have wondered many times... And we can't get into it now because we're going to have to wrap up for this episode. But I'm going to tip you here. I have wondered how much of what we think we know about angelology and demonology really is filtered through Milton.

**LM:** It is. And then, of course, Dante as well. But especially Milton. Especially for Protestants.

**MH:** I would love to have that conversation. Like how, just going through the things they wrote and how (let's be honest) some of it has become doctrine.

**LM:** It has! Because we just take for granted that's what happened. It's so powerful.

**MH:** So we're going to have to spend an interview on that.

**LM:** That would be fun!

**MH:** Because that would just... I'm just really curious as to what... It's something that I sense. But not having... I haven't spent much time at all in Milton. It's just this thing that, "I'll bet this is the case." But...

**LM:** And remember, we are *more* influenced by *Paradise Lost* if we haven't read it than if we have. [MH laughs] We are all incredibly influenced by Freud because we've never read any Freud.

**MH:** Mm hmm.

**LM:** In some ways that's worldview thinking—that it's caught us at such a deep level, we can't think out of that box and we just take it for granted. Oh, that leaves all sorts of questions. For instance, I've always taken for granted (maybe because of *Paradise Lost*) that after the original rebellion of the angels, no more angels ever fell again. But maybe not.

**MH:** Yeah, the whole [inaudible] of the angels thing. That "Well, we're all done now. Nobody can make any decisions now." You know, it's just stuff like that that I'd love to go through a list of those things that I've wondered about.

**LM:** It'd be fun! I think the implication of what you're saying in your book, Mike, is that after the Tower of Babel, when God turns over the earth and leaves the earth under the spiritual beings, I think you're implying that when he did that, not all of those spiritual beings were evil, but then afterwards, they continued to fall and give way to pride and become the Prince of Persia and stuff. Is that kind of your implication?

**MH:** Yeah, well, I think Daniel gets his theology from the Deuteronomy 32 worldview and that at some point... We aren't told how the sons of God become corrupt, but they evidently do because of Psalm 82. So we're not given a blow-by-blow account. And the real question, I think, that is out there that often doesn't get asked is, "Could there, in fact, be more defections now?" Because in your point about Milton, we just sort of grew up with this notion that, "Oh, that can never happen again." Well, here we have statements in Job... (There are three or four of them. This is all post-Fall.) Where God doesn't trust his own...

**LM:** You're right!

**MH:** I don't think that means that they're just waiting to burst out into rebellion. I think it does point to fallibility, which in and of itself opens the door to, "Yeah, somebody could screw up again," or "somebody could go their own way." I just don't see the door being shut because of statements like that.

**LM:** Like I said, it opens us up for greater research. And you can tell because it doesn't puff us up.

1:20:00

**MH:** This is... Yeah, we'll have to do it again. This has been a lot of fun. I want to thank you for being on and spending an hour (a little more than an hour but we've done that before for sure on this show) with us where we get to talk about some of these connections and just... I think that the dip into apologetics is really valuable too. Now do you have a website that you want our listeners to know about?

**LM:** The best way is if they just go to Amazon.com and go to my author page. Louis Markos. Greek name.

**MH:** Some of the books you mentioned I *know* there's going to be people in this audience who will want to get them and read them. So that's what everybody needs to do. Go to Amazon.com and put in Dr. Louis Markos. You'll see his name on the Naked Bible Podcast episode page to get the correct spelling. And then visit his author page and get his books. So thanks again.

**LM:** Hey, thanks so much. And again, great talking to you. Keep up the good work out there!

**MH:** Thank you. You too.

**LM:** Okay. Blessings. Bye-bye.

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**TS:** Alright, Mike. Lou was a great interview. I love him. He's got great energy. [laughs] We're definitely going to have to bring him back.

**MH:** Yeah, he does.

**TS:** Yeah, he's got a book on *Atheism on Trial*. I'd like to ask him about that on how to refute some modern arguments that atheists have. Then he's got a heaven and hell book, *Visions of the Afterlife*.

**MH:** Yeah.

**TS:** So I'd like to talk about that. So we've got a lot of good conversations that you could have with him.

**MH:** Yeah, there's a lot of good stuff. He does have a lot of good stuff.

**TS:** Yeah, absolutely. We'll definitely have to do that.

**MH:** Yeah, we'll have him back on for sure.

**TS:** Well, next week, Mike, we've got another great interview with Dr. Ben Witherington.

**MH:** Yeah, having Ben on is long overdue. He's a big supporter of *Unseen Realm*. Of course, he's in the film documentary. And Ben writes an awful lot of stuff for the layperson. He's probably got 30 or 40 scholarly books. But he has produced another 12 or 15 just for the people that really this audience represents. So he has a new one out. It's called *Who God Is: Meditations on the Character of Our God*. It's a little short book. So I thought this would be a great opportunity to have him on to talk about that book and some of his other books too.

