

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 472

1 Samuel 23

July 8, 2023

**Teacher: Dr. Ronn Johnson (RJ)**

**Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)**

### Episode Summary

David was informed that the Philistines were attacking the city of Keilah. He asked God if he should go to Keilah and help the people, and God told him to go. David's men were afraid to go to Keilah, but David assured them that God would be with them. David and his men went to Keilah and defeated the Philistines. Saul heard that David was in Keilah, and he set out to capture him. David learned that Saul was coming, and he and his men fled Keilah. David and his men hid in the wilderness, and Saul searched for them. Saul eventually gave up the search and returned to his home in Gibeah. Dr. Johnson also consults with ChatGPT to get its take on theology.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 472: 1 Samuel 23. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin and he's the scholar, Dr. Ronn Johnson. Hey, Ronn! How are you doing today?

**RJ:** Hey, Trey. Good, thank you.

**TS:** Yeah, I'm so glad to have you back on to continue 1 Samuel. We appreciate it. Thanks again!

**RJ:** Glad to be here. Glad to keep going down this very interesting book. Things are hidden in here... Maybe not hidden, but different ideas come out of here that I think are very valuable to the larger Divine Council Worldview, and that's, frankly, what I'm going to do with chapter 23. So...

**TS:** I don't want to keep everybody waiting, so Ronn, why don't we just get into it if you're ready?

**RJ:** Sure, I am, yeah.

Well, chapter 23 continues 15:23's theme of replacing Saul with David. If you recall, God had come to him and rejected Saul. So the question of why Saul was rejected should, I think, be on our mind as we continue through. There is a lot of narrative in chapter 23. My title (or subtitle) says, "David Saves the City of

Keilah." That gets your blood going, doesn't it? Let's listen to it. We're getting rid of Saul. That's kind of the subtopic here between 15:23 and the end of the book. By the time we get to 31, Saul will die on Mount Gilboa. 1 Chronicles 10 verses 13 and 14, however, from the theological point of view, summarize the life of Saul by saying that God killed him because he went to the witch of Endor. So let's look at this and see if we can...

Well, let's back up. The whole idea of a Divine Council Worldview (and this is something Mike and I talked about, and his friends, for a long time)... Which dominoes would tip, and in which direction, when we read the Bible? My personal view (not that Mike wasn't like this, and I'm sure he had other specific things that he would say about this)... But we talked about this issue here specifically. When it comes to the larger picture of the Bible, I would recommend that the question of "which *elohim*?" is almost on every page, almost every paragraph of the Bible. In other words, the question being asked of the reader and the question being answered by the writer on almost every turn of conversation is, "Which *elohim* is doing this, or is being followed by the person involved, or is being worshipped... or how do the *elohim* compare?" and so forth. And so when we come to 23:1... Let me just jump in [NKJV]:

**Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."**

**<sup>2</sup> Therefore David inquired of the LORD [YAHWEH], saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"**

**And the LORD [YAHWEH] said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."**

Interesting turn of phrase here, where it says "David went and inquired of Yahweh and Yahweh answered" and there are quotation marks, right? But then verse 3:

**<sup>3</sup> But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" <sup>4</sup> Then David inquired of the LORD once again.**

**And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."**

Later in the chapter (verse 9):

**<sup>9</sup> When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.”**

Now my recommendation (and with the commentators much the same), the first two stories we have there in verses 2 and 4 about David inquiring of Yahweh and Yahweh answering him back apparently do not involve the ephod, which would have been the Urim and Thummim storyline that I know Mike talked about. It would have probably been more of a prophet. In fact, 22:5:

**<sup>5</sup> Now the prophet Gad said to David, “Do not stay in the stronghold...**

That's the first mention of this prophet named Gad. The last mention of Gad (and the only other mention of Gad) is in 2 Samuel at the end of David's life. 2 Samuel 24:11:

**<sup>11</sup> Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer...**

...or prophet. Back in 1 Samuel 9:9, we hear that when a person wants to know Yahweh's will... Well, let me read it. It's an interesting little bit that informs so much of the story.

