

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 154

Q&A 20

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**Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)**

**Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)**

### Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions about:

- The bronze snake of Numbers 21
- Dating of the book of Daniel
- Zechariah 5 and angels/women with wings
- Seeking DNA from Moses' body
- Gaps in genealogies
- Evil in God's presence
- Jesus healing the deaf/dumb man as a mouth-opening ritual
- The nature of the angels in 1 Timothy 3:16
- What Mike would like to be asked

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 154, our 20<sup>th</sup> Question and Answer episode. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing this week?

**MH:** Pretty good. Busy, as usual, but good.

**TS:** That's good, Mike. You got any trips coming up here anytime soon? Speaking engagements?

**MH:** I do. Yeah, Indian Harbor Beach in Florida on May 20. I got a note about that from the organizer this morning and they have 90 people already signed up for that event. The guy who's organizing it guessed that there were about 60 percent of those that were familiar with the content and he guessed that the rest probably were not. But if you are interested or in the area (within a couple hours, I guess) of Indian Harbor Beach, Florida, please by all means come over on May 20 and introduce yourself when we get a chance to do that. You can get all the information on my website ([drms.com](http://drms.com)). Just go in the calendar and click on the event and you'll see where you need to sign up and the logistics and what-not.

**TS:** Well, Mike, we're going to be taking a little break with this episode and the next episode from Ezekiel. We probably should just go ahead and talk about the special guest we're having next week.

**MH:** Next week we're going to be interviewing David Limbaugh. A lot of you will already know who David Limbaugh is. Other than being Rush Limbaugh's brother, David is the author of a number of books in Christian Circles. His previous one was *The Emmaus Code: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament*, and he wrote *Jesus on Trial*. His next one is *The True Jesus: Uncovering the Divinity of Christ in the Gospels*. What's special about this is that David and I have been friends for a year or year and a half. He is a big user of Logos Bible Software, so we've corresponded quite a bit about that. He's read *The Unseen Realm* and really likes that. We've had a number of theological conversations. He asked me to read the draft of this book (his most recent one) and give it a blurb, and I did that. So if you get the book or go to Amazon and flip it over, you'll see my blurb at the top of his book. I asked him when we were chatting about doing the blurb... I said, "Hey, it'd be great if you came on the podcast. People could get to know you a little bit more, not as a political commentator but as somebody who's really interested in Scripture, maybe get your testimony and that sort of thing." He was real enthusiastic to come on the podcast, so we'll have him as Larry King used to say, "for the FULL HOUR!" (laughs) It'll be fun. I'm sure it'll be a good interview.

**TS:** Yeah, looking forward to it. All right, Mike, why don't we just get into our questions here if you're ready. I'm ready!

**MH:** Yeah.

**TS:** Our first question is from Molly. She's got a couple questions.

**Her first question is about Numbers 21:4-9 and episode 103 of the Naked Bible Podcast about the bronze snake. She wants to know if Dr. Heiser can please unpack this. It just seems bizarre that looking at a snake at a pole could cure a snakebite. I know the snake intertwined on a pole is a modern symbol of medicine. I know that Hezekiah had the bronze snake destroyed because the people were burning incense to it, but what is the meaning of this episode in Numbers?**

**MH:** I thought we had actually done that in episode 103, so for those listening I'd say to go listen to that. To abbreviate it, the serpent and the serpent-image (the thing fashioned there) didn't heal anybody. It was God who healed the people who looked at it. So God is healing the afflicted, whoever they were, when they looked at the serpent on the pole. In other words, when they showed faith—when they trusted in the thing God told Moses to make—and when they in faith did the thing God told them to do through Moses, God healed them. I think as far as the larger meaning, back in episode 103 we talked about how things like this from a scholarly context (looking at the wider ancient Near Eastern context)... We talked

about sympathetic magic. We talked about serpents being symbols of healing in the ancient Near East. Again, those things are what they are. If you're new to the podcast, sympathetic magic is the idea of how people would fashion an object that corresponded to something they wanted the deity to do. Sort of the classic example of this in the Bible is Genesis 31—the Jacob and Laban story, where Jacob lays out these different variegated rods and the cattle there have babies according to what was laid out. That is a classic example of sympathetic magic. The issue with it is God told him to do that. There you have in Genesis 31 an episode where God tells Jacob to do a certain thing to thwart Laban's attempts to cheat him, and Jacob obeys. Jacob believes that if he does this certain thing... Not that the branches that he lays out are going to do something, but that God will do something in response to his faith. This is how the Old Testament incorporates these sorts of ideas.

Back to the serpent issue, it's really the same issue there. When you do something that God wants you to do... Moses responds by making the object, the people respond by doing what God said needed to be done to be cured, then he cured them. The teaching point is that the God who harms is also the God who heals. In other words, there's no greater deity or power to appeal to. God's giving you the instructions. God's the one who afflicted you, and if you follow God's instructions, now God will heal you. So it's a pretty simple teaching point. If there was any connection to Egypt in terms of what was fashioned (what it looked like)—and again, we aren't told. A lot of the Israelites had been in Egypt, so if there was any connection to Egypt back here, it would have reinforced the idea that the healing had a divine source and not an earthly one. They would have been familiar with things like the uraeus, the cobra, and the way the Egyptians viewed these things. There would have been no ambiguity. "We're healed, not because of anything we could do to help ourselves. We're healed because of the power of God. We're doing what God asked us to do." The image (the serpent on the pole) becomes sort of this mediating object—something tangible that they can look at and respond to in obedience to get the result that God said, "If you do this, I will heal you." And so they do. I don't think it's really much more complicated than that. In episode 103, we talked about how there's really nothing specific to connect the serpent here to Genesis 3. People would have associated it with evil there. There's no hint of that in the passage. But it becomes a good type (a nonverbal prophecy, a precursor, something that prefigures something to come later) for Jesus lifted up on the cross. That, of course, is how it's used in the New Testament—responding in faith to the thing that God said, "If you believe this, then you'll get X, Y, Z result"... eternal life and forgiveness of sins in the case of the cross. It becomes a real nice analogy or typological prefiguring of what happens at the cross.

**TS:** All right. Molly's second question is:

**Can you please discuss the arguments for putting the book of Daniel into "early" or "late?"**

**MH:** (laughs) Yeah, this is a long and convoluted subject. Let's just talk about why the debate is even a debate. In other words, how it originated. I'm going to actually use Stephen Miller's *Daniel* commentary from the *New American Commentary* series. This whole series is pretty conservative theologically. It gives the early date a fair shake here, rather than just dismissing it. In fact, I think it defends it reasonably.

For the sake of the discussion, the early date of Daniel is the one that would say that the book was written in the sixth century B.C.—during the Babylonian period and events which are actually described—the historical context that is actually described in the book of Daniel. The late date of Daniel is centuries later—the second century B.C., so roughly 400 years later. How did we even get to there being a debate? Well, Miller says this:

10:00

Traditionally, it has been held that Daniel wrote the book substantially as it exists today, that the prophecy is historically reliable and that its predictions are supernatural and accurate. Likely there was some modernization of the language as the work was copied throughout the centuries, but otherwise it originated with the prophet in the sixth century B.C...