**TS:** Alright, sounds good, Mike. Well, with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.

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**More of the conversation that wasn't officially part of the episode:**

**MH:** The Milton thing has really been stuck in my craw for a while. And I just...

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**LM:** And of course, you know and Lewis writes this as well—that Lewis defends Milton. Because the Romantics (whom I teach as well) were the ones that decided that Satan was the real hero of *Paradise Lost*. And even though Lewis defends him and shows us, “No, he’s not the hero,” still I think Milton makes the mistake of making him seem too tragically heroic. And that’s why...

**MH:** Do you think Milton was an Aryan? I have this article about Milton being an Aryan.

**LM:** The trouble is that towards the end of his life, he published a book about doctrine. And if you read that, he *does* come across as Aryan. I don’t see any of that in *Paradise Lost* itself. The only thing in *Paradise Lost* itself that could be a little bit heretical is that Milton seemed unable to bend his mind around creation *ex nihilo*. He just didn’t seem to get it. But other than that, everything in *Paradise Lost* itself... I mean, it’s powerful presentation of the gospel and all. But yeah, that later work, *De Doctrina*, does say things that would put him much closer to an Aryan. It’s troubling.

**MH:** Okay. Alright, it’s good to know that there’s something to that but there’s a context for it, too. So that’s good.

**LM:** There’s at least one person out there writing a book trying to show that *De Doctrina* is not something that Milton wrote but that he allowed to be published. Because towards the end of his life he actually was the guy that was censoring books. So I don’t know if he’ll be able to prove his case. That would be nice. [laughs] And we’d be very happy. But there’s just odd things in there, when you get into it. But that’s why the presentation of evil is much more powerful in Tolkien—because Tolkien understands that evil is negation. That’s the Augustinian idea, that there is no positive evil. Evil is a perversion of good. And evil is ugly and despicable and stuff like that and anti-life and anti-hope anti-faith and we shouldn’t heroize it. Just to ask you, you seem to say and not say that the serpent in Eden is Satan. In the beginning you say something, but then in Revelation it seems to suggest that Satan is that serpent. That was the one thing I didn’t understand. So what is your take on that?

1:25:00

**MH:** The way I would articulate it is since the word *satan* is not used in Genesis 3 or anywhere else in the Old Testament of the rebel (I refer to him as the rebel in Eden)... So if we just had the Old Testament, we can’t draw this conclusion. However... I actually think that’s overstated, because what happens is in between the testaments you have a lot of really serious people in the Jewish community writing about their Old Testament. It’s their sacred scriptures. So they’re looking through and they’re getting all the data points and then they’re doing what we do. They’re looking at the data points, “Okay, how does this go together? How do we form the whole picture of what’s going on and what happened and where it’s leading?” So eventually somebody realizes that *satan*

means “adversary” or “to oppose.” It’s used in Job, but Job doesn’t really connect anything specifically back to Genesis 3. But the term fits. This is what he does. This is what he did. It’s what he does. It becomes part of his profile, his character sketch. So he’s a liar. That’s where you get that term applied later. You have a bunch of these terms. You have the liar, the deceiver, the opposer—*satan*. You have several terms that develop in between the testaments to describe the villain of Genesis 3. And then Satan becomes a proper name. Some of the other ones actually do too. Mastema is a term that’s in the Dead Sea Scrolls a lot for this character. So I do think, yes, I think in Revelation... I don’t think John is wrong to call the serpent Satan. The only issue is that term became a proper name late. But the theology is consistent. This is who he is. This is what he did. So if the shoe fits, let’s make him wear it. That’s how I would articulate it.

**LM:** Same person that’s in Job. Sorry. Is it the same in Job then?

**MH:** I don’t think the Genesis 3 character (the evil bad guy, Satan) is the figure of Job 1 and 2.

**LM:** Oh. Okay. In other words, *satan* is a title. Okay.

**MH:** The reason I don’t think that is... Yeah, it’s a title. And there’s a problem of Hebrew grammar there as well. But I take, when the rebel is cast down, that means he’s no longer employed. He’s off the payroll. He’s not showing up for work. He doesn’t work for God anymore. Because the *ha satan* in Job 1 and 2 is actually just doing his job. He’s part of this matrix of ideas where members of the heavenly host would record things. We’re familiar with the Book of Life. There’s actually about six or seven different books in the Bible that the heavenly host keep track of what’s going on on earth and report to God and things like that. It’s a really big tradition. We actually did a whole episode of the podcast on these, like “heavenly books” traditions. So he’s one of them. This is his job, to report. Now where he crosses the line in this meeting is when he challenges God’s assessment of Job. Because when you do that, you’re challenging both God’s omniscience and God’s character.

