

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 365

Q&A 44

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Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions:

- Did the original audience for Genesis 3:15 understand that a single savior would come to defeat the snake? [Time stamp 3:20]
- Was writing developed enough by Moses' time for him to have actually written down the Pentateuch? [12:50]
- Based on passages in 1 Kings 22, 1 Samuel 16, and Ezekiel 14, does God cause, tempt, or predestine the sin of false prophecy? [21:35]
- What is the best translation in the Lord's prayer for the word typically translated as "daily?" Is the bread natural or supernatural? [34:20]
- Does the story of the Prodigal Son allude to Deuteronomy 32:8-9 because of the father giving up his inheritance? [42:40]

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 365, our 44th Q&A. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What's going on?

MH: How many Q&As did you say we've done? [laughs] What was that number?

TS: Forty-four.

MH: [sighs] Oh, man. That's crazy. You know, every time we do one of these, I think, "Really?" That's hard to believe we've done *that* many Q&As. I mean, if we hit about five questions each time, that's like 200 questions! Easily.

TS: Yeah, we do five or six questions, or even more. Especially the early ones. They were a lot longer. But I've had to shorten these, because that's just too much work [laughs]. To be honest, Mike, we've got... We could probably do 1,000 Q&As [MH laughs] with as many questions as I've received. And again, I apologize to *everybody* out there who sends me a question. I can't respond to everybody. So just know that I *do* get your emails. They *are* in the queue. When and if we ever get to them, we can't guarantee it. But we'll keep chugging away.

And Mike, we're going to die before we get through all these questions. [MH laughs] Just know that. Our death will come first.

MH: Now that everyone's spirits have been crushed [laughter], you know, we can move on. [laughs]

TS: We'll try, but... Hey, Mike, this is our 365th episode! So we now officially have one episode for an entire year!

MH: Every day of the year. There you go.

TS: Every day for a year, yeah. That's a positive spin.

MH: We should've done something on Enoch, because of the 365. But ah, well. A Q&A is good. [laughs]

TS: We can throw a question in there about it. I could pretend like somebody asked about it [MH laughs] and you can answer it. Alright, well, congratulations again. 365 is a big number.

MH: Yeah, it *is* a big number.

TS: I'll get emails from some of these people and they listen at work or something, eight hours at a time. And man, my ears would bleed, Mike (no offense), listening to you that long. [laughs]

MH: Well, I think *my* ears would bleed, too. [laughs]

TS: I'm just kidding. I mean, your brain would blow up from all the content. That's impossible to... You know, I don't know if I could work [while listening to the content].

MH: It's amazing how some people will track through the content like that. I mean, they're nipping right at our heels, man.

TS: Hey, that's awesome. Binge. We've got so many episodes now. I even get emails from people who get sad when they catch up. Because they're so used to bingeing so many episodes [MH laughs], it's like, "What do you do with yourself?" Now you've got to go look for other podcasts to get your fix.

MH: Right. "You guys are slacking off! You're so lazy!" Yeah. Oh, I can just hear it.

TS: Well, Mike, we've got some great questions here. So I'm ready if you are. Might as well just jump in.

MH: Sure.

TS: Alright. Our first two questions are going to be from Jarryd. And his first question is:

3:20

Do you think that the original audience for Genesis 3:15 would have actually understood that a single savior would come to defeat the snake? I just can't see the sentence uses a singular, and it looks to me like we will always be fighting with the snake, not a prophecy of a savior. People like to quote that passage a lot, but it just seems like a pretty bad prophecy if anything.

MH: Yeah, I think there are things in the passage that *would* point to a singular... I hate to use the word “fulfillment,” because the word “fulfill” is like the word “cute.” Like it doesn’t really mean anything, because we tend to think cause-and-effect, one-to-one correspondence, whereas New Testament writers see fulfillment in a whole spectrum of ways (analogies, typologies, symbols, and so on and so forth). But for the sake of this question, I’ll use it. I do think that there are things in the passage that would point to a single person “fulfilling” this verse. That is *not* to say, though, that all the other stuff in the question isn’t true as well.

