

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 374

Q&A 45

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Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions:

- What is the Bible referring to when it speaks of “gods who came recently” in Deuteronomy 32:17 and Psalm 81:9? [Time stamp 7:50]
- Are there female Apkallu? If not, how could Gilgamesh be 2/3 Apkallu? [12:00]
- Was David carrying out God’s instructions to Joshua when he wiped out certain people groups in 1 Samuel 27? [13:10]
- What and/or whom will we be ruling over on the New Earth? [24:35]

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 374: Our 45th Q&A. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What’s going on?

MH: Well, not a whole lot personally. We’re wrapping up the semester in a couple weeks. And that means the summer will come, which means I get more time to write. So I’m glad that that’s turning a corner. I always look forward to that.

TS: Any writing... When you say writing... Are we getting the astral prophecy book? Or...

MH: No, no, no. That’s on the back burner. That’s taken a back seat to some other things. That’s about all I can say.

TS: Even the novel?

MH: Yeah, the novel I can mention. Yeah, that’s part of it. But there are some other things that I can’t divulge right now.

TS: Well, that’s good stuff. Alright, well, Mike, is there anything going on out there in the world internationally or domestically about biblical stuff?

MH: Yeah. I had a friend send me a link to a recent study about the use of artificial intelligence and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The headline that they sent was “A.I. unlocks ancient Dead Sea Scrolls mystery.” So that’s good for click bait. But it’s legit. It’s not just one of these scam articles that are going to capture your information and then send you all sorts of stuff you’re not interested in. What it’s about is that they’re trying to apply artificial intelligence to recognize patterns in letter styles so that they can hopefully identify specific scribal hands in Dead Sea Scrolls. Because... The article’s a little bit misleading. Like, it’ll say something like, “All these Dead Sea Scrolls were written in an almost uniform style.” Well, yeah, some letters. But when I was in grad school, we had to read things like Frank Moore Cross from Harvard. He did a (now) very famous article on scribal hands (paleography—letter formations). And he has a whole typology. And his typology was actually used to date Dead Sea Scrolls, because you could match the letter style to texts that had something in them that was actually datable (like somebody’s name or some event). And his work has really stood up over the test of time. So it’s long been known that more than one scribe produced these things. Even individual texts, that there were different scribal hands. So that’s a little misleading. This isn’t the first time this is known. But what they’re doing is they’re using artificial intelligence to detect very specific, minute changes in letter style and, essentially, to search through scrolls for that and isolate which sections belonged to which scribe (Scribe A or B or C or something like that). So it’s interesting. The results of it, I guess, if it’s applied might tell you which scribe... In theory it should tell you which scribe worked on which texts and where they worked. And then you can sort of (I don’t know that they’re going to do this) grade the scribes, like, “Okay, this guy’s guilty of 15 errors in the scrolls. This guy only screwed up eight times, so he’s a better scribe than the first guy.” [laughs] I don’t know what they’re actually going to do with it as far as evaluation, but it’s interesting. It’s an interesting use of technology to get at this kind of information.

TS: Yeah, absolutely. Well, A.I. is going to take over everything. So it doesn’t surprise me that they would use that in the biblical world. It’s probably going to unlock some kind of hidden Bible code.

MH: [laughs] Right. Or at least provide material that someone can invent yet another Bible code.

TS: Oh yeah, absolutely.

MH: My money’s on the invention side of it more than anything real and quantifiable. [laughs]

TS: Absolutely, Mike. That’s good stuff. Well, is there anything else going on in the world that you feel the need to talk about?

MH: No, not really. I know we’ve got some questions. What number Q&A is this?

TS: This is our 45th.

MH: Wow. We're almost at the golden anniversary of Q&As.

5:00

TS: Are we going to get each other anything for our 50th?

MH: [laughs] Yeah, well... You can get me maybe an updated copy of Microsoft Word or something like that. [laughs]

TS: There you go. That'd be really sweet. Really romantic.

MH: Yeah, well... That's stretching it.

TS: Hey, since this is a Q&A, I want to remind people out there to be collecting your thoughts on Revelation. Because at the end of it, we're going to do a specific Q&A on Revelation. So email me at TreyStricklin@gmail.com with your Revelation questions. And if you could help me out, put "Revelation" in the subject line. I'm going to be collecting those, Mike. And we're going to try to tackle as many as we can at the end of Revelation.

