

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 431

Q&A 55

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Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions:

- Is there a good explanation for why God commanded King Jehu to commit genocide, then condemned the action as murder? [Time stamp 1:22]
- Has the location of Tarshish been definitively identified? [11:35]
- You say humans are capable of creating their own sin. What about organized, Satanic evil? [12:30]
- Has anyone written anything claiming Gabriel fathered Jesus? [14:13]
- Will the nations be reclaimed through the accomplishment of the Great Commission or at Jesus' second bodily coming? [15:40]
- How are God's laws for Israel similar to and different from the laws of other nations? [16:36]
- Do you think Melchizedek was a Christophany, as author David Mitchell does? [21:32]
- What does bad science on the part of biblical authors imply about inspiration? [23:16]

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 431. Our 55th Q&A. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

MH: Okay. I can't complain too much.

TS: It's crazy how we're in the middle of the summer and June is practically over.

MH: I know. It's gone fast.

TS: It seems like we are just starting the year. It's nuts how fast it goes.

MH: Yeah, yeah, it is, now that you mention it. I hadn't even thought of it until you mentioned it now, and you're right [laughs].

TS: Yeah, yeah. Anything good this summer planned for you?

MH: No, nothing really planned. I mean, I'm still in the holding pattern with my treatment and all that stuff.

TS: Yeah.

MH: So we haven't planned anything.

TS: I gotcha. Alright, well, we have some great questions. Why don't we just jump in? Our first question is from Peter.

1:22

I've been bothered by the 2 Kings 10 and Hosea 1:4-5 subject matter. It would seem by these passages that God ordered King Jehu to commit genocide, only to condemn the commanded action as murder. Is there an apparent solution to this dilemma?

MH: Well, yeah, there is. First of all, I would say that targeting Baal worshippers among your countrymen is not genocide. So that's a misuse of that term. Genocide is extermination based on ethnicity. Clearly, that is not the motivation here. More broadly, God decides when to punish the heinous crimes of Ahab, Jezebel, and the rest of the Baal-worshipping lot with them (which was substantial), and that's God's choice. He gets to decide when and how evil (especially this ultra-low sort of evil) gets punished. So it's his prerogative. We do not tell God how to do his job. If anything, we avoid taking vengeance ourselves. It's the old "vengeance is mine; I will repay," says the Lord." So when God does that, it is basically wrongheaded for us to sit in judgement on God as to how God decides to do things when their interactions with the prophets shows that they could have repented. They could have stopped worshipping Baal. They could have done all those things, but they don't.

Now as far as the bigger or the more specific question, I'm going to read an extended portion here from Gleason Archer's book. It's a reference book, and I'm only doing this because I want to make the point to listeners that if you're going to be serious about Bible study, you must start investing in tools. You can't depend on a podcast. You can't depend on Mike to answer these questions. There are lots of tools out there that specifically address questions like this. There are compendium volumes of these sorts of things. So this one is Gleason Archer, the *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, published by Zondervan. And this goes back to 1982. At the end of this, I will mention a few more, but you need to start investing in tools. That is why they're published. It is why they're put out there—these reference works that can really help you. So Archer (or whoever did the article) writes:

There can be no question that Jehu fully carried out the commission he received from the Lord: “You shall strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish” (2 Kings 9:7-8).

This very clearly has nothing to do with genocide.

5:00

After Jehu, racing back from Ramoth Gilead to Jezreel, shot King Jehoram dead, and Ahaziah of Judah as well (for he was the grandson of Jezebel), he then proceeded to the city of Samaria and intimidated the elders of that city into decapitating all seventy of Ahab’s sons who were living in the palace (2 Kings 10:1-10). Not long after that, he managed to lure all the Baal-worshiping leaders of Israel into the temple of Baal on the pretext of leading them in a great celebration of worship there. Once they were locked up inside the temple itself, he had them all massacred by his troops and destroyed the entire building, desecrating it in such a way that it could never be used for worship again (vv. 18-27).

