

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 435

The Epistle of Jude, Part 4

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### Episode Summary

In the book that bears his name, Jude has compared the false teachers he opposes to the heavenly villains of Genesis 6:1-4 (see Part 3). In this episode, Jude continues this literary and theological strategy by comparing the false teachers to the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah. While we associate those two Old Testament cities with a particular sin of the flesh, Jude has something more dramatic in mind.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 435: The Epistle of Jude, Part 4. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

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**MH:** Oh, doing pretty good. By now, people have gotten the update of my health. So as I was referring to it in the update, it's a glass half-full update. So we're still taking one day at a time obviously, but I think things are still trending in a good direction.

**TS:** Yeah, would you mind giving a brief summary for our listeners who haven't seen that update?

**MH:** Sure. Yeah, we got the results of my third MRI back. The short version is that my cancer is not metastatic. It hasn't spread anywhere, which is the real good news. The bad news is that the size of the tumor is still the same as essentially when we started all this. We're about 10 months... We're a little shy of a year into chemo, and so the chemo has not had the desired effect to shrink the tumor for removal, but the surgeon thought... He suspects... He told us in our meeting this last week that he suspects that the tumor might be as much as 50 percent dead anyway. Size-wise, it is what it is, but it would be very unusual to have a situation where the chemotherapy has had no effect at all as far as the living and dead tissue and all that sort of stuff. So it basically has prepped us for talk of radiation, to get what they refer to as shrinkage on the outer edges—basically, whatever they can do to make it a little bit smaller. Then we can start

talking about possible removal. So it's still trending the way we would want it to trend.

**TS:** Alright, well, we'll keep our prayers going. Don't let off on that.

**MH:** Yeah. I also managed to gain 5 pounds in the last month, which doesn't sound like a lot, but for me that's really significant.

**TS:** That's awesome.

**MH:** So, yeah. I still don't have much of an appetite impulse, an eating impulse, but we have a routine down, so it's helped. Maintaining weight is important. If I can gain a few more pounds, that would be nice, too, but that was a pleasant surprise.

**TS:** I suggest peanut butter and ice cream, Mike. Have you tried that combo? Do you like peanut butter and ice cream?

**MH:** I have not tried that combo. Once in a while, I'll eat peanut butter crackers, but ice cream... I'm a vanilla guy and we've had plenty of that [laughs].

**TS:** Yeah. Oh my gosh, well my granddad used to...

**MH:** So that's pretty calorie-dense.

**TS:** Yeah. My grandparents use to mix peanut butter with ice cream. So I grew up with that combo. And let me tell you, that will put the weight on you.

**MH:** Yeah, that's calorie-dense right there.

**TS:** Yeah, good stuff.

**MH:** As opposed to just peanut butter ice cream, right?

**TS:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, you get a big scoop of it and you mix it together. Oh my gosh, so good. Well, that's good news. I guess no news is good news and we'll keep plugging away in our prayers and wish you the best.

**MH:** Absolutely. Like I said, as long as it's moving a little bit in the right direction, we'll take it.

**TS:** Well, switching gears here. Jude... It's been a great book study and we're just basically still getting into the beginning of it.

**MH:** Yeah.

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**TS:** I can imagine today's going to be just as good as the others.

**MH:** Yeah, today we're going to focus on Jude 7. We'll hit verses 7 and 8, but Jude 7 is the primary focus. We got into verse 8 a little bit last time when we talked about verse 6. So that will be part of the picture here anyway, but it's primarily Jude 7. So to jump in here, I'm going to read Jude 5-8. I think it gives a little bit of a fuller context for what we'll be talking about here in verse 7. So beginning in verse 5 we read:

**<sup>5</sup> Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup> And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— <sup>7</sup> just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.**

**<sup>8</sup> Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.**

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So that's Jude 5-8. And again, like I mentioned a moment ago, Jude 7 and 8 (but mostly verse 7) is going to be our focus today. We got into verse 8 last time because the verse explains (or at least reiterates) Jude's rationale for comparing the false teachers he is shooting at with typological or archetypal Old Testament sins and sinners. The last time it was the angels that sinned in the days before the flood, and this time in verse 7 it's Sodom and Gomorrah. And as verse 8 suggests, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah had something to do with these three elements: the defiling of the flesh (which is language for sexual sin), rejecting authority, and then thirdly, blaspheming God and his host. The first of these is what we always think of when we think of Sodom and Gomorrah, but I want to tie that episode into the other parts of Jude 8 as well.

