

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 427

Q&A 53

May 28, 2022

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Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions:

- When Paul cites the law in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, what is he talking about? [Time Stamp 5:40]
- Is it true that in the early Church nobody believed the elements of the Lord's Table were symbolic? [11:00]
- Would a salt covenant have been common in the ancient Near East, and is there any more to the analogy than simply salt being valuable? [14:10]
- How can the heavens have a genealogy or generations (toladoth)? [17:25]
- How does the peer review process work? [20:50]
- Is there any significance to the nation that Abraham was called out of in relationship to the table of nations? [23:25]

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 427: Our 53rd Q&A. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you feeling?

MH: Well, a little under it today, Trey, but I'm encouraged by the thought that we're another week closer to getting my pug.

TS: Yeah.

MH: Third pug.

TS: That'll cheer you up for sure. And we've settled on the name?

MH: Oh yeah.

TS: What was the name again?

MH: It'll be a girl and we're going to name it Stevie.

TS: Stevie, Stevie, yeah.

MH: Yep.

TS: Well, that's good. That's exciting. You'll have to, of course, take pictures. I'm sure you all will.

MH: I'm sure Drenna will put something on Instagram. No doubt.

TS: Well, Mike, *Stranger Things* is coming out, or actually it came out yesterday on Friday, May 27th.

MH: Yeah.

TS: And I assume you're going to be watching it, but Lexham Press is also going to be given a discount to the *World Turned Upside Down* book that you did about *Stranger Things*. It is \$5 with free shipping until the end of June. So go to the nakedbiblepodcast.com to get that code and you can get your *World Turned Upside Down* book for 5 bucks. Pretty cool.

MH: Yeah, it's an excellent deal. I always recommend people buy more than one to give away like at Halloween. You know, buy a bunch of them, and at that price buy five or ten of them.

TS: Could you give us a brief synopsis of the book and what you're talking about in the book?

MH: Oh yeah, what I do is I track the first three seasons as to how... Let me see how I can explain what my method was here? Basically, I took the elements of my little book, *What Does God Want*, which is presenting the Biblical story and the gospel to people for whom it's brand new—you know, seekers or somebody that the whole thing is new to. And I used that book to track the elements of that book through the TV show, *Stranger Things*. And it was so easy because they're all there. I mean, every important aspect of the Biblical story about the plan of salvation and why people need it is present in the *Stranger Things* story line and the plot line and the subplots. And I don't think it's because they planned it. I mean, it's not a Christian show, but I think it's because good storytelling just maps to good storytelling. It has the same human needs, the same human failures. It has supernatural solutions to their problems, you know, things like that. So it was a very easy book to write and a fun one to write because I love the show, but it's all there and I think it's a great book to serve as a discussion starter in youth groups and a discussion starter just at home, too, with your kids. Because, again, all of the elements are there.

TS: Yeah, they're also bundling a video series you did about the *Stranger Things* book, as well, for \$10, so be sure to check that out as well.

MH: Yeah, this is a great deal. I mean, you not only get the book, but you'll also get some video commentary that we created to go with the book. So if you're into *Stranger Things*, again, the new season has just dropped and lots of people are going to be talking about it and watching it. It's just one of these mega hits. By all means, *The World Turned Upside Down: Finding the Gospel in Stranger Things...* It's not because I wrote it, but it is a really good book to get into the TV series. So if you're a fan of the TV series or your kids are (and I can more or less guarantee unless they've been on Mars they probably are), this is a great tool to have them think about the spiritual content that's in the TV series and, of course, the video will help do that, too.

TS: Yeah, it's funny you say "if your kids are on Mars" or what not. My son who was, I guess, 11 or 12 at the time was too scared to watch it, but my daughter who is a year and a half younger than him loved it. So hopefully he'll watch this new season.

MH: Yeah, time to man up there.

TS: Exactly, exactly. Alright, well, looking forward to it.

MH: Yeah.

TS: We appreciate Lexham Press for offering that discount, and get it while you can. Anything else? Have you seen any good movies lately or anything fun—a TV show?

MH: No, I can't really say I've seen anything noteworthy recently.

5:00 **TS:** Yeah, you see *Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*. That was pretty good. I enjoyed that one.

MH: Yeah, that's on the list so it just depends when the kids don't work and when I feel good and all that kind of stuff, at least to go together anyway.

TS: Yeah, yeah, it's good. I liked it. I liked it. Well, alright, Mike. Well, why don't we just get through these questions here? That way you can go do something more fun than answering our questions [laughs].

MH: I don't know if I'll have that today, but go ahead.

TS: Alright. Sounds good. Our first two questions are from Tim from Hutto, Texas. The first one is:

5:40

When Paul cites the law in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, what is he talking about?

MH: Yeah, the short answer is “nobody knows for sure because there’s not really a clear citation.” Let me just read the passage so people know what we’re talking about.