**LM:** Ah, okay.

**MH:** You’re either intellectually wrong or you’re not telling us the truth. And that cannot be left on the table. So at that point, I always think of... Have you seen *Time Bandits*?

**LM:** Oh, I love *Time Bandits*, yes!

**MH:** It’s the scene where the evil one [laughs] says to one of his flunkies, “Don’t ever talk to me like that again.” And then he blows him up. That’s the image I think of when he...

**LM:** And then after he blows him up, he says, “Good question.” [laughter]

**MH:** Right. [laughs]

**LM:** “Shut up, I’m being rhetorical.”

1:30:00

**MH:** But if God had done that, the question is still on the table. In other words, that doesn’t answer the question, “Who’s right?” Is *ha satan* correct here or is God? So God doesn’t do that, but what he does is he says, “Okay, you’re allowed to do whatever you want to Job (except kill him) and we’ll find out whose assessment is correct. We’ll find out who’s telling the truth and who knows what they’re talking about and who doesn’t. And the parameters are what they are because God doesn’t want the *satan* to come back and say, “Oh yeah, well Job would’ve buckled *if* I had been allowed to...” No. “You can do anything you want, other than kill him. And you can’t kill him because we need to prove that Job *will endure*.”

**LM:** Yeah.

**MH:** God’s assessment is, in fact, correct. So now we (the reader) know all this is going on. Job doesn’t have any inkling, which is why he’s questioning.

**LM:** Yeah, that’s right. He didn’t know.

**MH:** So there’s this whole backstory. But this meeting starts out, it’s a normal Divine Council business meeting. Like, “What’s going on?” And then God gets his report, and he’s like, “Yeah, Job’s a great guy.” And then this is where the *satan* crosses the line, “Yeah, sure, he’s great. But if you did this and that to him, he’d curse you to your face.” That’s just going too far. And so God cannot allow his character to be questioned. So he has to shut it down.

**LM:** Which by the way is... Now have you heard this idea? And it’s so similar. Because I’ve heard some people speak of Satan in Job almost as if that’s his job. His job is the accuser, but he ends up almost enjoying his job too much.

**MH:** Well, the rebel... My take on it is that the rebel is cast down. He’s cast down to “earth” (*erets* in Hebrew). In some texts it’ll be the ground. But Hebrew *erets* is a key term because it’s also used of the underworld. And in Israelite cosmology, the underworld is *in* the earth anyway.

**LM:** Oh right.

**MH:** So basically “You’re off the payroll. You’re kicked out. God doesn’t need you to show up anymore.” All this stuff. So he’s there. And what is his status now? The earth has been corrupted. He introduces death into the world because of the curses. So that’s the starting point for where he becomes identified with the lord

of the dead. Because now everybody dies. In a sense, he owns every human. He has a right to own them. He has a right to their destiny because they followed him. Humanity followed him in his rebellion. Yes, they were deceived, but they still did this willingly. And so he's lord of the dead. This is his domain. Everything here is going to die. Eden is no more. Everything's in the process of dying because of this figure. So that's the condition that he's in. Now the reason he's cast... Like in Luke 10 when Jesus begins his ministry, he says, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." I don't think that's his expulsion, because I think he's already been expelled. My take on that is... It's not unique to me. This is... There are other New Testament scholars that follow this. The point of that is, "Now that the kingdom of God has begun, any member of the kingdom of God is no longer owned by this guy. He has no legal claim on you." So his role or his stance or his attitude or his claim that "I own them because they are in rebellion like me," that there's none of that anymore. If you're a member of the kingdom of God, there is no claim on you at all. You will rise again. And again, Jesus knows where this is leading. He knows he's going to die. He's going to rise again. Death will have no more claim on them. So Satan (the lord of the dead) literally becomes like a prosecutor without a case against those who are in Christ. So I take the "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" as being indicative of the fact that now that the kingdom of God has begun, the accuser (which is another meaning for *satan*) can bring no accusation on those who are in the kingdom any longer. So I take it as a symbolic act or statement.

**LM:** That's interesting. I'm interested to hear your answer on this. Because I obviously speak on Lewis a lot and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. And as you probably know, Lewis gravitates toward what's often called the ransom theory of the atonement. And traditionally, that was described that basically Satan owns us and Jesus' blood paid the ransom to Satan. But I notice a lot of theologians more recently are saying, "No, that's not true. God is not paying the ransom to Satan." Are you familiar with that one? I wonder if you have any insight from the *Unseen Realm*. What do you think about that?