So if you just look at it... It’s Genesis 3:15. We might as well quote that passage. Let me just open up the Bible here and read it. I don’t want to assume that everyone sort of has this in their head. So Genesis 3:15. And it’ll sound familiar, even if you didn’t know exactly where it came from. This is part of the judgment of the *nachash* (the serpent).

5:00

**15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”**

That’s the ESV. And we’re going to talk about the translation in a little bit as well. The “you” in this passage... They’re singular. They refer to the serpent. So “I will put enmity between you” (singular), “your offspring...” Again, these are second-person singular pronouns that refer to the serpent. So sure, in that sense, the serpent... What actually we have here is the supernatural being and he lives on. He’s not terminated or anything. So it’s obvious in that sense that the struggle (the enmity) is ongoing. That’s obvious from the text. And since that’s the case, the serpent’s metaphorical offspring points to this ongoing time. And also, if that’s true, then her seed (the woman’s seed) is also ongoing—to have this ongoing conflict. It can’t just work one way. It has to work both.

So this notion that we’re always going to be fighting the effect of the Fall, that’s obvious. It’s transparent from the text. But it’s also a little bit narrow because it

excludes certain things. The text also indicates that the ongoing number isn't specifically the point. The idea is that first there will be this struggle. That's on the table for sure. And then also, at some point, a particular human will crush the serpent's head. Because we can't exclude the line "*he shall bruise.*" This is a third-person singular pronoun in the Hebrew text. And that has to point to a particular human offspring of the woman. So "*he*" (some seed of the woman) is going to do some damage or inflict some harm or whatever on the serpent. So it does funnel down to a particular person. The same individual is also marked as suffering some affliction *from* the serpent. Again, just the second part of the verse. "*He shall bruise your head.*" "*He, her offspring (some particular offspring), is going to bruise your head, Nachash. And you shall bruise his heel.*" So there's a particularity here that should not be excluded from the verse. And that's why I would say there are indications in the text that this can point to a very specific fulfillment.

Now most scholars see Paul, for instance, referencing this verse in Romans 16:20. Let me just read that verse. This is probably less known by comparison. Paul writes to the Romans in the last chapter:

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

So again, most scholars think this is a reference on Paul's part to Genesis 3:15 because of the vocabulary here (feet, a reference to Satan, the crushing, so on and so forth). I don't have anything to disagree with there. However, we need to actually take a look at the verse. In Romans 16:20, where it says, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under *your* feet," "*your feet*" is plural. So it's actually a reference to the Church—to the believers. It's not a reference to Jesus in that verse doing the crushing. So you have this sort of transference. I would say it this way: There's an indirect reference to Jesus here (in what Paul's writing) as the Savior, because believers are corporately the body of Christ, okay? And believers would not be in that status without Christ. The fact that Revelation 12 also connects the birth of the messiah with the demise of Satan, the serpent (I mean, that language is in Revelation 12) also indicates that there's some allusion going on in connection with Jesus back to Genesis 3:15. So in the one passage (Romans 16:20) you have the bruising (or the crushing) idea. In Revelation 12 you don't have that. But nevertheless, the connection is made as to how this sort of works.

Now just as a sidebar, the ESV (you've probably noticed) has both lines in the second half of Genesis 3:15 translated the same way. It says, "*he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" Bruise is used twice there. It has the same translation. Now that translation... Just for those for whom this might pop into your head, or you're really into this verse, you're going to wonder—you're going to ask the question, "Why didn't Mike say something about this?" Well, I'm