In modern times, many scholars have maintained that the book in its present time was produced [MH: and that's an important word—composed] by an anonymous Jew during the second century B.C. writing under the pseudonym Daniel and that it consists of nonhistorical accounts and pseudo-prophecies. The purpose of the work in this scenario was to encourage Jewish believers in their struggle against the tyrant Antiochus IV [MH: also known as Antiochus Epiphanes, who lived from 175 to 163 B.C. In other words, during the Maccabean period in Jewish history between the testaments.] This supposition may be called *the Maccabean thesis* [or hypothesis]. According to this view, the book of Daniel would be the latest of the Old Testament scriptures. Often scholars who accept the Maccabean Thesis identify the second-century writer as a member of the religious sect known as the Hasidim...

For almost 1800 years, the traditional [early] view went virtually unchallenged within both Judaism and Christianity. Porphyry [MH: who can basically be dated to the 200's... The date that's given in Miller is debated, but 232 to 303 A.D.—somewhere in that range. I don't know how precise we can actually be.] was an exception to this. Eissfeldt [a German biblical scholar] explains:

"The neo-Platonist Porphyry, in the twelfth book of his polemical work titled 'Against the Christians' indicated the second century B.C. as the actual date of the book's composition and described the greater part of

his prophecies as *vaticinia ex eventu*" [MH: latin for prophecies or predictions made after the event].

His polemic 'Against the Christians' has been lost [MH: it's a document that we can't go read now], but its argument is preserved in Jerome's commentary on Daniel. [MH: Jerome is the guy who translated the Bible into the Latin Vulgate.] Porphyry reasoned "from the *a priori* assumption that there could be no predictive element in prophecy." According to Jerome, Porphyry "claims that the person who composed the book under the name of Daniel made it all up in order to revive the hopes of his countrymen, not that he was able to foreknow all of future history, but rather he records events that had already taken place."

That's the end of Miller's quote, and of course he quotes other people within that. Porphyry's view ultimately was condemned by the Church. Nobody really bought it. But that view now has become kind of a focal point—at least a touch point—for the late view of Daniel. I should point out that there are evangelicals who take the late view of Daniel and don't talk about Daniel the way that Porphyry did. In other words, they don't dismiss the idea that prophets really can foretell the future and that God instructs them to do so on a number of occasions. They view Daniel, though, as having this after-the-fact idea because it is a known genre in the Second Temple period. There are a number of reasons why they would look at Daniel that way and not look at another prophet and his predictions the same way. We can't just call somebody who takes a late view of Daniel as a "Porphyrian" (if that's even a word). That would be an unfair criticism. It might apply, but it would be very unfair.

Having said that, let's just summarize some of the issues. I think this is really what the question was after. A late-date argument would be made as follows. It's not simply about rejecting the idea of predictive prophecy. Scholars who accept the idea that God *can* reveal the future to people but who still take a late date view of Daniel would argue the point on the basis of the following ideas:

1. Much of Daniel 9-11 does, in fact, fit the Maccabean period—pretty closely in fact. Only later material in Daniel (roughly Daniel 11:36 onward) doesn't really jibe well with historical events in the Maccabean period. Mostly late-date advocates would say Daniel made errors here, but evangelicals who take the late date would speculate that after verse 36 we have some predictive prophecy going on. Most evangelicals who would take the late date of Daniel would be more generous than critics who say, "Daniel just screwed it up after verse 36." Of course, if you take the early date you're saying that Daniel predicted it all anyway, but that still doesn't answer the fact that after verse 36 we have historical problems. But if you take an early date, you say that when we hit verse 36 that's talking about events in the distant future. So many late-date evangelicals (to be fair, I would say most of them) would say the same thing once you hit verse 36.

15:00

2. You can argue the late date based on the fact that there are features of late Aramaic in the book of Daniel. Aramaic is like any other language, like English. It goes through discernible stages. What an Aramaic writer would have done in the sixth century is going to differ from what he might do grammatically centuries later. Daniel does have elements of late Aramaic in it. That's just a fact. It's just the way it is.
  
3. The presence of Persian and Greek words (which would both be later than the Babylonian period that the book itself describes) is an argument for a late date. In terms of Greek, I'm going to bring in Gleason Archer here. I think Archer has a pretty good treatment of this issue. He borrows a lot from an old scholar, Robert Dick Wilson, who's an old Princeton scholar—sort of a personal hero of mine from very early in my education. Archer says this:

These three words (in 3:5) are *qayt<sup>e</sup>rôs* (*kitharis* in Greek), *psantērîn* (*psaltērion* in Greek), and *sūmpōnyah* (*symphonia* in Greek). The last of these three does not occur in extant Greek literature until the time of Plato (ca. 370 b.c.), at least in the sense of a musical instrument. From this it has been argued that the word itself must be as late as the fourth century in Greek usage...

But the fact is, you've got three Greek words here that, on the surface, shouldn't be there if the book was written in the sixth century B.C. At least that's the way the argument goes.

4. The Hebrew canon has its own ordering of Old Testament books, and it's different than what you get in your English Bible. In the Hebrew canon, Daniel is not placed among the prophets. It's placed in the last section of the Hebrew Bible, known as "the Writings." There's a lot of late material in the Writings.
  
5. The Jewish writer Ben Sira, who lived circa 180 B.C., wrote in Sirach chapters 44-50... There, he lists significant Israelite or biblical characters in these chapters and he fails to mention Daniel, although he does mention Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and (collectively) the twelve Minor Prophets. So some reason from this that Ben Sira didn't know Daniel because Daniel didn't exist yet as a book.
  
6. Scholars often fixate on the word "Chaldean," which they say is late and shouldn't be there if Daniel was written in the sixth century.

7. Daniel is very obviously in the apocalyptic literature genre, which if you're just sort of counting genre noses (in other words, the number of ancient books that have apocalyptic features)... What are apocalyptic features? When you have angels coming and talking to people (specifically about the future), cosmic imagery about heaven and hell in the future, impending disaster, the ultimate afterlife, and Day of the Lord kind of stuff. Again, these things are associated with angels specifically and the way they come and dispense messages. Those are sort of classic stock elements of apocalyptic literature. Think of the book of Revelation. Most of the content of Revelation is mediated through angels. So that kind of literature, if you're just counting the number of books that would have those features as opposed to the ones who don't, overwhelmingly (I mean *overwhelmingly*) that kind of literature is dated from the third century B.C. onward. So it would be late.

That's how you would argue a late date for the book of Daniel, regardless of the prophecy issue. What about an early date? How would the early date argue its position and defend itself among some of these other things? Here's how it would be done:

20:00

1. Events in the book are set in the sixth century B.C. and they're very consistent with known historical figures: Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. They're also consistent with events: the exile, the Jews to Babylon... In fact, the book gives us a date about the exile and so that's when the book is set and there's no reason to think that it shouldn't be situated in terms of its composition in that period. So you have that.
2. Daniel 1:1 gives you an exact date, so why not just accept that?
3. Daniel also has features of early Aramaic. Yes, it does have features of late Aramaic, but it also has clear features of early Aramaic. Now, late-daters would say that's because the guy who was writing late wanted to give the book a feel of antiquity, so he's living after the fact and he would just sort of throw in some of this late grammatical stuff to give the reader of the original language this feel of antiquity for the book. That's how they would counteract that. But the fact of the matter is, in terms of its Aramaic portions, you have features of both early and late Aramaic in there.
4. In regard to Ben Sira's list, it's a long list that spans five or six chapters, but it is still selective if you actually read it. In other words, Ben Sira doesn't mention everybody he *could* mention in terms of a noble, biblical character in those chapters, so it's not a big deal that Daniel's not there. He just got skipped for whatever reason.
5. About Daniel's placement in the canon (in the late portion, the portion of the Writings and not the Prophets), early-daters would say that's due to his

primary role of a government administrator in Babylon and not as a classical prophet like the other guys. So they would say, "Look, the fact that it's placed in the Writings just sort of situates it historically, because a lot of other stuff in the writings has its orientation with the Babylonian and Persian empires." If you're familiar with the Writings, maybe some of your favorite books are going to be in there, like Job, and you've always heard that Job is early. That's one of those things... We could do an episode on that alone. There's no guarantee that Job is early. Job has a lot of features of late Hebrew. Hebrew is like Aramaic and like English. There are clear stages in the language. There's nothing that necessitates Job being an early book, even though everybody's always taught that. "Well, there's no reference to the covenants or the Law!" Well, maybe they're just not part of the story line. That's not a really good argument. "Well, they're doing patriarchal stuff!" Yeah, well Job is from the land of Uz, which isn't in Canaan. This is a Trans-Jordanian situation, so why would we think they're doing theocratic stuff associated with Moses and the temple? They don't live there! There's no reason, specifically, that you have to take Job early. So if you look at the collection of the Writings and the late stuff you're going to say that this order doesn't make any sense because this other stuff isn't late... Again, it may be. Early-daters would say that Daniel winds up there because of what the book describes—its setting and his role as administrator in Babylon and not as a classical prophet in the Promised Land proper like the other prophets were. So that's the counter-argument.

6. In regard to the term "Chaldean," Heroditus, writing in 450 B.C. uses "Chaldean" as a term. You say that's still later than the sixth century. It is. BUT, there are Assyrian records that go well before the Babylonian period that mention the *kaldu* in cuneiform inscriptions. The *kaldu* were prominent officials in the bureaucracy. R.K. Harrison's introduction to the Old Testament points that out. Robert Dick Wilson pointed it out in his work at the turn of the 20th century. Again, the Chaldean argument really isn't that good of an argument for a late date but you'll still see it.
7. What about those Greek words? I'll reference you to Archer here again (a little paragraph). Archer writes:

Since we now possess less than one-tenth of the significant Greek literature of the classical period, we lack sufficient data for timing the precise origin of any particular word or usage in the development of the Greek vocabulary [MH: I think that's a fair point]. It should carefully be observed that these three words are names of musical instruments and that such names have always circulated beyond national boundaries as the instruments themselves have become available to the foreign market. These three were undoubtedly of Greek origin and circulated with their

Greek names in Near Eastern markets, just as foreign musical terms have made their way into our own language, like the Italian *piano* and *viola*.

What Archer is saying here is that since these Greek terms are all about objects (musical instruments), just because they don't occur in literature doesn't mean that someone in the ancient Near East had never encountered one of these instruments or the person(s) who played them who would have told them what the thing was called. So in the course of cultural interaction (maybe through trade or shipping or who knows how), people would have carried these things from Greece into the ancient Near East and people in the ancient Near East would have encountered them in return. They would have heard them played and would have said, "Hey, what is that thing you're playing over there?" and then they would have heard the term. The term could have wound up in foreign discourse, just like *piano* and *viola* do in English. They could have wound up in foreign discourse without ever actually being described in literature. To me, that's a fair point. You can see how that could happen with objects of this nature.

8. Lastly, what about the apocalyptic genre issue? This is one that I think the late-daters really over-hype. I'm not going to say it's not important. It is important and there is an obvious mass of apocalyptic material that's late. That's all true. They're not making that up. But apocalypticism begins in Mesopotamian literature. The best source of this (and it's dense reading and it's really, really hard to find—it took me years to find this book) is by Helge Kvanvig. The book is called *The Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*. Now we all know from the content of this podcast that Second Temple Jewish material has deep Mesopotamian roots. And so the point here is that apocalypticism has deep Mesopotamian roots. This is not a third century B.C. invention. If Daniel is living in Mesopotamia (Babylon), the chances are reasonable that he could have encountered apocalyptic literature/stuff, or that what he is writing about the future would have had some of these stock elements in it. Literarily, this is how you could write this kind of literature. Daniel is literate, he's well-trained (we know this from the book of Daniel), he's trained in all these skills and in the sciences and in the knowledge of his captors. So if he's used to having a certain set of ideas conveyed with certain literary conventions, if that's what he's been educated in, it's not unreasonable to expect that his own material would have followed the mold. That happens everywhere in the Bible. People write things using the literary conventions of how things are written. If you don't follow them, you look like a hack. You look like you don't know what you're doing. You don't look like a professional writer. So the apocalyptic argument is legit, but it's not as powerful as you'd think. There is reason for debate here, but it's not a completely one-sided debate. That's my point.

So there you go. There's how the early and late views would be defended. I'll wrap up just by saying this—another quote here. It's by Zdravko Stefanovic. He wrote the volume in the Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series called *The Aramaic of Daniel in the Light of Old Aramaic*. What he does is he studies old Aramaic inscriptions and he compares the grammar and syntax to what you find in Daniel. So he's starting out with certifiably old material—old imperial Aramaic and that sort of stuff that you would expect in the seventh, sixth, fifth centuries B.C. And then he compares it to Daniel. Here's what he writes in his conclusion:

The contextual discussion of the literary and grammatical features of Old Aramaic (OA) texts, when brought into contact with DA, yields the following results:

30:00

1. The often-assumed uniformity of OA cannot be maintained any longer, since a study of the grammar of OA inscriptions gives a different picture of this aspect of OA texts. The Tell Fakhriyah inscription, with its sizable number of unexpected phenomena, points strongly to this...
2. This study contributes to the present discussions of Daniel's Aramaic (DA) in that it presents answers to certain objections raised regarding the traditional dating of DA. Three factors must be accounted for in any conclusion on DA: geography, chronology, and the literary character of the text.
3. The text of DA in its present form (including ch. 7) contains a significant amount of material similar to OA texts.

The key *desideratum* coming out of this study is that the search for features in DA of an early date should be pursued more intensively in the future.

This is the most recent book-length study (1992) on the Aramaic of Daniel, and basically he says that you can't date the book by the Aramaic. It's got as many features of old as it does late, so that ain't working. It's not an argument that can really be used as positive proof for a late view. So that's what I would say in response to the question. I know that was long, but that gives you a run-down on how each side is argued. I understand why people care about it. Even if you take the late view when you hit verse 36, though, unless you just want to say that Daniel's a screw-up and this thing is full of errors now... If you don't want to say that, you still have to say that he's predicting the future. So in once sense it is about a theological commitment, even for late-daters. So I would stress that if you run into somebody who takes a late view of Daniel, you've got to probe that a little bit with questions: What do you mean? Do you rule out predictive prophecy totally for any portion of the book? Do you rule out predictive prophecy *totally* for

the whole Old Testament or the whole Bible? If the answer is yes there, then you've got someone with a theological bias. But the answer might be no, so then you have a different discussion on your hands. We'll just leave it there.

**TS: Colin wants to know what Zechariah 5 is about: female angels and women with the wings of a stork? What?!**

**MH:** Yeah. I would say the first piece of advice here is don't overly literalize the text. This is a vision. Visions characteristically have symbols, and this is no exception. The women in the vision are never called angels. That's the first thing. They're called women. In fact, verse 10 distinguishes the angel (that is in the scene to begin with) from the women. So you have two features of the text that divorce the women from the angel category.