5:00

**<sup>9</sup> (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: “Come, let us go to the seer”; for *he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.*)**

So my thinking is that in the first couple verses of chapter 23 when it says that David inquired of Yahweh, he went to a prophet—probably Gad because he is later called David's seer. And he said, "Gad, what does God want me to do here?" And Gad would somehow go to Yahweh and Yahweh would answer him and then he would come back and tell David. In fact, as you see in 2 Samuel 24:12 (to finish that story), David's seer, Gad, says,

**<sup>12</sup> “Go and tell David, ‘Thus says the Lord [RJ: and this next part is interesting]: “I offer you three *things*; choose one of them...**

When a prophet would speak for Yahweh, it's very common that they would use the first person. They would say "I." I'm grabbing a book off my shelf that I remember buying with Mike while I was standing at SBL at one of the booths in 2008. I even wrote that on the cover/flyleaf. It's a book called *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible*. Mike and I were looking at the book together and I decided to buy it. I remember it was 85 bucks and Susan had told me to buy a Christmas present for myself and so I did. I'm glad I did! If you go to

page 172 of this book, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible*, it says this:

In ancient Semitic literature, messengers often did not distinguish themselves from their sender when delivering messages, so that the messengers speak in the first person, as if the sender of the message speaks. This formula may be applied in the same way to the delivering patterns of the divine or angelic messengers.

It took him 172 pages to get to that idea. In specific terms, when a messenger speaks... Again, my point is that in 2 Samuel 24:12, when Gad speaks, he says, "I..." The "I" is not Gad, the "I" is Yahweh, because he is representing him. Long story short, I think in 1 Samuel 23:2-4, David goes to Gad and says, "What does God want me to do?" In both cases, God answers David through Gad and he gets an answer. Now in 23:9,

**"Bring the ephod here." <sup>10</sup> Then David said, "O Lord God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake.**

And then he asks for the ephod, which would be the Urim and Thummim.

**<sup>11</sup> Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O Lord God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant."**

**And the Lord said, "He will come down."**

Now, somehow the Urim answers, whether it's blinking lights or stones in a pouch, we're just not sure.

**<sup>12</sup> Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"**

**And the Lord said, "They will deliver you."**

So again, a very clear answer—an objective answer—comes, apparently from this Urim and Thummim. Now why is this important? Let me make my case. I hinted at it when I went over 1 Samuel 21. When you compare the story of David to the story of Saul, screaming out of these two stories is the difference of, "Does God talk to one or the other or both, or either one? How does God respond to either man?" Back in 22:5, we already heard that Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold." David had inquired of the Lord and Gad had answered him. So we have five occurrences in 1 Samuel 22 and 23 where God responds to a

---

Davidic question with a straightforward answer. Here's the point: you never hear the text say, "David inquired of the Lord and God was silent." However, if you start looking into the life of Saul... Let's go back to 1 Samuel 14:37.

**<sup>37</sup> So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He [Yahweh] did not answer him that day.**

Go up to 28:6, which we'll be handling later. Chapter 28 is the famous story of the witch of Endor.

**<sup>6</sup> And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.**

10:00 He's got three strikes and he was out. There was nothing that God would say to him. Now compare that to a passage like (this is later of course)... Think in terms of why God would answer one person and not another. In Ezekiel 14:3, God is speaking to the prophet—through the prophet to the people about their situation in captivity. He says this:

**<sup>3</sup> "Son of man, these men [RJ: the ones who have gone into captivity] have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?" <sup>4</sup> "Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity [RJ: of course, these are the gods of Babylon], and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, <sup>5</sup> that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols."**

And then Ezekiel 20:3:

**<sup>3</sup> "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Have you come to inquire of Me? As I live," says the Lord God, "I will not be inquired of by you."**

God has a right to say, "No, I will not talk to you." And I would recommend the difference is (going back to Saul and David now)... The reason Saul doesn't get talked to is he is not a Yahwist. He is not worshipping Yahweh. And the point of the entire Bible, I believe... This would be a huge study and I'm going to just do a

bit of it here. God is not in the business of talking to those who do not worship him. Psalm 18... Let me read this. This is Psalm 18:41:

**<sup>41</sup>They cried out, but *there was none to save;*  
*Even to the Lord, but He did not answer them.***

The psalmist is recording the story of the exile, or probably leaving Egypt. The idea that God would not speak to Saul, thus, is not just that he had a bad day or that God was busy or he was even being disobedient. I've heard that idea, too. I think it's simply a matter that David was a Yahwist and Saul was not. 1 Samuel 26... I think I'm doing this chapter with you as well, and I'm glad to do it because of verse 23. Listen to how David describes how a person is treated by Yahweh.