10:00

going to, okay? The translation presumes that the lemma, *shûph* (if you actually had software or used a concordance here), is truly the same. So if you're going to translate both of them as "bruise," the translator is probably assuming that we have the same lemma in both places. But you *could* have a homograph. Remember? This audience should know what homographs are (a word that is spelled exactly the same way as another word but they have two different meanings—two different semantics). It could also be something what... This is an academic term—a linguistics term. It could be a bi-form. I'll try to explain briefly what that is. But this is actually a debate. Like, do we have the same lemma in the verse twice or do we have two different lemmas that actually look the same? That's a debate that scholars have about Genesis. You'll run into it in commentaries. So it may be (again, it's indeterminate) that the same lemma is intended in both places. And again, ESV reflects that. But it's also possible that we have the two separate lemmas that are homographs. It's equally possible. If they *are* homographs (you've got two different lemmas here), one means "to bruise"; the other would be something like "to snap at" or "snatch at." Think of a serpent trying to bite somebody's heel. So that very well could be what we have here. And so you're going to see certain translations try to distinguish between these two things. And this is part of the thinking, part of what may be going on in the translator's head.

Now as far as the bi-form option, this is a linguistic term where you have two not-identical lemmas, but they're very close, and specifically there are only certain consonants in Hebrew that work this way. So you could have one that's spelled with the Sh and the W (the vav) and the P (sh-w-p). And another one that's Sh, and then the aleph, and the P (sh-'-p). Depending on what grammatical form the one with the middle aleph is put into, it can work out spelling-wise (vocalization-wise) as שׁוּפָּ *šûph* [pronounced shoof, like "proof"], just like the other one. Even though they're not homographs, they're still two different lemmas, but they can look the same in the text, and so hence this question.

Another sidebar: the Septuagint translates these lemmas with the same Greek word—the same Greek lemma. So the Septuagint translator probably is looking at this and thinking they come from the same source. Cassuto, in his commentary, writes about this. If you have Cassuto's Genesis commentary, it'll be the first volume. He talks about what the options are. So you could go look that up. But again, I just wanted people to know that this is why certain translations in English... Some of them will be identical (the same word two times, just like ESV). Other ones will vary the vocabulary. So this is part of the issue. But as to the original question, yeah, this can certainly funnel into a very particular offspring of the woman. So that is exegetically defensible.

TS: His second question is:

12:50

A scholar in our church recently said that writing wasn't developed enough for Moses to actually write down the Pentateuch. He said, "It's not like Moses was carrying around tablets that he wrote this all down on." That threw me a bit, and I didn't know what to make of it, because I thought the Egyptians were using papyrus long before that. Can you comment on this, and how it was likely originally recorded?

MH: Yeah. I mean, I've made the comment before as well that Moses isn't carrying a tray of cuneiform tablets along with him during the Exodus. Because you know, a lot of the content in Genesis does hook into Babylonian texts. And I've said before on the podcast, my suspicion is that either Genesis 1-11 was either written during the Exile or was heavily edited using the Akkadian/Babylonian material to articulate a polemic—a theological polemic—in those 11 chapters. And if that's the case, well then, since that's part of the Torah, then you have the same question arise for different reasons about the rest of the Torah.

My view is, just generally (and then I'll get to the specifics of the question), that I don't accept JEDP (the consensus view among scholars), that the Pentateuch (the Torah) was not written at all by Moses—that it's a patchwork quilt of sources, and so on and so forth. I don't accept that view, but I also don't accept the traditional view that Moses wrote 99% or 100% of the Torah. I think it's somewhere in the middle. I'm what used to be called a Supplementarian, and there are different reasons for that.

15:00

Now that is preparatory to say, you should've detected in that answer that I don't have a problem with Moses being able to write stuff in the Torah. The reason that this scholar in this church said this... He's really basing this on the fact that there are no paleo-Hebrew inscriptions that we know of that are earlier than 1000 BC. You have to know a little bit about Hebrew. The Hebrew that you're used to seeing today is not the original Hebrew script. There's a paleo-Hebrew script that would've been used by Moses or anybody else in greater antiquity. The script that you're familiar with now comes out of the Babylonian Exile. It's an adoption of Aramaic in that case, the script that they were using there, and that is referred to as the block letter style. That is *not* what Hebrew letters were like in the biblical period (something before 1000 BC or even a little bit later than that. So if you look at that material that's been recovered from the ancient world, there are no Hebrew inscriptions that (I'm just using round numbers here) that are earlier than 1000 BC. Well, if Moses lived... 1400 BC is when he died. 1525-1405 BC. Obviously, he's living in the period for which we do not have epigraphic or inscriptional evidence for Old Hebrew. So that's really what's behind this statement.