1:35:00

**MH:** Yeah. What they'll do is they'll use Leviticus 16 in the Day of Atonement to argue that. Because one of the goats is for Azazel. And Azazel is later a Satan figure as well. But the problem with that is that the goat that's sent out into the wilderness is not sacrificed. The one that's sacrificed, the blood is applied to the Ark and to the Tabernacle. It sanctifies sacred space. The Day of Atonement is like hitting a reset button for the nation.

**LM:** Ah, right.

**MH:** Click the reset button. The sanctuary is now re-established for use for another year. But the second goat symbolically carries the sins out to the wilderness, which again is the domain of Satan because it's the place of death. You can't live there. There's no water. There's no food. It's these death metaphors all piled up on one another. And so what's going on there is that's not

a sacrifice. It's not a ransom. The goat is sent out to Azazel because that's where sin belongs (in the realm of the dead, in the realm of this guy). We're taking sin away from holy ground. We're moving it out there. So there's no payment. It's a deposit (if I want to use that language) or a dumping [laughs] of sin where it belongs. So I think if you're going to argue ransom theory, you cannot use Leviticus 16. I don't see what's wrong with the typical penal substitution idea. Because here's why we need the Savior to die. Because you can't have a resurrection without a death. And you've got to have resurrection to defeat the loss of immortality in Eden. It's the only way you can do it. And you can't have a resurrection without a death. So a death is absolutely necessary to the whole system—the whole cure (at least for the Genesis 3 problem). So I don't view it as a ransom at all. Having said all that, I'm not an opponent of other views of the atonement. I think they all contribute something. But I don't think ransom theory is... It's not like winning the day that all the other ones are just kaput now.

**LM:** Right. First of all, if you think about it, penal substitution is the oldest understanding of the atonement because it's Isaiah 53. We don't have to wait for ransom. When Jesus says "The son of man has come to give his life as a ransom for the many," who is the ransom being paid to? Or is that not even the right way to think about it?

**MH:** Yeah, I tend to think it's the right way to think about it. I think there's a confusion that arises from the English wording. In other words, there's semantic baggage that just gets accrued to that that's unfortunate.

**LM:** Is there a better word than ransom?

**MH:** Well, let me just see what the word is here quickly. That's Luke 19:10. Yeah, I tend to think that the ransom language there is payment sort of like... How can I say this? Some of the Old Testament vocabulary for sin and... Boy. You get this Levitical language—that you do this and that sacrifice and you will be forgiven. Or just language like that. Well the problem is that the Levitical sacrifices, none of the blood is ever applied to the offerer. It's not applied to people. There are only two exceptions. One, when the priests are sanctified for the first time. Then it gets applied to them. When the whole thing starts. So we have this odd vocabulary where we have this language about being "forgiven" but the blood is never applied to you. And if you actually go back into the Hebrew terminology, the word for atonement really means to purge. *Kiper* [pronounced kipp pare'] is to purge. When we did our series on Leviticus...

**LM:** Like purging with hyssop?

**MH:** Yeah. It's really a decontamination idea. It's done so that you won't contaminate sacred space the next time, right after this. And part of the vocabulary is to make restitution.

**LM:** Ah, okay.

**MH:** There's restitution language. So that's kind of the lens that I view this ransom language through.

1:40:00

**LM:** That makes sense. And again, it goes right back to the Bible Project Holiness video, the one that I think is so essential to our understanding. Before I forget, I do want to say, because you might want to look into this. One of the reasons I mentioned, "Is Satan somebody who took his job too seriously and ended up enjoying it" is that the Satan figure in Norse mythology is of course Loki. And when you read the mythology, Loki does not begin as an evil villain. He's almost a trickster in the beginning. He's like a trickster but it almost seems like he *enjoys* the tricking too much, becomes more and more flippant and stuff like that. And of course, when he really becomes evil is when he kills Balder, who is the Christ figure of Norse mythology (the Corn King). And I just... That to me is a fascinating concept. I don't know if there's really a parallel there.

**MH:** We should talk a little bit about that too in the future. Because I've wondered if the movies get this right about Loki being part of the Ice Giants.

**LM:** Oh, yeah. That is an odd one too, yeah.

**MH:** I thought that was really intriguing. But anyway. Well, yeah.

**LM:** Great talk.

**MH:** I know. Thanks for doing this. We'll have to do it again. And we'll try to scope out a good set of things to talk about and we'll do it.