MH: So you know what's going to happen. You know what's going to happen with those.

TS: What's that?

MH: People are going to sneak in questions to get at different End Times systems to see what I think about different End Times systems. That's what's going to happen right there. So if you're listening out there and that's the plan, my answers are going to be real short. [laughs] How many ways can I say I don't care? Eh, they'll probably have a little more substance than that. But I'm already on to you. If that's you, I'm on to you, before we even get started.

TS: Maybe we should just have a whole episode just where you tear down/break down specific End Times prophecies and pick them apart.

MH: Yeah, I've actually already done that on my website, drmsh.com, in the series of "Why an obsession with eschatology is a waste of time." So people can read through that. And then they can take what's there and they'll know how to argue against somebody else's position, but they'll also hopefully be awakened to the fact that, "Oh, somebody else could read this and argue against *my* position." So I don't know that we need to repeat that. But see, that might be the answer to those questions when we do our Q&A. "Oh, read #6 on the list of blog posts," or something like that.

TS: There you go. Yeah, I forgot about that. So you're right about that article. But it would be nice to get it in podcast form maybe. Maybe not.

MH: Well, maybe that'll be your 50th Q&A present. [laughs]

TS: I appreciate that.

MH: [laughs] Another Q&A.

TS: [flatly] Sounds great.

MH: I can hear the enthusiasm in your voice as we speak. Try to contain yourself, Trey. [laughs]

TS: Very hard, very hard to do, Mike. You're such a sweet... I don't know where I'm going with that. Alright, Mike, hey [MH laughs], let's get through our questions here. We've got some good questions.

MH: Well, it ended well. [laughs]

TS: We've got some good questions from some good people here, so let's just get at it. Our first one's from Jason from Tempe, Arizona. And his question is:

7:50

What does the Bible mean when it refers to gods that came "recently" (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 80:10 LXX)? Does this "recency" refer to the glorification of beings that were previously in some way like humans, i.e. believers in the Most High God who later were glorified and given responsibilities to protect and govern a subsequent generation of mortal beings? To me this seems somehow like a repeating cycle, since Paul refers to believers being transformed at the second coming (1 Corinthians 15:51), and John refers to believers as being called "Sons of God" (1 John 3:1).

"Recency" of godhood is mentioned in the Septuagint's Psalm 80 (which in modern Bibles is Psalm 81):

**Psalms 80:10 (NETS) [81:9 in modern English translations]
There shall be no recent god among you,
nor shall you do obeisance to a foreign god.**

What is it about the gods that makes them not only created, but also "recent?"

MH: The answer to this is a lot simpler than the question might suggest. And Jason actually has the answer *in* the question. And that is Psalm 80:10. So the talk about transformation (believers—humans—being transformed) is all eschatological. There's nothing in Scripture that refers to this happening in the past. So the repeating cycle is just something that is sort of an idea imported into the text. There's really no basis for that. But the answer, again, is a lot simpler.

10:00 The idea of “recent” gods refers to the gods... Just think of Deuteronomy 32:17. They didn’t worship God; they worshiped these other gods. They worshiped *shedim*, gods that they had not known. And again, you get this “recency” language in it. This refers to gods that Israel encountered since the Exodus period, as opposed to the God whom their fathers and ancestors had worshipped centuries prior to that (in other words, Yahweh). So to worship a different god than your ancestors did, that’s a “recent” god. That’s a more recent god. And by definition it would be a “foreign” god. It would be a different god. And if you look at Psalm 80:10, which you had read... I’m going to read from the Lexham English Septuagint here.

**There will not be a new god in you,
nor will you bow down to a foreign god.**

Well, there you have the “new god” language and in parallel the idea is “foreign.” So “new god,” “foreign god.” Right there is the answer in the verse. So these recent gods (these recent deities that Israel was worshiping and shouldn’t have been worshiping) are gods that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their forefathers, of course, at the Exodus did not.

And so Deuteronomy 32, even if Moses wrote that, the answer is still pertinent because he’s referring to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). If somebody else wrote Deuteronomy 32 (there’s this whole question of editorial activity in the authorship of the Torah), then we would loop Moses into that. Because obviously the Israelites coming out of Egypt are going to go to Sinai; they’re going to enter into a covenant with Yahweh. And the notion of Moses either forecasting that, “You’re going to go after other gods” or that they, in fact, already have (depending again on the authorship) just speaks to the issue. “Recent” means, “This wasn’t who your fathers worshiped. It wasn’t who you entered into covenant with. Who are these newbies?” That sort of thing. So again, the answer I think is pretty much more straightforward than the question might suggest.