**<sup>23</sup> May the Lord repay every man *for his righteousness and his faithfulness;* for the Lord delivered you [Saul] into *my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed.***

We'll talk about that again coming up—the idea of David not killing Saul. For now, David is committed to this idea (and this is in many of the psalms that he authors, of course, in our book of Psalms) that what Yahweh is always going to respond to is worship. Even as a worshipper, David, of course, is going to make a huge blunder with Uriah and Bathsheba and so forth. We know that. But what is never going to happen to David is a lack of his monotheistic worship toward Yahweh. He never switches *elohim*.

How would we know... How would I recommend, in fact ("know" is too strong)... Why would I recommend that Saul is not a Yahwist? This is going to be, I think, such a huge issue in the larger narrative of Samuel that it's worth our time to quickly review that. I'm going to give you some points. I think I have nine points. Why would I think that Saul is not a Yahwist:

1. God didn't speak to him. You never hear God speaking to Saul.
2. In 14:35, you hear this (there are things going on here that I don't have time to get back to but look at it):

**<sup>35</sup> Then Saul built an altar to [Yahweh].**

In the ancient world, if you came upon someone who was building an altar, the first question you would ask—the main question you would ask—is, "To which *elohim* are you building this? Who are you worshipping through this altar?" Notice:

**<sup>35</sup> Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. This was the first altar that he built to [Yahweh].**

It's stunning that we have in 14:35 this admission. "This is the first time Saul builds an altar to Yahweh." Of course, the story is a political mess that Saul is in with the people. I'd recommend he builds that altar to Yahweh because of political pressure. He knows he's supposed to. What that tells us, then, is that back in 13 (the chapter before this), when Saul waits seven days and builds an altar... Remember that? Verse 9:

15:00

**<sup>9</sup> So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering.**

Well, we know from 14:35, if that's the first one he built to Yahweh, 13:9 must not be to Yahweh. I think the author wants us to catch that. Which god did he worship in 13:9? I don't know, but that's why Samuel comes back and says, "What you have done is terrible." I don't think it was a timing issue. He wasn't rushing, like he can't make an altar... Remember, David is going to sacrifice. A lot of non-priests in the Bible sacrifice. Solomon will sacrifice... I don't have a list in front of me, but a lot of non-priests are sacrificing. So the idea that Saul is not a priest, thus he shouldn't sacrifice, is never said in the text, and I don't think that's the point. Oh, here's my quick list! I have it in my margin: Gideon (Judges 6), David (2 Samuel 24), Solomon (1 Kings 8). That's just a quick one that I had room for.

Again, that's my second point—that the first altar (and the only altar that we know of) that Saul makes to Yahweh is done in political pressure in 14:35.

3. The sin of witchcraft... We've been through this when you studied 1 Samuel 15. Look at verse 22.

**"Has the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?"**

He's saying that because he's not obeying the voice of Yahweh. He must be obeying the voice of another elohim.

**Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
And to heed than the fat of rams.**

**<sup>23</sup> For rebellion [RJ: and I take it to mean "the rebellion of you, Saul"] *is as* the sin of witchcraft,**

"Your problem, Saul, is that you're going to other gods."

**And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.**

Can you imagine Yahweh ever saying that to David? Absolutely not. As bad as David will be behaviorally, God will never say to him, "Your sin is as the sin of witchcraft or idolatry." Those words are clearly meant for Saul because, again, I don't see any evidence that he worshipped Yahweh.

4. A fascinating idea that no commentator that I am aware of brings up. Here's where you need your own Bible. Look at 15:15.

**<sup>15</sup> And Saul said [to Samuel], "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."**

YOUR God. Why doesn't he say, "Yahweh OUR or MY God?" This is to Samuel: "your God." Compare that to 15:21, just six verses up. He's still talking to Samuel.

**<sup>21</sup> But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal."**

And in case that doesn't count, look at verse 30.