As in all the churches of the saints,³⁴ the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.³⁵ If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

MH: Paul doesn’t actually cite anything specific from the law here. You know, most think this has something to do with creation order that he talks about in 1 Corinthians 11, but again, that’s a guess. Nobody really knows for sure. A lot of ink has been spilled to explain 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, but I think you have to give it some thought here. I’ll just tell everybody what my view is here and try to make that sensible.

It would be utterly incongruent to suppose that Paul was ignorant of women who prophesied in the early New Testament church. We have examples of that in Acts 21:8-9 with Philip’s daughters. Okay, if he would have known about Philip’s daughters (which we know Paul has been in Jerusalem a couple of times), he would not be telling women just generally to be silent in the church. He had earlier in this same epistle (1 Corinthians 11:5) encouraged women to pray and prophesy—again, presuming the immodesty situation of chapter 11 was in check.

There are other things to consider, too. The early church presumed the events of Pentecost fulfilled Joel 2:28-32 and that Joel’s prophecy included women prophesying, you know, that that was going to happen. So you would expect Paul to be on that side and on the side of women not being silent in church. Another consideration, did Phoebe (a woman commended by Paul in Romans 16:1) never speak a word of God in her ministry? I mean, if she was a deacon (which everybody acknowledges she was because that’s what she’s called in Roman’s 16:1), she would’ve had to at some point say something in church—to rebuke or admonish or encourage or do some sort of ministry here. So that doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. If Junia over in Romans 16:7 was a woman apostle, akin to what we might call a missionary, then speaking the word of God would be an obvious part of her ministry. So you have all these things mounting up that Paul would be on the side of women speaking, and then you get 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Now my view is that Paul is talking about something very specific there that he just does not relate in the letter. So we don’t know. It would’ve been something that he had in mind that would’ve been a problem in Corinth, but we just don’t know. He doesn’t give us the description of it. I think that’s an easy way to reconcile the statement here. Just say it was something the Corinthians were

doing wrong and go against all this other data that have Paul encouraging women speaking in church. I think that's an easy way to reconcile it. Now Grudem does something a little bit different. He gets a little more specific. Let me just read what Gruden says. This is from his *Systematic Theology*. He has a whole book on prophecy in the New Testament, but this is from his *Systematic Theology*. Gruden essentially presumes that what Paul is after is holding in check unauthorized interpretation. So he writes:

10:00

In this section, Paul cannot be prohibiting all public speech by women in the church, for he clearly allows them to pray and prophesy in church in 1 Corinthians 11:5. Therefore, it is best to understand this passage as referring to speech that is in the category being discussed in the immediate context, namely, the spoken evaluation and judging of prophecies in the congregation (see v. 29: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said"). While Paul allows women to speak and give prophecies in the church meeting, he does not allow them to speak up and give evaluations or critiques of the prophecies that have been given, for this would be a ruling or governing function with respect to the whole church.

Gruden argues for male-governed churches so that's why he worded it the way he did there. So to me this is also a possible trajectory, but at the end of the day, I just don't think Paul tells us what the problem is in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. It certainly can't be taken as a blanket statement that women shouldn't speak in church because of 1 Corinthians 11:5 and these other considerations that we talked about.

TS: Tim's second question is:

11:00

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard people tell me, "The belief that the elements were the actual body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist was universally held for 1000 years," in the early church. Or "no one believed the Lord's supper was symbolic in the early church fathers." Is this true? I find myself getting lost in the research.

MH: Well, and it's not true. I mean, there are going to be people you would find that believe that Jesus was talking figuratively, and for good reason. John chapter 6 makes that clear. And even though this is where the idea of consuming the flesh and blood comes from, in that very chapter there are things said in the chapter that make clear that this is a figurative idea. For example, this is John 6:33.

³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

So the bread of heaven is Jesus. Well, we know Jesus isn't a loaf of bread. Jesus wasn't transformed *from* a loaf of bread or *into* a loaf of bread. Okay? It's obviously figurative language. Verse 34 continues.

³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

So if we're going to take this literally, that this is the flesh and blood of Jesus, then no Christian should ever be hungry. You should never feel a pang of hunger. You should never feel thirsty. That's what the scripture says, right? Again, this is obviously figurative language. Jesus said to them, again,

"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. Whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe."

So the issue with taking in the bread of life is belief. Jesus says, "You haven't eaten yet." Okay? That means, you haven't believed yet. You go down to verse 40.

⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son [on the bread of life] and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Again, it's very clear what the basis of eternal life is. It's belief. It's faith. It's not taking the elements of the Lord's Table, and those elements do not become the literal flesh and blood of Jesus. That's a misreading of John 6. If we took it to John 6 and tried to be consistent with it, we would see the contradiction. Again, I've just pointed out one or two of them here. So don't get lost in the research too much. Get lost in John 6, I guess, because that's going to be your main point of correction.