I'll grant that this is a question because of the repeated, ubiquitous imagery in our own day of angels having wings—something that isn't a biblical idea. It's medieval. Or (I'll be more generous), it might be the result of seraphim and cherubim with angels—in other words, assuming that seraphim and cherubim are angels even though neither of those terms (seraphim, cherubim) are ever actually called angel (*malak* in Hebrew). They're never called that, but in our tradition we conflate all of these things; we mash them all together. So I think this is a result of early Christian medieval conflation of all heavenly beings into either good guys (angels) or bad guys (demons). It's a simplistic angelology and demonology that we've talked about on this show and in my books a number of times.

Having said that, though, even some good commentators will somehow assume that cherubim are humanoid in appearance and then they'll extrapolate that to this whole angel question, even though they're never called angels. If you look at the Exodus references to the cherubim on the Ark, it never says that they're humanoid in form. That's the movies or some artistic representation. The ones in Ezekiel have a human face, but they've got four faces! There aren't really many people that have four faces. One of the faces is human in appearance and they have hands, but the rest of it is creaturely. If you go back and look at Babylonian art, you're going to find these features and they're clearly not humans and not angels the way angels are actually described in the text. The way that angels are actually described is human-looking. They look like men. They look like people. They're never said to have wings. But again, these things get confused.

35:00

If you have Bible software, I would invite you to do a lemma search for all of the places with both *kerub* and *malak*. You're going to come up with zero hits. They don't occur in the same passage. They're just not there. *Malak* and *kanap* (the word for "wing"). You're going to get zero hits. These terms are not used to describe the other.

As far as what might be the meaning here, I think Klein has a nice summary. This is the New American Commentary. This is the most succinct commentary I could find for this. Klein says:

The woman in the basket appeared suddenly. Likewise, the two winged “women” appeared before the prophet. The angel gives no indication of the identity of these two “women” who now appear in the vision, only offering a few cursory remarks. Curiously, the text describes the women as having the wings of a stork. Although the stork is an unclean animal (Lev 11:19), the comparison between the women’s wings and those of the stork seems to focus on the size and strength of their wings, not on any notion of uncleanness. Consequently, the winged women flew with strength and grace as did their animal counterparts. In the vision, the two women carried the basket with the woman inside from Jerusalem back to Babylon.

The question to ask is, what about the woman in the basket? If you read Zechariah 5, she is a symbol of evil, of wickedness. They're taking the wickedness back to Babylon where it belongs.

The angel may also intend an additional meaning for “stork.”

In other words, when the angel describes these women as having the wings of a stork, there might be something else going on.

Even though the stork ranks among the unclean animals, it also had the reputation for caring tenderly for its own young. This observation lies behind the pun in the Old Testament between the Hebrew word for “stork” (*ḥāsîdāh*) and the word rendered “loyal” or “faithful” (*ḥāsîd*). This same tender care for the helpless young marks the Lord’s treatment of his “young,” the Israelites

That's why he's getting rid of the wickedness and sending it back to Babylon. So there might be some word-play going on here. I think the chances are good that that's the case because this is Zechariah. This is post-exilic. This is after the exile, coming back to the land; we take the wickedness back to Babylon where it belongs. This is an act of the grace of God, not counting their sins against them and bringing them along... No, you leave them back there and then you come home. I think that's the point of the passage.

**TS:** Our next question comes from two of our listeners tracking on the same idea. They're from Tammy and Nathan. I'll read Tammy's first.

**I have questions about Genesis 34, where God buries Moses' body where no man would find it and Jude's account of the archangel Michael and Satan's conversation about Moses' body. Do you agree that although**

**avoiding idolatry is a viable reason to hide the body, in light of the reality of today's DNA sciences, isn't it feasible to believe that God wanted to prevent mankind from obtaining Moses' DNA? I'd like to hear Mike's actual thoughts about this topic from the worldview in Jude's time in contrast to our present-day worldview. In this day and age, in my faith as I understand it, I believe that being in the presence of God would have changed anyone's physical body. I believe Moses died because God revealed himself to Moses. Otherwise, after spending 40 days and 40 nights in God's presence (not even face to face), I would not be surprised if Moses' physical body is still well-preserved and that's why God hid it.**

Nathan also kind of echoes this. He says:

**In the book of Jude, there is a reference that Michael battled over the body of Moses. Every time someone mentions the book of Jude, I can't help but wonder why they would have been fighting over the body of Moses.**

40:00

**MH:** Okay. I would say to start off that if we're going to go by the ancient worldview, this has nothing to do with DNA. They don't know what DNA is, for one thing. But even for those of us now who do, I don't think any of this has anything to do with DNA at all. I don't think in the case of Moses that his DNA was affected. Take Peter, James, and John. They see the glory of the unveiled Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. They're not changed in any way. This is sort of a cause/effect thing that I don't think is valid. I do think the idolatry trajectory that Tammy pointed out is really important, based on the biblical behavior with religious relics like the bronze serpent and even the behavior of believers afterward with relic-worship in late antiquity/Middle Ages and all that stuff. But the shining of Moses' face is not a property of Moses' body as the result of a DNA change. It was an after-effect of being in God's presence. Again, you have other people in the presence of the glory of God. Incidentally, the Transfiguration has clear touch-points with glory passages in the Old Testament by design to associate Jesus with the Old Testament glory. There's nothing going on there as far as some visual change. So I don't think Moses' body was altered in any way. I think this was a visual after-effect, probably because of the number of days and all that stuff. I don't think Moses' body was or is preserved. I don't think it would matter, other than the situation with idolatry.

When it comes to Jude, this is actually really a convenient question. It comes at the right time because what I'm going to say about this dovetails into what we just covered with Ezekiel 38/39 in Part 2. So if you haven't listened to Part 2 of Ezekiel 38/39, you may want to do that so that you can process what I'm going to say here. Let's just start here with a small quote from Bauckham's commentary. This will give you a flavor for the standard view, at least among scholars. Bauckham has spent a good bit of time on the epistles of Peter and Jude, and he's an expert in Second Temple literature. It's a good source, but I think he sort of under-argues a point because he's not as familiar with the Old Testament

context as we wish he would be in this case. In his commentary on Jude 9 (which is the relevant verse about this conflict between the devil and Michael for the body of Moses), he writes:

τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος διελέγετο περὶ τοῦ Μωϋσέως σώματος, “in debate with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses.” The words refer to a legal dispute (διακρινόμενος as in Joel 4:2 LXX) [MH: so this is legal vocabulary used in the Septuagint and other Greek literature]. The devil in his ancient role as accuser tried to establish Moses’ guilt, in order to prove him unworthy of honorable burial and to claim the body for himself.

That, I think, reflects the standard view. I have a little bit of a bone to pick with that because I think, honestly, we can do better. But we're certainly going to be the beneficiary of Baukham's work when it comes to Second Temple Jewish texts that sort of track with this (with what I'm going to say) or that kind of lay behind it.