TS: George from Woodsville, New Hampshire, asks:

12:00 **Are there any female Apkallu? If not, how can Gilgamesh be 2/3 Apkallu?**

MH: Well, let’s take the first part. I’m not aware of any iconography or anything textually that says there were female Apkallu. I know the implication of the second part of the question (“If not, how can Gilgamesh be 2/3 Apkallu?”). Well, if both male and female Apkallu existed, Gilgamesh would be completely Apkallu. So that’s one thing. But the reason why he’s 2/3 is because the post-flood Apkallu were (in some cuneiform material) “of human descent.” That’s why you only get the 2/3. And hence the parallel to Genesis 6:1-4 that I’ve talked about in

Unseen Realm and *Reversing Hermon* and the *Demons* book. All three of those books address the Apkallu context, which draws on the work of Amar Annus as far as the cuneiform material for this.

TS: Alright. Becky has a question about 1 Samuel 27. And I'm going to leave it up to you, Mike, to read the verses. But she wants to know this:

13:10

In the past (before listening to Naked Bible) I would have just considered this a straying from God, but now, with the specific listing of the nations invaded, I wonder if this wasn't David carrying out the directions to Joshua to wipe out these nations.

MH: Yeah, I think the verses where... Verse 8 and following... I might as well just read those for the audience. It says:

⁸ Now David and his men went up and made raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt. ⁹ And David would strike the land and would leave neither man nor woman alive, but would take away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the garments, and come back to Achish.

Achish is where he was (at least the person he was reporting to), at this time in his life, anyway. Continuing in verse 10:

¹⁰ When Achish asked, "Where have you made a raid today?" David would say, "Against the Negeb of Judah," or, "Against the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites," or, "Against the Negeb of the Kenites."

So on and so forth. So the rest of this we don't really need to read. It's really those first two verses about, he's going up, making raids against the Geshurites, Girzites, Amalekites. And then he strikes the land and leaves neither man nor woman alive. I tend to agree that what we have here... There's an editorial comment in here. And by that, I don't necessarily mean an editorial hand. I mean just in the text. The editorial comment is "these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur." Okay? If you recall from the Exodus series on the podcast, we talked about the Amalekites. And they do have a relationship to the giant clans. So there you have your clues right there—this "inhabitants of the land from of old" and the reference to the Amalekites. The Amalekites' heritage can be traced to the Horites. And if you want to listen to all that material, it's Episode 283 on Exodus 17.

15:00

So this is part... In that case, it's sort of a precursor to what Moses and later Joshua are going to run into in the land as far as opposition from the giant clans. In other words, it seeds that thought, or what's going to become a recurring motif. And in my view, it really defines the rationale for the conquest in terms of the

verbs of killing (the *kherem*, the “holy war”). Those elements of the conquest are really about the elimination of the giant clans and those that are perceived to extend from the Nephilim.

Now what about the Geshurites and the Girzites, though? So again, I agree in principle that this is what’s going on. And I think the Geshurites and the Girzites are part of this. And there’s actually a text-critical issue that makes it really doubtful (this is going to sound odd) that the Girzites even ever existed. But let me just track through. So you have two options on the Geshurites and the Girzites. I’m just going to read a little bit here. I looked up both terms from *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. And this is actually going to be part of a presentation I gave a couple years ago in Lubbock, TX, when I went through the people group names. But ABD notes that the Geshurites and the Girzites were:

The inhabitants of an area SE of Philistia, between Philistia and Sinai (Josh 13:2)... When David fled from Saul and resided in Philistia by permission of Achish, he executed forays against the Geshurites and despoiled them thoroughly (1 Sam 27:8–9).

And then another note from the same source. ABD writes:

The inhabitants of a district, Geshur, bounded by Gilead on the S, Bashan on the E, and Mt. Hermon on the N (Josh 13:11). They were Arameans who, with the Maacathites, remained Israel’s neighbors on Israel’s NE extremity.”