TS: Jacob in St. Augustine, Florida.

14:10

I was reading in Leviticus today and ran across the term "salt of the covenant." After checking the cross-references, I realized it appears three times in scripture, Leviticus 2:13, Number 18:19, and 2 Chronicles 13:5. It appears to have signified both the Mosaic and Davidic Covenants. Dr. Heiser talked about the covenant of salt in Episode 237 of the Naked Bible Podcast. It seems as if this salt covenant was a binding part of a covenant because salt was valuable and so the person given salt would be loyal to the salt-giver. My

question is this: would a salt covenant have been common in the ancient Near East? And is there any more to the analogy than simply salt being valuable and a debt of loyalty from being given salt?

15:00

MH: Yeah, I actually think that's a bit of an overreading of the text. Salt was certainly valuable, but to make it sort of the glue of the covenant says a little bit too much about it. I'll read you a section from Levine's commentary on Leviticus (Baruch Levine) because it's representative of what scholars have concluded here. He writes:

According to priestly law, all sacrifices were to be salted. [MH: It's true.] In the case of meat, salt functioned to remove whatever blood remained after the slaughter. The unexpected use of salt in grain offerings is likely a reflection of the overall tendency toward uniformity in ritual. The same general requirement is referred to in Numbers 18:19. In Ezra 6:9 and 7:22, we read that large quantities of salt were delivered to the postexilic Temple of Jerusalem for use in the sacrificial cult.

So I'll just stop there. It's evident that the salt is used to soak up the blood because you weren't supposed to consume the blood. So it's a way of drying out the meat, whether it's going to be preserved and eaten later in some circumstance or, again, just for the ritual itself. It was not supposed to have blood in it. These are generalities. You can go back through the Leviticus series for more nuancing. So that was the function of salt. You wouldn't truck in large quantities (you wouldn't truck in anything because they didn't have trucks then, but pardon the expression). You wouldn't bring in large quantities of salt to the temple if salt was there to signify a covenant. What are they doing, making covenants every 10 minutes there? No, that wasn't the point of the salt. The point of the salt was for sacrifice which they did do every day at the temple and so they had this need to get the blood out of the sacrifice. So in that respect, it's important. But you're only going to have this requirement if there is some sort of rule against consumption of blood, which there was, or if part of the sacrifice is to be preserved. Beyond that, I'm not an expert in ancient Near Eastern meat sacrifice rules so I'm not going to venture beyond that, but that much I think is pretty evident and helps to answer the question.

TS: Cody has our next question.

17:25

Genesis 2:4 refers to the "genealogical annals" of the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew term here, *toledoth*, is used nine times in the Old Testament, and it seems in every single occasion the word is used about actual genealogies of a person. But how can the heavens have a genealogy or generations? How in the world can the heavens and the earth have children?

MH: Yeah, well, some would go from this point and talk about Genesis' hiding some sort of procreational language about the planets—you know, the outer plants and so on and so forth. First of all, you're basing your conclusion on something that isn't in the text because it's so well hidden that nobody can see it. So it's a bit of special pleading there. There's nothing in the text of Genesis to indicate that you have the birthing of stars and, like, other deities named after stars or anything like that, because none of it's given in the text. It's literally an idea inserted into the text and then believed by some people. So we're not in the habit here of just inserting ideas into the text and then believing them and then saying that's what the text is really about when you can't actually read it in there. So that's one thing I would say. I mean, there's very little said at all about creating the celestial objects in Genesis 1:16—that the stars were created also, the light bearers, you know, the light reflectors, so on and so forth, which would include planets, but you don't have anything very specific. You don't have any planetary names, for instance. And since these names... like the Jewish month names were adaptations of deity names brought from Babylon (and you could google that and find that out in just a minute)... On the way back from Babylon, one of the things that, culturally, the Jews brought with them was names of the months updated and taken from the Babylonian language (the Aramaic) that they were speaking, and you have these deity names. So nobody was ashamed of that. Nobody was ashamed to have those names later in the Biblical text. So there wouldn't have been a problem here if the point of Genesis and its generations, its *toledoth*, were to teach the idea of God creating the other gods and the stars and stuff like that. There would be no reason to not put that in there if that was the point, but it's not in there. So we can't say it is the point.

20:00

I'm with the majority here of interpreters who say the only reason you get this language of the heavens and earth is to create symmetry in the Genesis account. In other words, it is used everywhere else of every other generation and so the first generation, the initial creation itself, the writer uses the same term to link it to all the other ones. You know, link it in succession. So I think it's about symmetry of the passage and nothing theological or anything like that.

TS: Greg Smith from Des Moines, Iowa asks:

20:50

Dr. Heiser often talks about the peer-review process. How exactly does that work? For example, a scholar writes an article for journal publication. Is the article sent to peers prior to publication or is peer response to the article after publication?