Here's what I would say. Jude 9 is related... It's fair to say that it's part of a tradition or borrows from Second Temple Jewish thinking that the Lord of the Dead tried to claim the body of Moses. I think that's pretty obvious. The tradition, though Baukham doesn't seem aware of this, may extend from some of the elements we covered last time in Part 2 of Ezekiel 38 and 39. Think with me here. Note that the place of Moses' burial has something to do with Part 2 of our last episode on Ezekiel 38 and 39. Deuteronomy 34:6 says:

**<sup>6</sup>and [God] buried [Moses] in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.**

The description doesn't give us a precise location for the burial, but what it does say is interesting. "The valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor" sounds a lot like (and geographically corresponds to) "the Valley of the Travelers" mentioned in Ezekiel 39:11. If you listened to the last episode, I read a portion of the DDD entry on travelers. I'm going to read this again—this little bit of it. DDD says:

45:00

The valley of the *‘ōbērîm* [travelers] is located ‘east of the sea’ (v 11)...

We said the sea here is likely the Dead Sea, so it's in Moab. It's in that part of the world. It's in Trans-Jordan.

The valley of the *‘ōbērîm* is located ‘east of the sea’ (v 11), which is probably the Dead Sea. So it was part of Transjordan. This is a region which shows many traces of ancient cults of the dead, such as the megalithic monuments called dolmens and place names referring to the dead and the netherworld, viz. Obot [which means ‘Spirit-of-the-Dead’], Peor [which relates to the Baal of Peor], and Abarim.

We talked last time about how the place name *Abarim* likely is related to or is named after *‘ōbērîm*, the Valley of the Travelers. Who were the travelers? Again, you'd have to listen to the last episode, but basically this has to deal with this location being associated with the realm of the dead and the passing over to the realm of the dead. That place was where the Rephaim were. It's in the Transjordan. There were Rephaim giant clans there, the spirits of the dead giants—the demons—and all this kind of stuff. This whole matrix of ideas is in play (I would suggest) in this episode. It's part of the backdrop to understanding Jude 9 and the struggle over the body of Moses. Now *Obot* and *Abarim* (just by way of summary here) were places associated with the realm of the dead and the Rephaim. It seems possible (to me, anyway) and I would say it's even reasonable that Moses would have been buried in the place associated with the realm of the dead—in this part of the Transjordan. "This is the gateway to the realm of the dead... we're going to bury him there!" God buries him there. The Rephaim were part of that underworld. Everybody goes to the underworld. Everybody dies. You have to think like an Old Testament person here. "He's right on the doorstep here, so let's bury him here. This is the gateway to the netherworld where we all go. We all go to Sheol."

Now it was the hope of the righteous to one day be removed from the grave—to be taken out of Sheol. We've talked about this many times on the show, but all these terms like "hell," "Gehenna," "Sheol," "the Valley of the *‘ōbērîm*"... All these terms are sort of linguistic or verbal necessities for us. They describe a place that actually... In reality, the spirit world does not have earthly latitude and longitude. These are places associated with death and where the dead go, for whatever reason. We can't necessarily completely capture the reasoning behind some of these terms and the places, but we use words like "heaven" and "hell," and we still use words like "passing over" and all that... We do that because we're trying to describe the transition of the embodied life in this world (the world we know and inhabit) and a world that is for the disembodied or for a different kind of body—the spiritual place, the afterlife. The only way we can describe that is to use terms of place and terms that involve latitude and longitude as though they were places. So this is what we've got going on here.

It shouldn't shock us that Moses winds up getting buried in a place that was associated with the passing-over from this life to the next—the realm of the dead. "Well, why would God send him to hell?" God isn't sending him to hell. God is burying him. He's taking Moses' life (if you want to put it that way). It's time for Moses to die—or depart from this world, if you want to resist the conclusion that Moses died (some people want to argue that)... whatever. God is removing him from this terrestrial world and putting him in the next world. I think you have to conclude more than that because there's talk of a body, but I'm trying to be generous here.

50:00

So we've got a situation where it's time for Moses to depart into the next life, into the afterlife. In the afterlife, there are good parts and bad parts in the spiritual world. We still think this way today, even though we have a New Testament. We go to the spiritual world. The soul/spirit separates from the body; we die and go to the spiritual world. There are good parts to that... there's a good place, and there's a bad place. We use the same kinds of descriptors here, that's the point. So if we look at the passage in that way, Moses' death/departure is associated with the Valley of the *'Ĕbērīm*, the land of the dead.

Now let's go a little step further. I would say if you're looking at it that way it is, in turn, quite understandable if there arose a Second Temple tradition about the body of Moses. Arguably, Moses is the central figure of Israelite history. If a tradition arose that Moses' body was contested by the Lord of the Dead... In other words, if the person in charge there (Baal, Baalzebul... Baal becomes the Satan figure and all that sort of stuff—the Lord of the Dead in the Second Temple period and in the New Testament is identified as Satan.) It seems to suggest, though, that there was some sort of contention about not letting Moses pass to the good place. In other words, to punish Moses—to contest Moses' ultimate destiny. It seems reasonable that this idea could have arisen because of where Moses is buried and because of who else is there in this place. So he gets contested by Satan—by the devil—in this time period. You see this tradition develop. To me, that's understandable. Now Michael was Israel's prince. He is the guardian of Yahweh's portion, according to Daniel 10 and 12. In some sense, he would be the logical candidate to get Moses, to deliver him from this threat—to claim the body of Moses for the eschatological land of promise. Remember, Moses didn't get to actually inhabit the Promised Land, he got to see it from a distance. But he goes and claims the body of Moses for the eschatological land of promise, which is the domain of Yahweh. It's Yahweh's house, it's Yahweh's place, it's where Yahweh lives. What I'm saying here is that it seems reasonable that this tradition about Moses (because he's so important) could have arisen because of the context of where he dies and where he's buried and the associations with that place. The idea of the tradition coming about doesn't surprise me, really, at all.

If this scenario is coherent in any way... I'm suggesting that there's a lot to chew on here. I think it is coherent. It may not be perfect, but there's a lot to chew on here. Then Baukham's speculation about this having something to do with guilt is a bit misguided. It's kind of on target, but it also misses the point. Baukham refers to Zechariah 3:2. This is the scene where you've got the angel of Yahweh, you have the *satan* figure there (*ha satan*), you've got Joshua the high priest, who is guilty and being accused by the *satan* figure. The problem I have with it is that the *satan* figure of Zechariah is not the same as the devil in Second Temple Judaism or the New Testament. You don't have the *satan* in the Old Testament playing that role. You do have him as an accuser, and Joshua the high priest in Zechariah 3 represents the guilt of the nation. Of course, he's going to be forgiven because in Zechariah we're dealing with coming out of the exile and all

that sort of thing. But when it comes to Moses, Moses isn't responsible for that. I don't know how you're transferring the guilt of the nation to Moses. It just doesn't make any sense to me. But again, Baukham tries to connect these two things, I think because this is where you get *satan* vocabulary that might be useful to understanding Jude 9. That's the part of his (and probably fair to say a majority argument) that I'm just saying doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Moses isn't being accused of any unrighteousness like Joshua the high priest.

On the positive side, Baukham does marshal some really interesting parallels to Jude 9 in pseudepigraphical texts. These can date anywhere from a couple centuries B.C. in the Second Temple period all the way to the first century. I'm just going to give you some references here because I don't want to... I'm debating here. Well, I'll read some of this because it's kind of interesting. But if you really want to get the full treatment here, you'd buy Baukham's *Word Biblical Commentary in 2 Peter and Jude* and you can get the whole thing. He refers to, for instance, Jubilees 17:15-18:16. Baukham writes:

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*Jub.* 17:15–18:16 tells the story of the sacrifice of Isaac within the framework of a heavenly trial of Abraham (cf. Job 1–2), in which the prince of the Mastema (equals Satan) again appears as accuser, arguing that Abraham's faithfulness should be tested. When Abraham proves faithful, it is the angel of the presence who, on God's behalf, intervenes to save Isaac (cf. Gen 22:11–12), while "the prince of the Mastema was put to shame" (*Jub.* 18:12)...