It was after Jehu had carried out all these stern measures for the suppression of idolatry in Israel that the commendation came to him from the Lord: “Because you have done well in executing what is right in My eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in My heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel” (2 Kings 10:30).

But 2 Kings 10:33 indicates that even before that invasion by Assyria (in the twenty-first year of Shalmaneser, which would have been about 832 B.C.), Jehu has lost all Transjordan, Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben (which later had for the most part been conquered by Moab under King Mesha) to King Hazael of Damascus. His son Jehoahaz was reduced to complete vassalage by Hazael and his son Benhadad. But Jehoash was allowed by the Lord to expel the Syrians in three decisive engagements and also to crush the pretensions of King Amaziah of Judah in the Battle of Bethshemesh, with a resultant spoilation of Jerusalem itself. But it was Jehu’s great-grandson Jeroboam II who achieved very great success on the battlefield, for he regained possession of the Transjordanian tribal territory and all the area formerly ruled over by Jeroboam I, just as the prophet Jonah had predicted.

On what basis, then, did the prophet Hosea proclaim the judgment of the Lord on the dynasty of Jehu (Hos. 1:4-5)? It was because of the impure motive with which Jehu himself had carried out his commission from Yahweh to blot out the line of Ahab. Although Jehu had only done what God had commanded, he did so out of a carnal zeal that was tainted with protective self-interest. 2 Kings 10:29 says of

him: “However, as for the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, [by] which he made Israel sin, from these Jehu did not depart, even the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan.”

Let me just stop there. If we’re going to conclude that God is judging Jehu for the same thing that he commanded him to do (which he did), we would be interpreting those verses as only including what happened there with Jehu in that one instance, whereas the statement is much broader:

28 Thus Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel. 29 But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin...

Jehu clearly has bigger problems. He has other spiritual defects other than carrying out this command from back in 2 Kings 10. So that’s why he is condemned. He is not condemned for the 2 Kings 10 incident or the material. He was obedient there. He is condemned for the places he is not obedient. He follows in the way of Jeroboam I. Back to the paragraph.

This same mixture of motives showed up in Jehu’s descendants as well, for Jehoahaz “did evil in the sight of the LORD and followed the sins of Jeroboam.”

Jehoash, Jehoahaz’s son, did not do much better, for he followed his father’s evil example (2 Kings 13:11), even though he did retain a respectful relationship with the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 13:14-19), and even though Jeroboam II enjoyed such remarkable success in war and had a long reign of forty-one years – i.e., from 793-782 as viceroy under his father, and 782-753 B.C. as sole king – yet his relationship toward the LORD was no better than his father’s. “He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, [with] which he made Israel sin” (v. 24).

So the reason that they’re condemned is because they don’t depart from the sins of Jeroboam, not because he got rid of Ahab. Again, it seems pretty clear on this end.

The important principle set forth in Hosea 1:4 was that when blood is shed, even in the service of God and in obedience to His command, blood-guiltiness attaches to God’s agent himself if his motive is tainted with carnal self-interest rather than by a sincere concern for the purity of the faith and the preservation of God’s truth (such as, for example, animated Elijah when he had the 450 prophets of Baal put to death after the contest with them on Mount Carmel). The “bloodshed of Jezreel” was finally visited on the house of Jehu with his great-great-grandson, Zechariah, being murdered at his own birthday party by his trusted chariot captain Shallum (2 Kings 15:10).

10:00

So, again, what they're condemned for is following in the sins of Jeroboam, not for obeying God back in 2 Kings 10. Other resources besides Archer... Again, *you must invest in tools*. You shouldn't be dependent on asking other people questions like this when they're fully answerable by reference works. Other than this one... This was Gleason Archer. I'll repeat the title: Gleason Archer, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Here are a few others: There's David O'Brien, *Today's Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties*. There's a book by Normal L. Geisler and Thomas How, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*. Walt Kaiser and few other authors... there were several books, but they're been collected into one volume: *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, by InterVarsity Press. Murray Harris has one called *Navigating Tough Texts: A Guide to Problem Passages in the New Testament*. So there you have five reference works that are all worth getting for questions like these.