**<sup>30</sup> Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please..."**

This is to Samuel. He's about to bow again to Yahweh for reasons of political pressure.

**<sup>30</sup> Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God."**

Here's my point: if you look at every narrative of Saul's life in 1 Samuel, he never says, "Yahweh my God." Can you imagine David [laughs] ever saying to someone else, "Yahweh your God?" He never does! It's always, "Yahweh my God." And that's the Psalms, right? "The Lord my God." It's just a very



simple point. When I've gone to all the commentators I can find, I don't see them ever making mention of this interesting use of the word "your." It shows how careful our Bible really is. So number four is that Saul never claimed Yahweh.

5. Remember the distressing spirit? For the sake of time I won't get into it, but in chapter 16, 18, and 19, we have God/Yahweh sending a distressing (or *rah*—evil) spirit upon Saul? He never does that to David, obviously. In fact 1 Samuel 16:13:

**<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.**

In the next verse, a *rah* (evil, distressing) spirit troubled Saul. I think God is showing the difference between a follower of his ("I'm going to put my spirit upon him") and a non-follower of me ("I'm going to put an evil spirit on him"). It just shows, again, the difference of how God treats David and Saul, and I believe it's because of who they worshipped. It's the equivalent, to me, of demonic possession of some kind, which then when you get into the New Testament becomes a reality that Jesus has to deal with, which would be a fun topic to talk about.

20:00

Again, reasons that Saul does not seem to be a Yahwist:

6. In 1 Samuel 18:27 and 19:13... I won't read them, but Michal, the daughter of Saul, is given to David as a gift. It's interesting that in 19:13, Michal took an image and laid it in the bed. She's trying to protect David by making it look like David is in the bed. Michal took an image (and that word is an actual word for an idol) and laid it in the bed, put on a cover of goat's hair on its head and covered it with clothes. It reminds us of that old movie, *Escape from Alcatraz*. I remember circling this a long time ago in my Bible thinking, "Why does Michal have an image ready to go?" It's because Michal is the daughter of Saul. Folks, I'd recommend that if you could look behind the curtain of Saul's life, he's got idols. His daughter had one. His daughter took one into her marriage with David. So where does that come from? I think it came from Saul.
7. This is a good one. It's a terrible one, but it's something we just studied in chapter 22. Verse 17:

**<sup>17</sup> Then the king said to the guards who stood about him [RJ: I think that was Doeg], "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with**

**David...**

**18 ... So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod.**

Now think of it again. David commits adultery and murder. Bad enough, I understand that. Would David ever have killed a priest of Yahweh? I know in our minds we all of a sudden put this stop and say there's no way that David would do that, and that's because David worshipped Yahweh. Why would Saul command the killing of the priests of Yahweh? Because (ding, ding, ding) he wasn't a Yahwist. He was trying to get at Yahweh whenever he could, and there was one clear means of it.

8. Just two more quickly. Hosea 13:11...

Oh by the way, I checked with ChatGPT (the AI computer that has been amazing the world by how clear its answers are). I got on there this morning and asked this question: "Was King Saul a Yahwist." Here is ChatGPT's answer:

King Saul was a follower of Yahweh, the God of Israel, and is generally considered to be a Yahwist. He was anointed as the first king of Israel by the prophet Samuel, who was a devoted worshipper of Yahweh. Saul himself was also known to consult with Yahweh through the prophet, Samuel, and sought his guidance in matters of war and governance.

I wish I could comment on all that, but I'm going to keep going.

However, it was worth noting that Saul's devotion to Yahweh was not always consistent and there were instances where he acted contrary to Yahweh's commands. For example, in 1 Samuel 15, he disobeyed Yahweh's instructions to completely destroy the Amalekites and their possessions. Despite this, it can be argued that Saul was still considered a follower of Yahweh and that his disobedience was a failure to follow Yahweh's commands rather than a rejection of Yahweh himself.

I asked back... I wasn't satisfied with ChatGPT here. To me, he was giving assertions without proving it. I ask back:

What biblical evidence do you have for these assertions? I would like to know what texts defend your points. Thank you, sir.

ChatGPT:

The Bible provides several pieces of evidence that suggest King Saul was a Yahwist.