MH: The article is sent around to peers prior to publication. That's how it gets reviewed. So for instance, if I wanted to write an article for some scholarly journal, the first thing I would do is look up the rules for submission and everybody has rules of submission (you know, how many words you're allowed and use this abbreviation system, so on and so forth). Everybody has their rules.

Then you write the article and you submit it to wherever they tell you to send it. And from that point on, it's out of your hands. Because what's going to happen to it is it will get sent to two or three scholars in the relevant fields. The editor is going to determine who to ask to read this particular article, this particular submission. So it's going to get sent to two or three people for review and the review is anonymous. In other words, when I've done this, I've gotten back reviewers' comments, but I don't know who they are. They're just Word docs sent through the editor's email. So I have no idea who the person is that reviewed any particular article of mine. Then the reviewer in the process of the review will put notes in there suggesting things that, "maybe this needs a little work," "maybe this needs a little bit more attention," "include this, but don't include that." So they'll render their opinion and their advice on the article. Then at the end of it, they'll tell the editor if they recommend it for publication or not. Then you'll ultimately hear from the editor that your article was accepted or not. Typically, with an idea of when it would appear in the publication. So that's how it works. You don't know who your reviewers are. They probably don't even know you or know who you are. Depending on the journal, the chances of that could be good. So it's an anonymous process and your work has to be approved by field experts to be worthy of inclusion in the journal. In other words, "This is worth reading. This is something worth reading on this given subject." So that's how they determine it.

TS: Joe in Florida has our last question.

23:25

Is there any significance to the nation that Abraham was called out of in relationship to the table of nations?

MH: It's not clear to me which nation he is thinking about here, but I'm going to guess that he means "Ur of the Chaldeans." Again, I'm not sure. So if my guess is correct, then the question is, "Was there any significance to Ur of the Chaldeans to have Abraham called out of that place?" I would say the answer to this is basically the same no matter what view of Ur of the Chaldeans you take. If you think it's the city of Ur in southern Babylon, well then obviously the reason that it's noteworthy is that there is a reversal of all that is Babylonish to the writer and to the original readers. Babylon was the place that chaos erupted, seen especially in Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel incident. But also, if you factor in ancient Near Eastern material, that could be behind the flood stories and the creation stories. You're also going to be imbibing into a Babylonish context there. So the chaos elements and some of those things are going to be associated with Babylon, too. So to have Abram selected out of Babylon there in the south would be significant. God is going to take somebody out of the realm of chaos to fix the chaos. And that's ultimately what the story of scripture is about: what happens to Abraham's seed who, ultimately, is Christ. So that's why it would be significant.

25:00

If you believe that Ur is not Babylon in the south [audio breaks up] and there are reasons why that might be the case. Again, I've blogged about this on my website before. You could google "Abraham location Ur" and you're going to find it. Put in my website address as part of the search terms and you'll find it. But if you believe it's in the northwest, well then the reversal is a little bit different. This is going to be the region from which the Amorites were associated. The Amorites are pre-Israelite. They become the pre-Israelite occupants of the promised land, those who are to be driven out among whom are Nephilim and so on and so forth. You would have to review the reversal of Abraham's circumstance in that context, more of a reversing of the conquest of the land by these people who, ultimately, they are associated with Babylon as well because later dynasties in Babylon tried to link themselves up with the old original Amorite Dynasty. Hammurabi's Dynasty is the most famous for this, but Nebuchadnezzar tried to mimic the old Amorite kings and so on and so forth and wanted to be part of the Amorite tradition. So the Babylonian "stink" is going to be on this idea no matter what geographical point or origin you opt for. There is going to be this notion of reversing Babylon and what it stood for and how people thought about it. God is going to act through one man, Abraham, and he is going to do things that will reverse the chaos caused by this other place. So there's a cosmic reversal going on there.

TS: Alright, and don't forget to get Mike's book, *The World Turned Upside Down* from Lexham Press. It's \$5 with free shipping until the end of June. Go to the nakedbiblepodcast.com website to get that code or click the link to take you there to get it. Season 5 is going to be the end of it. I guess this is season 4 and I heard season 4... I haven't looked at it yet, but it's super long, like the episodes. I think the finale is like two hours long or something.

MH: Yeah, they cut it into two so we're just getting started on it. But yeah, I mean we're getting into it now. So it won't take us too long to go through the whole thing. We typically binge watch it.

TS: Alright, Mike, that's it. We appreciate you soldiering through these questions, and I appreciate everybody sending in those questions. Again, you can email me your questions at treystricklin@gmail.com. You can get my email on the nakedbiblepodcast.com website. Alright, Mike, well with that, we thank you for answering them again, and I hope and pray that you get to feeling better. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.