I think Gene Green does a really nice job with this in his commentary—again, taking verse 7 with verse 8. So just to read verse 7 again:

**<sup>7</sup> just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.**

Then you get these three elements in verse 8: “defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.” So Green in his commentary writes this. He says:

Jude’s third example of sin followed by divine judgment is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. God revealed to Abraham his forthcoming judgment on these cities, saying, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin!” (Genesis 18:20 NRSV).

Somewhat surprisingly, the exact nature of the cities’ sin is not elaborated. The reader is only made aware of the depravity of the inhabitants of Sodom when the angelic visitors arrive at Lot’s house. These soon become the objects of sexual desire by all the male inhabitants of the city, from the youngest to the oldest: “Bring them out to us so that we may know them” (Genesis 19:5 NRSV). Lot had shown the messengers hospitality and tried to protect his guests by taking the extreme measure of offering the assailants his daughters instead (Genesis 19:8). Since not even ten righteous people were found in Sodom [MH: which was the barter discussion in Genesis 18:22-23], God destroyed the city by sulfur and fire along with Gomorrah (Genesis 19:12-29). Included in the judgment were the surrounding cities of the plain (Genesis 19:24-25, 28-29), a piece of the story to which Jude refers in the opening of verse 7. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah because archetypal in the Old Testament as well as in Jewish and Christian literature (Deut. 32:32; Isa. 1:10; 3:9; Jer. 23:14; 3 Macc. 2:5; 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 7:106; Matt. 11:23), as did the divine judgment that came on these cities (Isa. 1:9; 13:19; Jer. 49:18; 50:40; Lam. 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9; 3 Macc. 2:5; 2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 2:8; Matt. 10:15; 11:24; Luke 10:12; 17:29–30; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6). They were therefore set forward as an example to “later generations” (3 Macc. 2:5).

So what was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? I mean, that’s the first most obvious question. And as I said above (and as Green suggested), when we think of Sodom and Gomorrah, that sin, we think of the sexual sin specifically. We think of homosexuality because it’s the men of Sodom who want Lot to let them “know” the two men in Genesis 19:5, which the reader, of course, knows are angels. It’s not that the men of Sodom know this and Lot doesn’t even know it yet, but the readers certainly do. So since it’s the men of Sodom that want to “know” the two men there, we automatically think of the sin of homosexuality. Now we know that this wording, “Bring them out so that we may know them...” We know this is sexual for two reasons. First, to “know” someone is a Hebrew idiom used elsewhere for sexual relations. For instance, in Genesis 4:1, Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived. This is the birth episode of Cain and Abel and this “knowing” language is used in Genesis 4:1, verse 17, verse 25. It’s very clear. We get the same thing in 1 Samuel 1:19 with the case of Hannah and her husband—the same kind of language there. Ezekiel 19:7 is a little more off the beaten path and a lot of English translations obscure the verse there, but if I

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could read Ezekiel 19:7 to you, you'll get the flavor here. At least I'll help fill in the gaps here. This is ESV and I'm going to back it up to verse... In Ezekiel 19, there are a bunch of things happening to the city. Verse 6:

**<sup>6</sup> He prowled among the lions;  
he became a young lion,  
and he learned to catch prey;  
he devoured men,  
<sup>7</sup> and seized their widows.**

Again, "he" here is the... Chapter 19 is a lamentation for the princes of Israel, and basically they become representative of bad behavior. And this line in verse 7 about "seizing their widows..." He laid waste their cities. Well, the word "seized" there is actually *yadah*. It's actually "to know." So he knew their widows. So basically, it's the language of rape. It's the language of "ravishing" women in conquest. So again, in Ezekiel 19 in the context, it is very clear what is being talked about, even though the English translations tend to obscure it with language like "ravished" or "took" or something like that. "Know" is what it has in the Hebrew text, just like in Genesis 4, just like in 1 Samuel 1:19. So that's the first reason we know that this is sexual—just the idiomatic language.

The second is the immediate context. Lot's daughters... Again, you get the same language about them. So if we go to Genesis 19:7, this is when the men of Sodom... Let's go back up to verse 5:

**<sup>5</sup> And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."**

So there's the sexual language there. Lot went out to the men at the entrance and shut the door after him...