So you get a connection there in terms of the northern border with Bashan and Mount Hermon. So taking this a little further, based on Josh 12:5; 13:2, 11, 13, Lipinski... I’ve referenced this article before on the podcast. This is Lipinski’s article about El’s abode (the abode of El, the Canaanite deity), in which he argues very effectively was originally Mount Hermon. This was the seat of the gods all the way back to Sumerian times. And of course this is right at the border of the region of Bashan. So Lipinski writes:

The biblical story [MH: based on these passages in Joshua] implies the existence of Manassite settlements in Bashan, which should probably be linked with Jereboam II’s conquests in the area. In earlier times, this region belonged, at least partly, to the kings of Geshur, later the Aramean kingdom of Damascus... The kingdom of Geshur or Bēth-Maaka extended for 40 km north of the Sea of Galilee...

So this whole region. And that much, of course, would be in the parameters of the land that was promised to Abraham and his descendants. So consequently, the Geshurites were residents in Amorite territory associated with Sihon and Og of Bashan (kings of the Amorites). Og was a giant, the last of the Rephaim. Though there’s no verse that explicitly calls them Amorites, they’re in this

territory. This would mean that the first option (the Geshurites were inhabiting an area in the south near Philistia) is not really the point of the reference, at least for the conquest narratives.

20:00

So going back to Anchor Bible Dictionary's two options, it's really the second one, that the Geshurites we're talking about were inhabitants of the district Geshur, up toward the north. So how do we look at this? We've got David going after these Geshurites. You could argue that there were two separate groups (one in the south and one in the north). And so a scholar would look at this and say, "Well, the Geshurites... We have to keep these two groups separate." But to me that actually isn't that clear. Because okay, you have Geshurites in both locations. I get it. One location is very obviously associated with the giant clans. The other location is southeast of Philistia, between Philistia and Sinai. But you get this association with the Amalekites as well. So you have these people groups (one of them, at least, the Amalekites, clearly is part of the giant clan traditions), living together. So regardless of which set of Geshurites we're talking about (and if we're talking about Achish, who is down in the south, it would be that group), I still think you have a connection to giant clan thinking and giant clan people groups. This association is still legit. It has some explanatory power here.

Now let's go to the Girzites. They're also mentioned in 1 Samuel 27:8. Now if the above is correct, about the Geshurites, and all that, what about his other group? Well, in fact, the Girzites may never have existed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary* notes this:

However, the scholarly consensus is that the Girzites, unknown from any other source [MH: not just in the Bible, but anywhere else], most probably did not exist. Already the [Masoretic Text] corrected the Ketib reading girzî to the Qere reading gizrî "Gezrites," meaning inhabitants of Gezer [MH: which also is in the north, by the way].

Now what that means in English... Let me just finish the quote.

... Gezer, however, lies much too far to the N to fit the context of this passage. Evidence from the LXX would indicate that the MT reading either represents a conflate text presenting two variants in Geshurites and Girzites/Gezrites (Driver NHT, 211; McCarter 1 Samuel AB, 413) or is a result of a dittography of Geshurites (Aharoni EncMiqr 2: 554).

Dittography means an accidental duplication of a term. Now in English what this means is that what the Masoretic Text has, the way it's spelled, scribes themselves corrected so that it read "Gezrites" instead of "Girzites." The Ketib (pronounced keth eev') reading is... Ketib is a term meaning "what is written"—in other words "what the text show you, what you're looking at in the text." And then a scribe would in the column put a Qere. "This is what should be read." So

“here’s what’s written; here’s what should be read.” So the ancient scribal traditions actually already make this correction. And so if the correction is correct—if we’re dealing with people of Gezer—then there’s no such thing as Girzites. They’re just people of Gezer. They’re not some other group. So it would be a misspelling that has created this people group that we find in our English Bibles.

Again, regardless, if it is the Gezrites, yeah, they’re in the North. And they wouldn’t really apply (so the explanation goes) to David’s forays, because David’s operating in the South. Well, okay. How do we know that some people from Gezer weren’t living down there as well? Well, the short answer is, “We don’t.” You don’t have to have a city; you just have to have some people who, this is where they come from. They happen to be there when David does these raids. And somebody takes note of it (whoever’s writing 1 Samuel 27), that there were people from Gezer there, too. And Gezer, of course, is included in the conquest, obviously—the original conquest of the land. And because of its location in proximity to places like Bashan... And there are other reasons. We can’t really get into all this in detail in a Q&A. But there are other reasons that they have linkages back into these giant clan traditions. Their inclusion in the idea at least still deserves attention—still has some merit.