Now having said that, it's an assumption. That's all we have here on that person's part. It is, of course, an assumption that this means (the fact that we don't have inscriptions earlier than 1000 BC in Old Hebrew)... That's an

assumption that that fact (that absence in the archeological record) means that the written form of Hebrew wasn't developed. You can't really draw that conclusion. You could have written Hebrew developed and maybe we just don't have stuff that was produced in it. I mean, if you think about the Hebrews... You know, why do we have inscriptions from any culture? It's because they had a settled civilization. There was the occasion (the need) to produce documentary evidence like stelae or inscriptions or whatever, economic records. None of this applies to the Hebrews in Moses' day. The reason I wouldn't expect there to be original tablet forms (or on any medium) of the Torah in Old Hebrew is because the Hebrews weren't a settled people. There's no reason for them to produce material that we could point at and look at and say, "Oh, yeah! The Hebrews living back around Moses' time, they were literate! Look at that inscription there." Why would they produce it? They're not settled in a land. I mean, what's the point? They're not producing receipts or economic records like you see with cuneiform tablets. They don't have any of that. They're wandering around in a desert. They're on their way to a land. And once they get in, they've got to basically start the whole thing from scratch (their civilization). So there's not a necessary connection between the absence of inscriptional data and the idea that the language itself wasn't developed in writing. So that's the first problem (the historical circumstances).

Now Moses would have been highly literate (if we accept the biblical account of the guy Moses). He would've been highly literate as someone trained in Pharaoh's household. He'd be expected to read and write Egyptian and very likely Akkadian (at least be able to read Akkadian). And that's especially true if the Exodus was a late exodus. Just think the 1200s BC instead of the early date. If you don't know what I'm talking about here, go listen to the first four or five episodes of the book of Exodus series. If it's a later date, this is especially true that Moses would be literate in Egyptian and Akkadian writing, because Akkadian was the language of international correspondence during this period. The Tel el-Amarna letters are written in Akkadian. It's a correspondence between Pharaoh and his underling authorities in what we would call now the Holy Land—in Palestine. It's all Akkadian. It's not Egyptian. It's Akkadian. So if the Hebrew language had been put to writing, there is no reason to suppose that Moses wouldn't have known that language (that script) as well. I mean, he knows Egyptian; he knows Akkadian. If Hebrew (the language of his native people) has been put into writing, there's no reason to suspect that he wouldn't know it.

20:00

Now it *is* a reasonable expectation that that language *had* a written form, because the proto-Sinaitic inscriptions date to 400 years *earlier* than the late date of the exodus. Again, if you don't know what those are, the proto-Sinaitic inscriptions are important because they are the beginning of the Semitic alphabet. Where someone at some of the turquoise mines in Sinai... And this predates the early date of the Exodus. So this has nothing to do with with the Exodus, okay? But you've got somebody who's taking Egyptian characters and using them to create an alphabet. And the inscriptions that are in that Egyptian-

looking alphabet are Semitic. They conform to the grammar of Semitic languages. We don't know who those people were. There's no way to identify them, despite claims to the contrary. There are people out there that say, "Oh, we know that the biblical Hebrews produced the proto-Sinaitic inscriptions." Well, actually, you don't. Because all of the features that can be known from those inscriptions are also parts of other Semitic languages. There's no way to directly tie it to the Hebrews in the Bible. There's no way to do that, even though people... It's a nice idea. Wouldn't that be cool? But you've got nothing there. Okay?

So all that to say, I think that this conclusion that the scholar in your church drew is based upon a point of fact (this data about we don't have any Hebrew inscriptions earlier than 1000 BC) requires making certain assumptions about what that means that I don't think really hold together well or (let me just be more charitable) that lack certainty. So again, if Moses is who the Bible says he was, he's going to be highly literate. If the language of his people exists in an alphabet, you better believe... There's no reason to conclude he wouldn't know that. Okay? So we don't know one way or the other. But it's a reasonable thing to conclude that, yeah, Moses could've written stuff.