TS: Peter's second question is:

11:35

Concerning the association of Tarshish with Spain, the last I knew Tarshish was only known as part of the western Mediterranean, speculated as anywhere between Spain and Sardinia. Has a definitive association been made? What about Ophir?

MH: Yeah, the best resource for this I'm just going to direct you to (and I've sent this to Trey and it's on the episode website)... there's an article by John Day on "Where was Tarshish." It's from Day's collection of essays on Genesis 1-11 [*From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1-11*], and it's the most thorough treatment of the location of Tarshish and identifying it with Spain. So I would just recommend to read that. I can't very well read 12-13 pages of explanation on the podcast.

TS: Our next question is from Patrick:

12:30

I was listening to the Naked Bible Podcast regarding the responsibility of the Watchers for human sin. Your point was, humans are capable of creating their own sin. My question is, what about organized evil in the world? I'm talking about Satanic ritual abuse victims. It seems to me that there are two kinds of sin, sort of: garden-variety, and then there is the very deliberate, destructive enterprise.

MH: That's a bit of a generous view of sin [laughs], but Satanic ritual abuse is still human evil. Humans are the ones perpetrating it. So you can't really answer a cosmic question if that's what is behind this question (I'm not actually sure)... You can't really answer a cosmic question by reasoning backwards from a heinous example of human evil. In this case, maybe there are sincere Satanists. Maybe they're worshiping Satan, worshiping the creature more than the creator.

But SRA can be rooted a lot more in the flesh than that. Programming is the worst form, but that is all about gaining power over other people to serve your own ends. It's still human, perhaps involving humans being deceived by a supernatural evil power—that's certainly possible. But that doesn't answer what sounds to be like the "well, where did evil come from," question or "what would've prompted evil in the first place?" If that's the question, then I'd say the root is the hunger for autonomy—rebellion and resistance to authority (any authority, all authority in the extreme).

TS: Dick in Stephenville, Texas asks:

14:13

Has anyone written a paper on the possibility that Gabriel was the father of Jesus, and that his powers were the result of being a Nephilim? I don't believe this, but I see how it could be argued, seeing that he is such a part of the birth stories. If it is not an issue, I don't want to make it one.

15:00

MH: Well, I'm relieved to hear that you don't believe this, because it's theologically absurd. It's also textually indefensible. Gabriel... His name is Gabriel. It comes from *gebbor* which is related to *gibbor* but not every *gibbor* was a giant. David is called a *gibbor*. God is called a *gibbor* in Isaiah 9 ("wonderful counselor, mighty God"). It's *el gibbor*. So the fact that you have *gibbor* given our language, it doesn't mean at all that you're looking at Nephilim. So that's the exegetical problem. But the theological problem is much worse. You look at the all the passages that point to Jesus' pre-existence. You look at a passage like Hebrews 1 for instance, arguing very clearly for pre-existence, Philippians 2: Jesus was not fathered by anything or anyone. So nobody's written a paper on this because it's so theologically indefensible. That's how I would answer the question.

TS: Taylor asks:

15:40

Do you think the nations will be reclaimed and the Great Commission will succeed within human history? Or do you think that the nations will only be reclaimed after Jesus' second bodily coming?

MH: Well, the Lord's return will close the door on the Great Commission and lead to the destruction of the spiritual powers over the nations, and then, of course, the submission of the nations under Christ and their conversion. So [audio breaks up] post-millennialist, because I'm not. I don't think post-millennialism makes a whole lot of sense in light of a lot of other things that are said about reclaiming the nations. It is triggered on the second coming. We don't reclaim them for Jesus, then Jesus comes back and says, "Thank you." I mean, a lot of this work is going to depend on Him and his return.