**<sup>7</sup> and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. <sup>8</sup> Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please.**

So right there we get the same context with Lot offering his daughters sexually to the men of Sodom. And he says, "Look, they're virgins; they haven't known a man." And it has to mean that they're virgins because it's just not possible that it means that they've never met a man or never seen a man before. I mean, their dad was a man, okay? So again, the sexual idiomatic language is pretty plain in the passage, as it is elsewhere. So we can be sure that the language here and the violation (the potential violation) here is sexual. These men want these two visitors (these two male visitors—two men, as far as they know) that Lot is harboring... They want Lot to bring them out and they can have their way with

them sexually. Since the angels appeared as men and were thought to be men by the male inhabitants of Sodom who wanted to “know” them, it’s obvious that homosexual relations were part of the story. But was homosexuality, per se, the sin? You could ask it this way: Is this proof that all the men of the city were gay or were practicing homosexuals? And that is very unlikely. It had to do more with the homosexual rape of the two men Lot was harboring and the ensuing humiliation upon Lot in the shame/honor culture that required hospitality to strangers in the extreme—so extreme that Lot is willing to surrender up his daughters to be able to maintain hospitality to strangers. Again, it’s a Middle Eastern cultural thing that we are just not familiar with. But again, back in the Biblical day (and even to some extent now), hospitality was put very high on the cultural ladder as far as things that you do and don’t do. But again, since everybody concerned in the story is male, it is very obvious that homosexual activity is in view, but that does not mean that every person in the city, every male in the city, was a practicing homosexual or something like that. In this culture and in others, this kind of abuse, this kind of rape scenario, would have been sort of a gesture of contempt and humiliation.

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Now none of this undoes the fact that scripture elsewhere refers to voluntary homosexual behavior as sin (for instance, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13 and verses like that), but it does, I think, honor the context more that this is really about a violation of hospitality, and in the most visceral sort of way.

So I say all that to say this: There’s an obvious “defile the flesh” element here that would coincide with verse 8. It’s nigh unto impossible to deny that (and the homosexual nature of it) as far as the actual activity. But as far as the bigger picture... Again, I think we need to keep the bigger picture in mind.

As a side bar, for those of you who are interested, I occasionally get the question in an e-mail about, “Hey, what’s a good resource on the Bible and what the Bible teaches about homosexuality, and something that is current to kind of keep up with the hermeneutic gymnastics that have sort of evolved around this topic?” And I think the best book here is Robert Gagnon’s book, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*. It’s a 2002 book so it’s been out for 20 years, but it is very, very thorough and very current, at least it was for its time. And frankly, there isn’t a whole lot more than could be said than the arguments that Gagnon interacts with as far as different approaches to homosexuality and homosexual behavior in the Bible—in both Testaments and also, of course, in Second Temple Jewish literature and Rabbinic literature. It’s the most thorough resource that I’m familiar with. So if you’re interested in this topic, I’d recommend reading that. It’s a pretty substantial book; it’s pretty thick. So there you go.

So the question is, “Is there more to it than this?” I think, again, we need to look at the wider context as being one of hospitality, but not ignoring the threat of homosexual rape that is obviously lurking in the text.

Some scholars note that the reader knows that the two men are actually angels, and that should matter. And so they would argue that *that* violation (a violation with angels) is actually the focus of Genesis 19. And if it’s the focus of Genesis 19, it would be the focus here of Jude 7. These other scholars see a reiteration of the sin of Genesis 6, which is part of the logic not only of the inclusion of Sodom and Gomorrah here in Jude 7... It comes right on the heel of his example of the archetypal sin of the angels, and then he goes to Sodom and Gomorrah. In effect, you have another sin with the angels here, even though in this case the angels are the victims, or potential victims. They see a reiteration of what is going on with the sin of Genesis 6 here in Jude 7. But also if you look at it that way, the remaining two elements of verse 8 (the rejecting authority and blaspheming God and his host, the glorious ones)... That also comes into better focus if you take the sin of Genesis 19 (and here of Jude 7) as being more pronounced—not just general homosexual violation here, but specifically having to do with this transgression of the boundary between the human world and the angelic world. Recall from our earlier episode on Jude 6 (Part 3 of our Jude exposition series here) that the angelic sin... that a number of commentators (as well as me) see the “glorious ones” as heavenly beings. Again, I think that’s pretty obvious. We cited Gene Green back in that other earlier episode when he notes that in the Septuagint of Exodus 15:11—“Who is like you among the Gods (among the *elim*), oh Lord (Yahweh)—*elim* there is translated as “glorious ones,” or “the glories.” I don’t think that’s coincidental. I mean, this is vocabulary you would use for supernatural beings, not just human beings of high estate or something like that, which we talked about in the last episode. Bauckham was another one that we quoted last time who also noted that certain Dead Sea Scrolls call the heavenly beings the “glorious ones.”