Now there are five. I would kind of leave with you, the hearer, if ChatGPT gets this right. Does he find texts that prove that Saul worshipped Yahweh?

1. Saul's anointing by the prophet, Samuel. In 1 Samuel 9-10, we see that Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel, indicating that Yahweh had chosen him as the leader of the people.

I'm just going to stop there because of what I just turned to—Hosea 13:11, which says (going back to the story of Israel):

**<sup>11</sup> I gave you a king in My anger,  
And took *him* away in My wrath.**

What does that tell you about God's choice of Saul? "Oh, I gave you a king." In fact, go back and remember, "I want a king" (yell, yell). "We want a king like the other nations." Guess who the other nations' kings worshipped? So when God gave them Saul, yes, I would agree with ChatGPT that Samuel anointed him. But that doesn't prove anything. So in his first point to me, he didn't check Hosea 13:11.

ChatGPT's second point to prove Saul was a Yahwist:

25:00

2. Saul's use of the Urim and Thummim. The Urim and Thummim were sacred objects used by the high priest to determine God's will. In 1 Samuel 28, we see that Saul consulted the high priest using the Urim and Thummim.

Now do you buy that? I would say, Mr. Chat, you again... So what? A king may use it, but that doesn't prove anything about his worship of Yahweh.

3. Saul's recognition of Yahweh as the one true God. In 1 Samuel 14...

That sounds good, but let's look at the text.

...In 1 Samuel 14, we see that Saul acknowledges Yahweh as the true God and attributes his victories in battle to Yahweh's help.

Well, I'm looking at 1 Samuel 14 and I honestly don't know where he's talking about. Notice he doesn't give me a verse. So... Unless I'm missing something, I don't sense anything in 1 Samuel 14. This is that text in verse 37 where God does not answer him. So I would say, "No, Chat, again you gave me a text and you want me to believe it but I don't see it in there."

4. Saul's pursuit of David. Although Saul's pursuit of David is often seen as evidence of his jealousy and paranoia, it is worth noting that he saw David as a threat to his rule as king, rather than as a threat to Yahweh's sovereignty.

I don't know where you get that in the text. I would say that has nothing to do with the text of 1 Samuel. And then number five:

5. Yahweh's initial approval of Saul. When Saul was anointed as king, Yahweh was pleased with his choice and empowered him to lead his people.

Well, again, I'm going to say back to Chat, "We have pagans who were helped by Yahweh." If you go to Judges, Eglon, king of... Judges 3:12:

**<sup>12</sup> And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab...**

Well, just because Yahweh strengthens an evil king doesn't mean that he's a Yahwist. Moab worshipped Chemosh, so Mr. Chat, you're 0 for 5. I appreciate your attempt at this, but no.

So again, can AI help us here? I think ChatGPT will be useful in a lot of ways for a lot of people, but when it comes to theology, I've not found it to be helpful because he's only thinking backwards. He is going to take all these things that have been said (in our case, "is Saul a Yahwist")... Very rarely has it been discussed, and he just went back and grabbed verses that didn't even help his argument.

9. My last one, number nine is 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 which, very importantly, say this:

**<sup>13</sup> So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord [RJ: a classic case of being an unbeliever], because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance [RJ: he went to another god]. <sup>14</sup> But *he* did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.**

So it's easy to make Saul something better than he actually was when it comes to his worship patterns because we assume that since he's a Jew, he's going to be a Yahwist.

But all that to say... I've taken a long time with that, but when it comes to the 23rd chapter of Samuel... And that's pretty much all I want to say about the whole chapter.

Except that it's interesting in verse 14:

**14 And David stayed in strongholds...**

That's *matzadah* or *matzdah* or *masada*—some people think this is the Masada of our current geography. It's translated as "strongholds" in the wilderness. The last verse of our chapter:

**29 Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.**

Again, a beautiful place to visit if you go to Israel is the place of En Gedi. What do you want to call it? The stream that runs through En Gedi and the waterfall in the back and all that, where David hid.