So anyway, that’s kind of a long answer to this. The fundamental point of the question is, “Is what David is doing here a mimicking of Joshua, a wiping out (and a wiping up, if I can say it that way) of the conquest rationale—the conquest purpose—in terms of the elimination of specific peoples because of the association with giant clans?” And yeah, I think there’s something to that here. And again, I think that little line in there (“these were the nations of old”) is designed to take the readers’ mind in that direction.

TS: Bob has a question. And he wants to know:

24:35

Scripture tells us that we will rule with Christ after his second coming. My question is, "What do we rule over?" Since the unbelievers will be in the lake of fire and believers will be rulers with Christ, what will we be responsible for ruling?

MH: You know, I wish I had a dollar for every time I get asked this question. [laughs] I could get you that anniversary gift then, Trey.

TS: You would have \$5?

MH: [laughs] I’d probably have \$50. He asks in the first part, “What do we rule over?” But then the second part of the question is really getting at “*who* do we rule over?” Those are two different things. You know, what we rule over is the Earth, specifically the new Earth—the new Eden. And yeah, it’s going to be populated by believers, with Jesus. We need to stop thinking about our rulership

in the new Earth as “who do I get to be the boss of?” or “who do I outrank and get to give orders to, in a nice, post-apocalyptic, new Eden sort of way?” You need to start thinking about the rulership in the new Eden as partnership. We are there with fellow believers. We’re all equal imagers of God. We are co-rulers with Jesus. We are steward kings. Basically, what we’re going to be doing in the new Earth is “ruling over the earth,” which really means we’re going to be living like Adam and Eve would have lived (and of course their children) had there never been a Fall. The “dominion” language of Genesis 1:28, “Let them have dominion over the earth,” it’s the same lemma (in the Septuagint, anyway) as we see in Romans 15:12, where we have the messiah and looping in the rule of the Gentiles, and we’re granted to rule with him in Revelation 2:26 and 3:24.

So I think the whole question just needs to be reframed, that when it gets to the end of the eschaton, when everything plays out, we have a new global Eden. Everything is going to return (hit the reset button) to what it should have been—what it could have been without rebellion. And so we are going to be steward-kings of the planet. We’re going to enjoy it as it was meant to be enjoyed. And we are going to do the sorts of activities that Adam and Eve would have been doing in that environment, together, collectively, as one family. So it’s not that we have other people to lord over; it’s that we have other people to rule *with*, alongside of. So again, that’s the short answer to that. There’s a lot in there to unpack, obviously. But that’s the short answer to, I think, a very reasonable question and a very common one.

TS: So does that mean I’ve got to start working out? If we’re going to be like Adam and Eve, we’re... [MH laughs] Are we going to have clothes? Because I need to start working out.

MH: There you go. It figures you’d pull something like that right out of the answer. [laughs]

TS: So you’re telling me we’re a bunch of nudists.

MH: Yeah, I’ll say your glorified body will probably take care of that.

TS: That’s awesome.

MH: And if we want to get silly theologically, Jesus, in his resurrected body, had new clothing too that he didn’t have before. So you’ll probably get new clothing anyway. So I don’t think you need to worry about that. We’ll still know it’s you.

TS: Well, I’ll probably be in the nudist section.

MH: If you want a better body, maybe you’ll have one, but we’ll know it’s you. Unless you *want* to be a nudist, I guess. You’re on your own there, Trey.

TS: I'll be going, "Oh, gee, me and Adam, we'll be down by the beach."

MH: I think the Lord will just take one look at you and say, "Well, there's always one of those in the crowd." What are you going to do? There's always somebody like that.

TS: Alright, well, looking forward to it.

MH: "Even here." [laughs]

TS: Looking forward to it. Alright, Mike. Well, that's it. We were in and out with this one. We only had those four questions. So we're going to be a short one today. But we appreciate you answering our questions.

MH: It's okay.

TS: It is okay. We appreciate everybody sending me your questions. Obviously, we can't get to them all. But nonetheless, we appreciate it. And also, I can't reply to everybody, so I apologize once again if I can't respond to you. Because I don't even have a disclaimer up. Because this is my personal email. So I can't be putting up an auto disclaimer. But just know, I get your emails and I read them. I appreciate it. And we thank you for sending those in. And for you, Mike, answering those questions. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.