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So I think... I’m going to go back to Green’s commentary. I think it’s worth citing again because he’s tracking on the importance of knowing that the audience (the reader, the reading audience) knows that the two men in Genesis 19 are angels and that that is a meaningful element in our interpretation here. So Green’s commentary, I think, is worth citing again here. He ties the elements together, I think, a bit in relation to Jude 7. He ties verses 7 and 8 together in a fairly succinct way. He writes this. He said:

Jude’s use of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah underscores these cities’ failure to talk in the way, particularly highlighting how they had departed from the natural order of things – “in the same way as these...”, having indulged in unfaithful acts and gone after another kind of flesh.”

Again, the men of the city of Sodom are... What Green is arguing is that the men in the city of Sodom are going after angelic flesh, and that's really what Jude is going after and that's really what Genesis 19 has in view. So back to Green and he writes:

Jude links the sin of the angels in verse 6 with that of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (the names of the cities standing for their inhabitants), noting that those people sinned *ton homoion tropon toutois*, which means in like manner as "these" angels.

So to break in here again, Green is saying that the Greek text itself ties these two things together by using a phrase like "in like manner." Then Green says:

Jude employs *ton homoion tropon* [MH: some of that Greek phrase] adverbially (BDF §160), using an expression that means the same as (*homotropos*), "in the same manner" (LSJ 1228). As the angels abandoned their proper station (v. 6), so too, the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities "indulged in unfaithful acts" (aorist participle *ekporneusasai*).

There you get that *pornuo*, that sexual element there in the Greek verb.

This verb is found only here in the NT, but appears some forty-one times in the LXX, where it may mean either to indulge in sexual relations (Gen. 38:24; Lev. 19:29; Hos. 2:7; 4:13) or to indulge in acts of unfaithfulness with respect to God (Exod. 34:15; Deut. 31:16; Ezek. 20:30; Hos. 1:2; 4:12; 5:3; Sir. 46:11; see Muraoka 2002: 167).

So what Green is saying here is that this term means to either "indulge in sexual relations" or to again, more generally, "engage in acts of unfaithfulness toward God." And you can see how he is linking this all now with verse 8. Green writes in verse 6:

Both the sin of the angels (v. 6) and that of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah had a sexual component, yet Jude's principal emphasis in verse 6 is on the way the angels abandoned their proper place. This the angels (Watchers) did, according to the tradition, by engaging in sexual relations with humans (1 En. 12.4). The opposite was true of the Sodomites, who left their place and tried to engage in sexual relations with angelic messengers. While Jude notes the sexual component of the sin, he highlights the way such sin is a violation of the order of things. The angels "did not keep" but "deserted," and so also the people of Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in unfaithful acts with respect to God... In the further reflection on the sin of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities, Jude shines the spotlight on the attempt to engage in sexual acts with the angelic messengers: "having gone after another kind of flesh." The "flesh" of the angelic

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messengers is called “strange” (KJV) in the sense of being of a different kind (BDAG 399, 915)... Once again, the emphasis falls not simply on the sexual nature of the sin... but also on the way their act contravened the established order of things. Jude’s thought in vv. 6–7 is much akin to that found in T. Naph. 3.4–5:

**This is a Second Temple Jewish pseudepigraphical book and here’s the line in that work:**

So that you do not become like Sodom, which departed from the order of nature. Likewise the Watchers departed from nature’s order.

**So the Testament of Naphtali very clearly views what is happening in Sodom and Gomorrah as a violation of the greater order of things, specifically transgressing this boundary between the angelic world and the human world. Green finishes up by saying:**

The sexual aspect of their sin is the vehicle by which they had violated the order established by God. The heretics’ sin likewise revolves around a rebellion against established order, with their sexual sin being a function of the fundamental problem (v. 8).

**That’s the end of Green’s quote. Now Bauckham takes the same approach. And I’m citing Green and Bauckham because these are two major commentaries on the book of Jude. So, again, I want to reinforce as many times as we can on this podcast that the kind of stuff that I’m into and that I write about in *Unseen Realm*, it’s not idiosyncratic to me. I’m just giving you peer-reviewed high scholarship on these things that you can find in lots of places and trying and make it decipherable for you. So Bauckham, in his *Word Biblical Commentary*, takes the same approach that Green does and he adds a relevant observation about the propensity to see homosexuality as the main focus of Sodom and Gomorrah and the sin there. So Bauckham notes this. He says:**

[Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities] had long been regarded as the paradigm case of divine judgment (Deut 29:23; Isa 1:9; 13:19; Jer 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lam 4:6; Hos 11:8; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Sir 16:8; 3 Macc 2:5; *Jub.* 16:6, 9; 20:5; 22:22; 36:10; *T. Asher* 7:1; Philo, *Quaest. Gen.* 4:51; Josephus, BJ 5.566; Matt 10:15; 11:24; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12; 17:29).