TS: Our next question is from Evan:

21:35

I have a question about 1 Kings 22:22, 1 Samuel 16:14, and Ezekiel 14:9. Each verse speaks about an "evil" or "lying" spirit coming from God. One extremely popular pastor uses these verses to say that God has predestined and is governing all man's sin. Is God causing, tempting, or predestining the sin of false prophecy? Finally, is the divine council member in these verses "evil" or "tempting"?

MH: The short answer to these questions is "No," and "No." Okay? You know, I get questions like this about what some people are listening to and what other people are saying that ought to know better and just... Part of me just dies inside. [laughs] You know? This is a seriously flawed notion. One of those passages (1 Kings 22:22) is going to ring bells with this audience, because that's the Micaiah passage (1 Kings 22:19-23) where we have a Divine Council session. So again, I'm going to read that just in case people aren't aware of this.

¹⁹ And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left;

Okay, so that's your first clue to one of the problems with this assumption that this "popular pastor" is teaching. You have the host of heaven, the heavenly host, (i.e., angelic beings, if you want to use that terminology) standing beside the Lord as the Lord sits on his throne. So they're intelligent entities. Okay?

²⁰ and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. ²¹ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' ²² And the LORD said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.'

So that's verse 22, "lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." And that's one of the launching points for the question. So I would just... Putting that passage in everyone's head. And then the 1 Samuel 16:14 verse we might as well read this. And I'll get to the one in Ezekiel in a bit.

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.

Again, this is ESV. So having those two floating around in our heads now, my first question is, "Why would we assume that there's sin going on? Why?" If the lying spirit is from God, by definition it isn't sin. God doesn't sin. He doesn't like sin. Why would we conclude that God is endorsing or creating or predestinating sin, okay? It creates a number of conundra by virtue of the logic problem there. And the example from 1 Kings is particularly wrong-headed, for other reasons. I'm going to try to follow my discussion here. The spirit comes from the group. The group is the heavenly host standing in Yahweh's presence. Why would we expect that evil, rebellious spirits... Spirits who are in rebellion don't report for work. They're not on God's payroll anymore. Why would we assume that? Again, it doesn't make sense on a number of levels. So again, I think the real issue here is this whole notion of lying and deception and so on and so forth.

25:00

So you go to 1 Samuel 16:14. And I would say, drawing the conclusion that we have moral evil here really reflects either a lack of knowledge about the semantic range of this word that gets translated "evil" (it's the word *ra'*)... We either have a lack of knowledge of the semantic range or we have (let's be blunt) just laziness. He never looked it up, okay? This word does not need to indicate moral evil. *Ra'* can mean other things besides moral evil, i.e., sin. Let me just go through a few examples. Genesis 37:2. I can just sit here and do a quick search. I mean, this doesn't take a whole lot of effort here. This is Genesis 37:2:

² These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

He brought a *raʿ* report—a bad report. Did Joseph *sin* when he reported to his father? Is there moral evil in the report? I mean, is there something about the report that is evil? The uttering of the report? You could say, “Well, the contents of it, because the sons are just not doing their job,” or whatever. Yeah, we know that. That’s the *content* of the report. But what I’m asking is, “Is the report itself morally evil? Does it have something do with sin?” No. You keep going in Genesis 37:20, the word shows up again. This is the brothers plotting against Joseph.

²⁰ “Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him [MH: a *raʿ* animal], and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

What, is the animal sinful? Is the animal guilty of moral evil, doing what animals do? How about verse 33? We keep going in the same chapter. This is when they hand the cloak with blood on it to Jacob.

³³ And he identified it and said, “It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him...”

Again, is the animal sinning? I’m hoping you see the point here. This is a little ridiculous. But let’s keep going. Genesis 41:33. This is Joseph interpreting Pharaoh’s dream.