TS: Jason was wondering:

16:36

I've heard you mention several times other ancient writings like the Ugaritic texts, etc., and how there are some similarities to the Biblical texts in some areas. My question is, do these other ancient texts lay out civil laws, relational laws to God and man, prohibitions against human sacrifice? Do they aim to bring light and order to chaos, or do they just convolute things? Do the other ancient texts prescribe or encourage sexual worship practices? Do they prescribe child sacrifice? It seems like although there may be some similarities between the Hebrew scriptures and other ancient texts, only the Bible brings light, love, and relationship to God. What do you say?

MH: Well, there are a lot of law codes. When you ask, "Do ancient texts lay out civil laws," the answer is, "Of course, and there are a lot of them!" People are living in civilizations. They're living in cultures with lots of other people—tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people. You have to have a legal system for that to be at all workable. You have to have authority and hierarchy and laws and such, and crime and punishment.

So there's a lot of law code material in the ancient Near East. But that's very general. You mention relational laws about God to man. If you mean laws against blasphemy, yeah, those existed in other ancient law codes. People took the worship of their gods seriously and they don't want their gods' property defiled or their sacred space defiled and so on and so forth. They don't want their gods blasphemed in their religious system. So, yeah, there's going to be laws there, too. There are going to be laws that separate priesthood from temple and common person from sacred space and all that.

Human sacrifice... that was rare in antiquity. It was actually quite rare. Some places practiced it occasionally. It's not like the Aztecs, okay? We shouldn't be equating the Carthaginians or the Phoenicians with what the Aztecs were doing, but it did happen. But I don't think the scale was quite the same. But that's just one culture. Other cultures would have found this abhorrent and would not have done it. So I don't have ancient law codes memorized or anything like that, and God forbid that I would take the time to do that. That'd be pretty boring actually. So I'd have to conclude that, yeah, there were rules against it because they didn't do it, but the priesthood was largely going to be charged with enforcing and setting up their own system of worship (and so on and so forth) with the king and the higher ups in the administration. So the fact that most places don't practice this is going to suggest, yeah, there were laws against that, too.

Generally speaking, though, the laws do aim to bring about a better society. They have to make life livable. They have to punish crime. I mean, people are living in these mass groups, and they have the same problems. They have problems with

20:00 their neighbor. They have problems with theft. They have problems with graft and unfairness. They have problems in their marital relationships. They have problems in business relationships. They have all the problems we do. So you have to have a legal system to make life livable, and they do. Again, there is abundant textual testimony to this. There are lots of law codes.

The fundamental difference, though, between the Old Testament law codes (and the whole Old Testament system) and other ancient Near Eastern systems is that Israel's system of laws and its legal codes derive from a relationship—a covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the people that is based on love—God's love for Israel. This is Deuteronomy 7:7-8. That's it in a nutshell. That is unique in the Ancient Near East. You don't find covenantal codes based on love that sort of give the logic to the whole civilization. Israel has that. We actually spent a week or so in my 201 Awakening School of Theology class on this. There are other things that make Israel's laws and Israel's culture different, but this is the fundamental difference—again, the covenantal relationship there in Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

TS: Maxwell wanted to know:

21:32 **After reading *Jesus, The Incarnation of the Word,*” by David Mitchell, I wondered if you think Melchizedek is a Christophany like David does. The way that he presented Melchizedek was very convincing—that he was an appearance of Christ and that there can't be two internal high priests. You seem to agree heavily with the rest of David's content in those books, but it seems like his thought of Melchizedek is different than your past episodes on Melchizedek.**

MH: Yeah, I'm not persuaded that Melchizedek was a Christophany. I still lean toward the relationship being typology, not a Christophany. If Melchizedek really was a king, for instance, then you have an extended Christophany over a people who didn't come from Abraham, which doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. I mean, who is he king over? It's not the people of Abraham. I mean, Abraham's in the picture. So that doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. Two internal high priests... Well, all that Psalm 110 requires is that there's a second order of high priests. It doesn't look for two at the same time or anything like that. It just establishes the order. If Melchizedek is (and he is) the first priest mentioned in scripture, that is the higher order and it's outside the line of Aaron. It takes preeminence. That's all you need. So I'm not persuaded that Melchizedek was a Christophany.