The book of Jubilees makes further use of the theme of the contest between Satan and the angel, especially in chap 48, to illuminate the career of Moses and the Exodus. According to 48:2–3, it was the prince of the Mastema (not the Lord, as in Ex 4:24) who tried to kill Moses [MH: **So the Jubilees tradition sort of subverts that; they don't want God to be killing Moses so they swap in the devil figure to do that**], and it was the angel of the presence who delivered Moses from his power (48:5). Though Satan's motivation here plainly derives from his enmity toward God and God's people (48:4), it may be that the author still intends him to be seen in the role of accuser: it was Moses' failure to circumcise his son (Gen 4:25) which put him into Satan's power.

What Baukham does is he marshals texts like this that pit the *satan* figure (the devil or Satan or a *satan* figure) against the angel of the presence or the angel of the Lord and says this might be the Second Temple Jewish backdrop to Jude 9. I think there is something to this idea, but I think we're better off thinking about the geography here and what that would have telegraphed about the realm of the dead—the Valley of the *ʿObērīm* and all that. That's an important element, too. What I'm suggesting to all of you listening is to take the Second Temple material for what it's worth. There are some interesting possible parallels or precursors to Jude 9, but you also need to factor in some Old Testament material to get a fuller picture of what people were thinking. What they're thinking, I'm suggesting, is

that Moses was so central a figure to the Israelites that when he went into the afterlife there was resistance to allowing Moses to join the Lord. That was an idea. Did that really happen? Well, Jude brings this up so we have an inscripturation (an inspired comment) to this effect. So I would say, "Yeah, something happened like that! There was resistance to Moses being with the Lord after he died." What that looked like and what we know... maybe some of these texts are helpful, but the idea isn't that quaint when you think about the geography of it.

**TS:** Derrick in Kansas has a question for Mike in regards to biblical genealogies.

**In the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, Mike has said in the past that the genealogies have gaps and they were not meant to be exact ancestry, but rather a general bloodline type of thing, as well as paralleling the Sumerian Kings List. However, it seems in extrabiblical literature, as well as early church commentaries, they assumed it was direct lineage rather than a telescoped ancestry. How would Mike reconcile that with the gaps? Or take, for instance, Jude 14, which says Enoch was the seventh from Adam. How does that work with genealogical gaps? And does Mike believe that the men listed in the genealogies actually lived to the age that it says, or is it purely a literary thing? For instance, did Methuselah actually live 969 years?**

**MH:** There are a number of questions here. First of all, I would say that I haven't said and wouldn't say (and frankly don't know anybody that says) that there are gaps in *all* of the genealogies. I would also say that there may be gaps in one genealogy but that doesn't mean you have a gap in another. So it's not an all-or-nothing kind of proposition.

In regard to the ages, people can go to [drmsb.com](http://drmsb.com) and put in the word "genealogy" or "mathematical." I've blogged about this a number of times. I think there is some sort of mathematical thing going on with the genealogies that is literary. It's designed to telegraph something. Nobody's really come up with one that works all the time, although if you search for that on my site it leads to an article that gives you a summary of the approaches. There is certainly something going on with the Sumerian King List in that respect that people have figured out what the cipher is. People have taken really good shots at the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 to come up with a cipher. Some of the shots are better than others, but I do suspect there is something mathematical going on there. That would mean that the patriarchal figures here... We can't assume that the numbers here are actually designed to give us their actual, literal lifespan. There's something else going on here for some theological reason. In the space of the podcast here, that's about all I can say. Go up to site, get the article, get the summary, read through it, and you'll get an idea of what I'm talking about and why.

1:00:00

Back to the gap issue, nobody is saying there are gaps in every genealogy. I don't have any problem saying that Adam is the seventh from Adam like the text says he is. Think about this, though. Even though I have no trouble thinking Enoch was the seventh from Adam, you have to realize that Jude is just quoting what he's reading in the Old Testament. It may well be in real-time that there were gaps in that genealogy, but Jude can't really quote something he doesn't know. He can't quote information he's never given. He's just quoting the Old Testament and he's quoting it accurately, but that doesn't mean that there's something else that could be going on here.

I think, in his case, that we do have the seventh from Adam... I think the number seven is really important. If you read the mathematical cipher article you'll find out why. Especially with Enoch, that is a big deal. I personally would think that Enoch is the seventh from Adam and that means something theologically. Enoch's own number (365) would be significant. Again, you can read the material there. So this isn't an either/or kind of thing that you can parse.

My view, again, is that I'm willing to bet that there are gaps in some of the genealogies and that the numbers involve some sort of mathematical cipher going on. What I would recommend to Derrick and to the rest of the listeners is a book called... and it only exists in Kindle, unfortunately. I don't have Kindle, but I went to hear this guy at the last set of academic meetings. The Evangelical Theological Society had a full afternoon session on biblical genealogies. Doesn't that sound exciting? But I went to that and this guy was one of the speakers. It's a book called *God of the Gaps: Gaps in Biblical Genealogies Make it Impossible to Calculate the Date of Creation*. It's a long, clunky title. It's authored by two people: Hugh Henry and Daniel Dyke. As I recall, the guy that was there was Hugh Henry (at the last ETS). It was a really interesting session because he had approaches to gaps that I've not heard of before or seen. For example, he would take comments in the Scripture about the number of generations between this or that event, which included the names of biblical figures that also happened to be in genealogies, and he showed how either certain names get skipped or how the time frame between the events could not be reconciled with the number of generations in the genealogies based on other passages that sort of define how long a generation is. The point of his presentation was that it's not about just looking at lists of names. You have to look at statements made about figures and about time periods—about X number of years between this and that event or between generations—and then go look at the genealogy and ask yourself, "Could this number of generations in the genealogy account for that number of years that we know has to take place because of the Bible's own chronology?" And he actually showed examples of where it just doesn't work. His hypothesis was that the genealogical information is selective and, in some cases, you have to conclude that there's skipping going on (that there must be gaps in the information) and that what is used is used for a specific purpose—to highlight someone or something. But you can't just use the numbers to do a strict chronology. I would recommend that work just because I saw some things in that

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presentation that were just different. I had not seen anybody take some of the approaches that these two guys did (again, only one speaker was presenting). I just found it really interesting. Again, it's called *God of the Gaps: Gaps in Biblical Genealogies Make it Impossible to Calculate the Date of Creation*. It's only available in Kindle, unfortunately, so if you don't have Kindle like me, you can't actually go get a hard copy of it. I suppose at some point I'll go get a Kindle just to have this, but I have what was given at the session. It was just really interesting.

**TS:** Our next two questions are from Lindsay. The first one is:

**Christians like to say that evil cannot dwell in God's presence and that gives support to the Levitical system and the doctrine of hell. However, how do we conceive of Satan's presence before God in the Old Testament? What about fallen but not yet judged council members?**

**MH:** I have to admit that I'm not quite sure I understand the question. I'll just take a stab at it, though. The idea that evil cannot dwell in God's presence, I think, is more homiletical (it's more preaching) than biblical, in a certain sense. What I mean by that is this, for example: God is omnipresent. Just a standard staple of Theology Proper (who God is by his nature). God is omnipresent. So that means there's no place where he isn't. Evil is in his presence pretty much all the time. (laughs) The same is true in the spiritual world, since there's no part of that world off-limits to God. You're either omnipresent or you're not. And God is omnipresent. I think Scripture teaches this pretty clearly. And so God "coexists" with fallen divine beings all of the time. That's why I say this idea to me is more preaching than it is really careful thinking biblically.