³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.”

Now can anybody guess where *raʿ* occurs? We didn’t come across anything that sounded like moral evil. But we actually have a reference to what? We have famine and years of plenty. Where does that come from? Well, it comes from the vision of the cows, if you remember. So if we go back up earlier in the chapter... So this is Genesis 41:3-4 now. So I went to verses 33-34 (that’s the context). Go back to verses 3-4. Here’s where you get the word, actually.

³ And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows.

The word “ugly” is *raʿ*. So should we say, “Behold, seven other cows who were sinful and thin came up out of the Nile after them, and those sinful, thin cows ate up the other ones”? Again, you could go on and on with these kinds of examples. I’ll do one more (Leviticus 26:6).

⁶ I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land.

“I will remove the *raʿ* beasts from the land.” “I’ll remove the *sinful* beasts.” Now again, *raʿ* as a term need not have anything to do with sin and moral evil. What it really means... Again, broadly—the semantic range of this—yes, it can include moral evil, obviously. But it can also indicate something unfavorable, harmful, dangerous, and, of course, in Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream, ugly. “These cows just don’t look good.” Okay, they’re stricken by famine. They look awful. So *raʿ* can mean those neutral things.

30:00

Now if we go back to 1 Samuel 16:14, where “the Spirit of the LORD departs from Saul and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him,” that’s actually a good translation. There’s something about this spirit, and it could go either way. It could be an entity (because 1 Kings 22, we have entities there) or it could just be God afflicting Saul internally (psychologically)—Saul’s own spirit, something like that. It could go either way. Commentators... You can look this up in virtually any commentary that’s serious (that engages the text) and you’ll get this discussion. But the whole idea is that either God is sending a spirit to trouble Saul, to make him uncomfortable (maybe harm him psychologically, make him a wreck, make him anxious, irritable) or it could be that it’s a not reference to Saul’s internal disposition at all. It doesn’t have to have anything to do with moral evil. It’s just something unfavorable, harmful, something you wouldn’t want to have happen to you—that kind of thing. I think that’s what’s going on in 1 Samuel 16.

You get another example in Judges 9. God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the rulers of Shechem. In other words, there’s something that God does that creates a conflict between these two groups. One party—one side of the equation—is getting judged and the other side is not, so on and so forth. So God is judging who he wants to judge—who deserves judgment. And I think that’s what’s going on in these sorts of verses. You go to Ezekiel 14:9, let’s just read that since that was brought up.

⁹ And if the prophet is deceived and speaks a word, I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

Now the word *ra'* doesn't appear in that passage, but just the idea of God deceiving some prophet, to destroy him. Alright? So all of these things (Ezekiel 14:9, 1 Samuel 16, [1 Kings 22]), what they come down to is that God is judging evil. And so here's the question: Is God allowed to use the means of deception or trickery (or just make somebody irritable so it starts a fight) to judge evildoers? I'll follow that with another question. Who's going to tell him that he can't? Of course he can. God gets to judge evil in whatever way God deems fit. We did a whole episode on God's use of deception to judge evil. That's Episode 210, for anyone who wants to go back and listen to it. God doing that... Such things are not evil, for evil is defined (in a very basic way for the sake of this Q&A) as that which is contrary to God's will. God doesn't ordain the violations of his own will. He doesn't violate his own will. What he does is by definition not a violation of his own will. God can judge evil however he wills without violating his own will. That's what it comes down to. Judging evil, as well, is consistent with God's moral character. So I think what's tripping up the discussion here is this talk about deception and God doing something. You know, I've got news for you. At the end of the day, God is going to deny eternal life to the wicked. So God's means of judging the wicked (short of their eternal destiny)... God can do what he wants to judge evil. And he does. Again, you can go back and listen to Episode 210. You'll get other examples of God using these sorts of means.