But what's the conclusion of chapter 23? You have a good example, to me, of what it means to be a Yahwist. David will go to Gad and/or the Urim and Thummim and plead with Yahweh. "What do I do?" God responds immediately, not because David is a good person in behavior. He'll prove the opposite in some ways, of course, coming up. But since David has put his trust in Yahweh above all the gods (read the psalms on this, of course), God will talk to him. It's just like how the New Testament promises that if we call upon him, he will answer. What that is saying in New Testament terms is, "If you call on the right God, you're going to get the right God to respond." But if you are in the habit of talking to other gods... And you can do this sometimes without knowing it. I'm convinced that in America, it says "In God We Trust" on our coins, but remember Torah said that Yahweh was the only God. And yet you had a lot of Jews in that day (Israelites), whether they be Esau, Ishmael, Saul in this case... They were in a tribe that worshipped Yahweh, but that's always going to be an individual question. Just as in America we don't all worship Yahweh even though we carry coins that say we do, so in Israel, when you're reading Samuel, be asking the question always: "Is this guy—this person... Is this story telling us who is worshipping Yahweh?" I think more commonly than not, you're going to see evidence that is going to be going in one of two directions.

30:00

I'm going to conclude with that, Trey. Just call to mind, again, that a Divine Council Worldview that Mike was all about... It doesn't agree on all the specifics, but it agrees on this one point: the whole story of scripture moves in a direction of which God/god do you worship? In the end, even the gospel itself will be phrased in that question. American evangelicalism has kind of turned that to asking God to forgive your sins, but I'd recommend that's an in-house privilege. The door they get you in is which god do you worship. Once in the house, now we look

around at people who are forgiven, true. But you didn't get forgiven... You didn't come in the door by asking God to forgive you. That's jumping past the [laughs] the original question much too quickly in the Bible.

So that'll do it for chapter 23! Thank you so much.

**TS:** It's amazing that we're now interacting with artificial intelligence in theology and Bible study. So what did you think about ChatGPT? It amazes me.

**RJ:** I would love to... There's got to be chat groups about this. I've not joined any, but I would love to talk with other Christians about their use of AI, and especially ChatGPT. My suspicions, just because I'm a believer I guess and I'm in the image of God is that because I'm human, I'm going to have... This is what I think the image of God means, primarily: when God created all the animals, he made them in their image. Remember that?

**TS:** Um hm

**RJ:** Then he turns and says to the divine beings around him, "Let's make humans in our image." In other words, let's make them more like us than like the dog that they're going to have as a pet. And so my guess would be that coming out of Genesis 1 is a human race that thinks elohim thoughts easier than dog thoughts. And so when AI comes upon the scene like it is now... I just had a conversation this morning over breakfast about this with some friends, and the friend to my left said, "Oh, it's going to be able to answer theological questions in time. Once we give AI or ChatGPT time, it will finally be able to come up with theological answers." And again, this is just my opinion. I'm not a computer expert, by any means. I think because AI is not in Genesis 1:26, that we are always going to have the ability to think past it and be able to think God's thoughts in some sense. And so if we ask ChatGPT theological questions, I think what it's going to do... What was proved to me by its answer to me on this issue of Saul was that he's going to go back and read all the commentaries and cite answers that history and historical theologians have given, but he's not able to think forward. He's certainly not going to think in a Divine Council Worldview because guess who introduced that to the evangelical world? Mike Heiser. And that's why what Mike did was so (and is so) powerful. It gives you a way of looking at scripture that is not new, it's old. But it's so old that you have to go back to the Bible to get it. And ChatGPT [laughs]... he's not reading the Bible, he's reading commentaries about the Bible. Maybe he is reading it, but he's going to be influenced by people that are commenting on it, but not necessarily thinking for himself, if you want to put the word "him" there. Of course, that's the catch.

**TS:** Yeah...

**RJ:** It'll be fun to hear how ChatGPT answers all sorts of theological questions in the future. I would love to do that.

**TS:** Oh yeah, as soon as Heiser's work is incorporated into ChatGPT at some point, I mean... I agree that it's just going to regurgitate back data that is all based on human data, so whatever it spits out... It's interesting just what it decides to spit out.

**RJ:** It's fascinating! You can have a conversation with it. It's just incredible.

**TS:** Yeah, well that's good stuff. I like how you incorporated it into today's Bible study. That was great. I loved it. All right, and sir, we appreciate it. We'll see you back for chapter 26. And again, we want to thank Dr. Johnson for our Bible study today. And with that, I want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.