I say all that to say that I'd have to know what verses Lindsay is specifically thinking of for this idea that evil can't dwell in God's presence. I'm not going to take a stab at specific verses. I know there are some that suggest some idea like that, but I'd have to know what the specific verses are before venturing too much further. If I were to throw caution to the wind for a minute, I would add again that a term like "hell" is an afterlife term. It's not a place with latitude and longitude. It's a place in the spiritual world and God is a resident in the spiritual world, by definition. That alone shows us that there's some sort of co-existence with other parts of the spiritual world and their inhabitants, because there's no place where God isn't.

Consequently, I think the point of any passage about God not wanting evil in his presence is really better understood as some teaching point or statement about defilement or the fact that God doesn't *tolerate* evil in the sense of ever approving of it. The Levitical system was about teaching humans the difference between them and God. That's pretty transparent. It was about teaching people about his otherness or the difference between God's space and normal, mundane space (sacred space vs. other space). I doubt if divine beings don't know there's a

difference between where God is and where they are or something like that. So I think there's a bit of a disconnect there, too, but catch the main point: God is omnipresent. He is everywhere. There is no place where God isn't. In that sense, he is in the "presence" of evil and rebellious divine beings a lot. This theological reality (which is Scriptural) needs to have an impact on any verse that talks about God not liking evil in his presence. There has to be a relationship struck between those two ideas. But without having a specific verse to jump into, right now that's about all I can say.

**TS:** Lindsay's second question is:

**In Mark 7:31, there is a strange account of Jesus healing the deaf and dumb man. Jesus puts his fingers in his ears, spits, touches his tongue, and then says, "Be opened." Could this Gentile have understood Jesus as performing the mouth-opening ritual for idols? Could Jesus be enacting something similar, preparing this man as the idol/image of God to receive God's indwelling Spirit?**

**MH:** I actually don't really think so. I don't think the opening of the mouth ceremony is in view for a couple of reasons. There ritual/ceremony itself represented birth for an idol. It's the moment of animation. It also was a metaphor for rebirth in a spiritual sense. In this passage specifically, we don't really have any commentary to the effect that this person becomes a believer now. It's just absent. We don't have it, so anything you'd say about it in that direction is based on no data—it's based on silence.

1:10:00

For those interested in the opening of the mouth thing (to establish what it was for), I will post a couple of articles. There are two of them and they're actually pretty long and detailed. It goes through the Egyptian ritual. I used to have my students in the Egyptology class I taught here locally read both of these articles. They're really interesting because the opening of the mouth ritual deliberately mimics what you do with a newborn baby... in other words, how you clear it's airway with your fingers and stuff like that—what you do with the infant, and even really what we do today. They would actually do those same motions and have ritual objects to substitute for fingers and what-not to stick in the nose and all that. They would actually do that to idols to mimic what they would do to newborn humans. The idea was that this was the moment of birth/animation for the idol. I'm going to throw those in the folder that newsletter subscribers get access to (they get the "address," so to speak to that folder). If you want to go up and read those two articles on the opening of the mouth, that's how you'd find them in the folder. You'd search for them that way. If you're into this kind of stuff, I think you'd find them really interesting.

Let's go back to Mark 7. There is a parallel to this in Matthew 15, but that one's even less detailed—more general. Both of the episodes in Matthew and Mark, respectively, precede the feeding of the four thousand, so we know there's a

parallel there even without much detail. To be honest with you, there's really not much written specifically on this question, like you get with the spitting in the dirt and making clay. We've done an episode (or else it was in a Q&A) about how there was a Dead Sea Scroll that ties Jesus spitting in the dirt and making clay and healing someone that way... it ties that to Jewish tradition about how God made man in the creation narrative. If you didn't listen to that, the phrase that man is created "from the dust of the ground"... There was a strong tradition that what was meant there was that God spit in the dirt and made clay and then made the man. The reason they thought that was because of Jeremiah and the whole potter and clay description of how God made human beings. You don't really have any clay in view for this, though, so it doesn't really apply to this passage without the clay. The clay is kind of important because of the Genesis tie-in and the potter/clay tie-in. This is something sort of related-but-different.

To be honest with you, you're not going to find much in terms of commentaries and journal articles on this. The people who comment on it get lost in the geography. There's this big huge debate over whether Mark understands the geography of Canaan in his day... it's just a weird itinerary that has Jesus skipping around here and there. They get lost in the details about the geography. They get lost in the term *Ephaphtha* in the verse. "Is that Aramaic or Hebrew?" This is the kind of thing scholars just get fixated on. I'll be honest with you: you're not going to find very much that's terribly helpful, even in a normally good commentary. So far we don't have any specific parallels to that.

Lastly, I would add that even though there's no clay here, you still do have spit. So if you went back and listened to that earlier episode, spit did have something to do with the act of creation. I suppose you could have had somebody (when they read this passage in the first century) who might think of a creator. But I'll be honest with you: I think it's a stretch because of the absence of the clay element. Again, the clay was important because of the potter and clay metaphor that we get in Jeremiah. That's probably not much help, but I don't think it's the opening of the mouth ritual. I don't think we have the really necessary elements, the point of that ritual, specifically. We don't get those details mentioned in the passage.

**TS:** Matthew in the UK has a question.

**Am I correct in assuming that the angels mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:16 are the imprisoned angels that Jesus has spoken to?**

**MH:** I don't think so. Rebellious divine beings aren't typically called "angels" without some qualifier for clarity. There's an exception, which I'll get to in a moment, but usually we get things like "angels that sinned" or "evil spirits" or "spirits in prison" or "the devil and his angels." Those qualifiers help identify what side this particular being is on.

The clear exception is 1 Corinthians 6:3.

1:15:00

**<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we are to judge angels?**

That's very likely a reference to the inheritance of the nations that we've talked about a lot on this podcast and that I've talked about in *Unseen Realm*. It's very likely a reference to the inheritance of the nations and the displacing of the fallen sons of God that get their beginning in Deuteronomy 32:8-9. But it could be a general reference to glorified believers outranking angels at the end of the eschaton, but I think it is a reference to the displacement of the sons of God because of other language in Revelation 2 and 3. Again, you can go read that in *Unseen Realm*.

If we look at Hebrews 1 and 2, you have references there to things like how God didn't help the angels but he helped human beings through the atonement of Christ. That obliquely might suggest that he has fallen angels (angels that might need redemption and can't get it) there. The passage, I think, certainly can be read that way. I've blogged recently about that and how I think that gives us an interpretive clue to the question of angelic redemption. At the very least—even if he's not targeting fallen angels in that Hebrews passage—he's making it clear that the atonement and the effect of the atonement was about humanity. That was the big deal because Jesus became incarnate as a man—not as an angel, but as a man.

Again, that's an oblique reference so it's not quite as clear of an exception as 1 Corinthians 6:3 would be, but usually we get some qualifier to make the situation clear. We don't have that in 1 Timothy 3:16. I would be with the mass of commentators here that would say, "seen of angels" in that passage is probably best interpreted as the angels of the tomb (Luke 24:4). I think, even more specifically, Matthew 28:2.