**These Biblical and then Second Temple Jewish literary texts make this point that Sodom and Gomorrah and these cities have been regarded as the paradigm case of divine judgment. Bauckham writes:**

[On the clauses] which practiced immorality in the same way as the angels and hankered after strange flesh.

So he quotes Jude 7. On those clauses, Bauckham writes:

The second clause explains the first. As the angels fell because of their lust for women, so the Sodomites desired sexual relations with angels. The reference is to the incident in Gen 19:4–11.

Catch this. Catch what Bauckham says here:

*Sarkos heteras* “strange flesh,” cannot, as many commentators and most translations assume, refer to homosexual practice, in which the flesh is not “different” (*heteras*); it must mean the flesh of angels.

Now let me break in here. His point here is that homosexuality is sex with the same flesh, not different flesh. And again, if you think about it from that perspective, it’s like, well, yeah, if it was a same-sex violation... I mean, if that was the point, just the general sin of homosexuality... If that was the point of Genesis 19 that we’re supposed to come away with, why would Jude call it “strange flesh?” Why wouldn’t he call it “the same flesh?” Because that’s what a homosexual relationship is. It’s a sexual relationship between the same sex. So I think Bauckham’s observation here is really worth pointing out and worth making. And he makes it part of his argument that what Genesis 19 wants the readers to really be horrified over is not in the immediate context (what would’ve been ostensibly a homosexual rape situation), but rather, that it’s this violation of the nature of things, of the order of things—the proper order between heaven and earth, between the seen and the unseen realm—that this is what is more horrific in the Genesis 19 incident and this is why Jude references it right after referencing the Genesis 6 sin with the angels. Again, I think this has some explanatory power that we want to be sure we don’t miss as we’re going through the passage. Bauckham continues and he says:

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The sin of the Sodomites (not, strictly, of the other towns) reached its zenith in this most extravagant of sexual aberrations, which would have transgressed the order of creation as shockingly as the fallen angels did. The two cases are similarly brought together in *T. Napht.* 3:4–5.

To read that again, the verse says:

So that you do not become like Sodom which departed from the order of nature. Likewise the Watchers departed from nature’s order.

So Bauckham is right on track with his. He takes the same perspective. And let me just finish up with him with one more statement he makes. He says:

In rejecting the commandments of God [MH: this divine order], the false teachers were rebelling against the divinely established order of things as flagrantly as the Watchers and the Sodomites had done. Moreover, in doing so they were motivated, like the Watchers and the Sodomites, by sexual lust, and, like the Sodomites, insulted angels.

He's looping Jude 8 into the discussion with Jude 7.

So all of this is from the reader's perspective. We don't want to miss this as we wrap up here. All of this is from the reader's perspective—what Jude's readers are actually going to be thinking because they know the Sodom story. They know the whole story back in Genesis 19. They knew that the two men there in Genesis 19 were actually angels. There's no indication that the men of Sodom knew that, but the readers of the story do know that and so Jude is highlighting the way things were in the moment to portray the false teachers as analogous to transgression of divine order. And it's an effective way to look at verse 7 because of the way it ties into verse 8.

I think this is a good place for us to end here because we get a clear break from the situation with Sodom and Gomorrah to what we'll cover next time, the very next thing in Jude 9. Let's just go there by way of a preview. We leave off in verse 8. These people (these false teachers, relying on their dreams) defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. Then here's what we'll cover next time, verses 9 and 10:

**<sup>9</sup> But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." <sup>10</sup> But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.**

So next time we'll hit the whole matter of Moses and the devil fighting over... Moses' body being fought over by the devil and Michael, which is really an odd statement. Those of you who have read *Reversing Hermon* know that I've commented on this before, but we'll get into it here on the podcast. But again, this is a good place to end and transition to Michael and Satan in this dispute over Moses' body because it also has to do with the blaspheming (or fearing to blaspheme) the glorious ones. So next time we'll hit that.

**TS:** Alright, Mike. Yeah, it seems like we've covered this subject today a few times on the podcast throughout the years.

**MH:** We do get the question, yeah.

**TS:** Yeah, and I'm really looking forward to next week's episode when you cover Michael and the devil fighting and stuff.

**MH:** Yeah, yeah, it's pretty weird.

**TS:** Yeah, absolutely. We like weird. Alright. Don't forget, go visit our sponsor, [Logos.com/nakedbible](https://Logos.com/nakedbible). If you have not done so, now is the time to go get the #1 best Bible software in the planet. Alright, Mike, well, we look forward to Part 5. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.