TS: Chris in Ledyard, Connecticut, has our next question:

34:20

In studying the Lord's Prayer, I've discovered that the Greek word typically translated in English Bibles as "daily," as in "Give us this day our *daily* bread," is a mystery. It seems that no one really knows what the true meaning of the word is, and over time different suggestions have been made, including daily bread, the bread for tomorrow, and supersubstantial or supernatural bread (e.g. Jesus Himself). Can Dr. Heiser provide any additional insight into what the best translation of this word might be? Based on the literary structure of the Lord's Prayer and its location within the Sermon on the Mount, does Dr. Heiser lean toward a natural or supernatural interpretation of the "bread" in the Lord's Prayer?

MH: The second part I'll just say, I think it's natural. I think it's talking about physical needs, in that passage anyway. And the other one, I'm in favor of using other parts in the near context (really the same verses) as the difficult word occurs. I mean, there's other vocabulary in there that I think helps us narrow the possibilities as far as interpretation goes. So let's unpack this a little bit. Because I think people may not be aware of the difficulty here.

So on one hand, in part there's not much of a mystery. You look at Matthew 6:10. Let's just start in Matthew. This prayer of course occurs in more than one Gospel. But in Matthew 6:10:

¹⁰ **Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**
¹¹ **Give us this day our daily bread [MH: So ESV has "daily" bread],**
¹² **and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

So we have here "give us" and then we have the term *sēmeron*. It means "tomorrow." So it's a time-orienting word. And then it's followed by another term, which is the troublesome one. The lemma there is ἐπιούσιος (*epiousios*). That's the one that there's ambiguity. Like what does that term mean? And we'll get into... It's pretty rare, okay? But my suggestion is going to be, let's use the word "tomorrow" to help us narrow the understanding of the word that is less clear. And let's loop in a bit of logic here. Jesus would probably endorse the idea of praying every day. And so if you're in the habit of using this prayer as a pattern of prayer regularly, and you know that the time word in there is oriented by "tomorrow," that does give you this day by day, "daily" feel to it. And again, that's the trajectory most commentators follow.

So let's just go back to the term. This first term (*sēmeron*) means "tomorrow." It's the same word that occurs later in Matthew 6 (in verse 34) where it clearly means "tomorrow." You can look up the term. The Lord's prayer in Luke 11:3, though, uses different terminology. It's *to kath* (which is from *kata*) *hēmeron*. It literally means "what is according to a day." So you have, again, this... Not the "tomorrow" sense. If you're praying the prayer with regularity, the "tomorrow" language makes sense, but here you have "what is according to a day" or "to the day." So again, you have this "daily" sense. And that phrase is, in turn, clarified by other things in the passage.

So if we take what we know, you have this "tomorrow" and you've got *hēmeron*, which is the normal word for "day." You've got this "according to the day" or "that which is according to a day." If you have these words that are easy to grasp and comprehend, my predilection is going to be to use them to help us understand the word that is more difficult (the second one, ἐπιούσιος—*epiousios*).

So if we go to BDAG, which is the Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich lexicon, a standard lexicon for the Greek New Testament, the entry on ἐπιούσιος... It says this in part:

ἐπιούσιος, ον according to Origen [MH: that's the patristic father], De Orat. 27, 7, coined by the evangelists [MH: like this is a term they made up].

Now the entry's going to go a little bit away from that, kinda sorta. It's going to be rare. It's going to be unusual. So part of the entry will say, "Ah, maybe Origen was kind of onto something here. It's kind of unique." But then if you go elsewhere through the entry, you're going to see some other examples or similar terms. And so maybe they did coin the term, maybe they sort of altered a known term that has more of a chronological orientation to come up with this one. Again, this is the discussion that lexicographers are going to have.

So you go through the entry and they list a bunch of interpretations. And I'm going to give you three of them. There are other trajectories in the entry, but here are three. The question is, "What is ἐπιούσιος derived from? If they coined this term or maybe they just took other terms that were common and put them together and sort of made their own, or there's some nuance in here that can be otherwise understood. So here's one. I'm going to give you three.