TS: Ed has our last question and it's about the *Naked Bible Podcast* Episode 86: The Head Covering of 1 Corinthians 11:13-15. Everyone's favorite, right?

23:16

Dr. Heiser has said before, “Why did it take so long for us to figure this out?” What did this imply for inspiration is Scripture? Concursus? God obviously knew that doctrine was being advocated on bad science, as well as how many generations would pass misinterpreting and causing harm because of it.

MH: Well, first of all, I would ask what harm was caused. Just because it's not scientific doesn't mean it was destructive. It's bad medical theory. (And again, for those of you who don't know what we're talking about here, you have to go back and listen to Naked Bible Episode 86; I'm not going to rehearse it here.) It's bad medical theory, but I can't see how it would lead to physical harm of anyone or termination of life. It's not nearly as bad as missing the boat, for instance, on germ theory. That would certainly be destructive. It was a bad idea about how life came to be in the womb. I would also say it wasn't universal. Paul is tapping into Greco-Roman medical text here—medical theory. The Jews, for instance... This isn't where they're going with this. They're going to be more often using the planting metaphor and what not, but this goes beyond that. It's just bad medical theory.

25:00

As far as inspiration, I would say, go up to *YouTube* and search my name and the word “inspiration” and you'll find out what my view of inspiration is, and it'll answer this question in more detail. In a nutshell, I don't think God cared how the information or how the idea of modesty and warding off this threat of the angels repeating what happened in Genesis 6. That was the proposition. That was the point of concern. How that gets communicated, I think, is incidental. And you're right, God did know that it was bad medical theory, but again, God chooses people as to who they are. He doesn't convert the writers into modern thinkers before he uses them. He didn't do that with anybody else. I mean, there are lots of things that Biblical writers didn't know that we know that would've been bad science. So what? Again, the points that he is trying to communicate or that God wants them to communicate... They are perfectly capable of communicating them even if they're using an incorrect means to do so. So I distinguish between the proposition—the idea that God wants conveyed—and the means by which the proposition is expressed. God lets the ancient writers that he has prepared for doing the task express the idea in whatever means, however they are able to do so, and God is content with it.

Again, I have something of a long write-up on this, too, in my FAQ that is just dealing with this idea of primitive science and the Bible more generally. So if you went up to the FAQ and looked down at the last question in the FAQ, you're going to run into it. My views on inspiration are on *YouTube* in a number of places. I would recommend watching that. God lets the writers he prepared express what he wants expressed according to the means by which they can do it. He doesn't reinvent the humans into superhumans or scientific humans before he'll use them. He just doesn't do it. The question, I think, somewhat also

confuses Biblical authority with inspiration. I mean, all of it is inspired because ultimately it has its point of origin in God's decisions as to who to task with writing scripture, so on and so forth. But that doesn't mean that it has equal authority. The propositions are what have authority, not the means by which the propositions get expressed. That can be changeable and malleable and prescientific and left up to the writer, but as long as they accomplish the task God wants them to accomplish, God's going to be fine with it. We know that because he was. This is a good example of it. There are others. We don't need to launch out into others, but this is a perfectly good example of God letting them express an idea—something he wanted expressed—using means that God knows are misguided in terms of the science that will come to light in future generations. God doesn't stop him and say, "Wait a minute. I need to make you a scientist first before we can finish this page." He doesn't do that.

TS: That's all the questions we have for this week. And Ed there at the end has the word of the day: "concurus." I haven't heard that word in a while.

MH: Yeah.

TS: I don't know when the last time I heard that word. Do you want to give us a brief definition of "concurus" for the folks out there?

MH: Well, I think what he means by it is that God condescends to the ability of the writers, which I would agree with. It also goes by the word "accommodation." God accommodates himself and his purposes to the writers' abilities.

TS: There you go. Alright, word of the day: "concurus." Everybody go out and use it. I expect to see people using it on social medial. Alright, well, that's all the questions we have this week, and we appreciate everybody sending in those questions and Mike answering them. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.