35:00

1. One option is that it derives from ἐπι and οὐσία, which BDAG translates as that which is "necessary for existence." And they cite Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome as, this is the trajectory they take. This is where they think it comes from. So ἐπι and οὐσία. Combining those two Greek terms to form ἐπιούσιος, and the meaning would be "that which is necessary for existence." And since we need to exist every day, which would be nice (we can't take a day off from existence), "daily" captures the idea. And then, of course, it's consistent with the other chronological language in the passage. However, there are a couple of other options.

2. Some would say it is a substantivizing (that's a grammar term) of ἐπι τὴν οὔσαν, which would mean "for the current day." And there's a little note in BDAG, when you get this phrase ἐπι τὴν οὔσαν (according to what is necessary), a daily sort of necessity is implied here. And so they say, if that's where it comes from, it would mean something like "for the current day" or "for today." And for each of these, they're going to cite different passages in Greek literature that get you to those terms (ἐπι τὴν οὔσαν or *epi ousia*). Those are terms you're going to find in other Greek literature and the context is consistent. And they're saying, "Well, maybe the Gospel writers used these passages or this kind of language to coin their own term."

3. They also say and cite examples that it could mean "for the following day," using one of these breakdowns and then going that trajectory. "For the following day." And that goes well with the presence of *sēmeron* in Matthew, which means "tomorrow." So again, we could go down other trajectories, but the term is rare; it's unusual. Its derivation is not a mystery in that there are no possibilities as to having any hope of explaining this. That's not true. It's uncertain as to which one

of the possibilities actually happened or actually is in the picture. That's the part that's uncertain. But as far as where this term might have come from, there are good options here. And a translation like "daily" or "for tomorrow" or "for the current day," something like that, that's well within the semantic range of these options, and makes sense, given the boots-on-the-ground existence of the people that are listening to Jesus.

TS: Our last question is from Curtis in College Station, TX.

42:40

Does the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11–32 allude to Deuteronomy 32:8-9? The father giving the inheritance to the rebellious son seems to match up fairly well.

MH: This one is actually going to be short. It might surprise the audience because the question includes Deuteronomy 32. I don't think so. In Deuteronomy 32:8-9, Yahweh doesn't give away his inheritance. He takes Israel as his inheritance. Now I'm sure the thought process here (what's behind the question) is the idea of abandoning humanity more generally (surrender of the nations and so on and so forth). But the "inheritance" language that's actually in the verse pertains specifically to Israel, not the nations that are being abandoned. So if we're thinking about inheritance being a potential link between Deuteronomy 32:8-9 and the Prodigal Son parable, if you're zeroing in on the inheritance, it doesn't fit. Because Yahweh is... I'll use the language of Deuteronomy 4:19-20, the parallel with Deuteronomy 32:8-9. Yahweh *takes* his inheritance. He takes Israel as his own. He doesn't give it up. He takes it. So it's actually the reverse of the prodigal situation. But again, I think where the question really comes from is the notion of the disinheritance (is a term I like to use) or the abandonment of the nations. But again, the language of Deuteronomy 32 specifically relates to taking Israel as the inheritance. Now sure, if God elects Israel (we'll use "the E word" there), then the others are non-elect. Okay, I can see that. But if you take that idea from Deuteronomy or the Old Testament generally, God making a positive choice suggests obviously on the other hand the negative choice. When you go to the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, it still doesn't line up very well, because in that case you'd have someone not being disinherited... He doesn't disinherit the prodigal. He gives him what he wants, but he's still his son. And the son comes back and everything turns out well, and so on and so forth, and he comes to his senses and all that. So even under some of those assumptions, in my head it doesn't really align well.

45:00

TS: Alright, Mike. Just like that, we're done for this week. Don't forget, if you have a question, please send them to me at TreyStricklin@gmail.com, and just know that we can't get to everyone's [laughter], but the ones that we do get, we appreciate.

MH: Thanks for that word of comfort. [laughter]

TS: And Mike, we appreciate you answering those questions. And next week, we get back into Revelation, I believe Revelation 4.

MH: Mm hmm.

TS: And with that, Mike, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.