**<sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.**

And then it describes his appearance. "An angel of the Lord"... So some angel from God moves the stone, rolls the stone away. Are we to presume that he never saw Jesus or Jesus didn't like pop out and say, "Good job! This is what you were supposed to do..." You'd have to assume that he never saw the risen savior, which to me is really a stretch. I think what we have in that reference to "seen of angels" is probably best understood as the opening of the tomb scene, the resurrection situation. Look at the order in 1 Timothy 3:16.

**He was manifested in the flesh,  
vindicated by the Spirit,  
seen by angels,**

**proclaimed among the nations,  
believed on in the world,  
taken up in glory.**

You can create something of a chronology for that. It's not really precise because he's taken up in glory before the gospel really advances to the nations. It's not a really good chronology, but it has all the elements there like the book of Acts. At least you could argue (as many scholars do) that the beginning of this is the incarnation and the resurrection through the power of the Spirit, and then you have this "seen by angels" thing which happens after the vindication by the Spirit. Most scholars would say that's a reference to being resurrected through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is language that you get from other passages. Since "angels" follows that, almost all commentators would say that "seen of angels" here is about the resurrection/tomb scene. I think that's pretty reasonable here.

**TS:** We'll end with Cory's question.

**What are some questions Mike wishes people would ask him, either regarding theology or even personal goals? What would Mike most enjoy helping people understand at this point in his life and work.**

**MH:** (laughs) It's such an open-ended question! I should mention to start out that people can ask questions for Q&A that are personal questions. I don't mind that at all. Off the top of my head, I'll tell you what I want to say, Trey. I'd like people ask, "Why did you let Trey win the Fantasy Football League?"

**TS:** Boy, you can't help that! I was unstoppable right there. That's not a choice.

**MH:** That's honestly the first thing that popped into my head when I saw that question.

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Getting a little more serious, I would sort of have two answers to this. One is that it's nice to be able to explain to people why I do what I do—specifically in terms of stuff that I do outside of biblical studies (the fringe stuff like you'd read on Paleobabble). "Why was Mike in the *Ancient Aliens Debunked* documentary?" and all that stuff. UFO religions, why do I write fiction about paranormal and supernatural stuff, UFO stuff, science fiction stuff... why do I do those sorts of things?

The second one would be about what books I would like to write in the future. These things actually sort of dovetail, so I'm going to go off the top of my head here, even though I did make a little list. I have a little list, I should say, in a spreadsheet of books I'd like to write. I can open that up here and take a look at that.

Those are the two things: Why do you do what you do outside of pure biblical stuff (Naked Bible stuff), and then what do you hope to produce in the future? They are related. I would say as far as why I do what I do, if people are wondering about that, the best thing to do is go to my website (drmsb.com) and go to "About" because I actually describe this. I do get this question a good bit. "Why do you do some of this strange stuff... what's the point?" Most of the time people ask and they genuinely want to know. Sometimes you know you're dealing with somebody who just wants to sort of poke fun at it, and that's fine, as well. I love to talk to those people because I congratulate them on finding the group of people out there who don't need good thinking. Thank you for that. "These are the people we should just leave alone and let them basically go to hell (if they're lost) because they believe lots of stupid stuff." I'll put it that way, too, to people. "Thank you for identifying the people that we *shouldn't* care about, or that as biblical scholars we can just sort of dismiss. Thanks for that." And that usually shuts down the kind of person who just wants to poke fun at it. Because my follow-up question would be, "What are *you* doing? Can you suggest something better? And 'better' isn't 'leave them alone.' Can you give me a positive substitute? I'm willing to take your advice and instruction, your good suggestions here." By that time they usually clam up.

The point, again, is well-taken. I do this because I don't like when people get misled—whether it's about biblical stuff or in these other realms. To be honest with you, these other realms—Paleobabble stuff, the weird Christian Middle Earth or just Middle Earth in general (non-Christian Middle Earth), Ancient Aliens, Gnosticism, Zeitgeist—all this stuff has a tremendous reach. We're talking millions and millions and millions of people who filter things like the Bible and Jesus through those things. If you don't have anybody who has good theology and who cares, if you don't have *anybody* occupying that space and standing in that gap just a little bit... If you don't have anybody doing that, guess what? People aren't going to hear that, "You know what? The Bible doesn't really say that." Or "You know what? You're really misunderstanding this passage." Or "You've been misled by someone who says this or that about the Bible or about Jesus or about God." If you don't have somebody doing that, they're not going to find it.

You say, "Well, just trust the Lord." When we trust the Lord (at least in New Testament thinking), we get off our butts, too. We actually try to *do* something so that God has some person to actually use and use to influence people.

So that's really why I do what I do. But you could read the "About" page. I care that people don't get sucked in by what I call "cyber-twaddle" on the internet about the Bible and the ancient world. I care that they don't swap in extraterrestrials and aliens and psychic this-or-that for theism. I care about that. I care about how science fiction topics like an extraterrestrial reality or transhumanism or artificial intelligence... All these things are actually related.

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People who don't understand that they're related don't have their heads in the material, so I guess we can give them a pass for that. But all of these things are related and they're all attempts to displace theism and Christianity. Science fiction and the paranormal capture the imagination by offering a means to our own divinity and glimpses of other realities. Space is heaven without the biblical God. These are very simple thoughts that propel lots of what people encounter on the internet. They propel major motion pictures and comic books. Somebody needs to have their head in that material. And I have had my head in it for a long time. Honestly, I'm not an expert in any of it, but I've had my head in it long enough that I can see it with clarity. It would be great to have more help. It would be great instead of having people kind of chortle over, it would be great to have people who were invested and who had high content knowledge... subject matter experts helping to produce good things for the person whose faith is the New Age. You can't really call it the New Age anymore. Their faith is the post-Christian, techno-scientific, extraterrestrial, quasi-paranormal, new physics sort of model. If that is a person's religion, they just need to be brought into a theological conversation. The way to do that is not to hand them a tract and say "come to church next week." The way to do that is to try to engage them on their turf. The only way you can do that is to go out and meet them and have a decent amount of knowledge about how they think. So that's why I do it.

What do I want to write? There's all sorts of books that I want to write. I would like to write not just one, but several books on the Christian approach to the paranormal. In my spreadsheet I have this broken down into mental phenomena, physical phenomena, divinatory phenomena, and preternatural phenomena. I could do four books on that. Again, this is my wish list. If I could actually do what Mike is capable of doing and have full-time hours to do it, I'd be writing those books. I'd be writing a book or several books (I'm just looking at my spreadsheet now) on Ancient Astronauts. I have three volumes there that I'd love to do. Volume 1 would be how the Ancient Astronaut myth is "defended" from the Bible and Christian art. Volume 2 would be ancient texts and artifacts. Volume 3 would be what I call occult pseudo-science. All of these are big themes. They propel the Ancient Astronaut narrative. I'd love to do a book on responding to Zeitgeist. Another one I have here is "Christianity Astray: Ten Self-Inflicted Wounds That Are Killing the Church." That's more sort of "inside baseball"—stuff the church is doing to itself that really harm it now and in the future. I'd like to do a book on infant salvation. I think it would be a wonderful topic and would give people a lot of comfort. This is essentially my Romans 5:12 material.

We're going to do some of that. We're going to do as much as we can in video with the *Fringepop* TV show. If you don't know what that is, then you're not a subscriber to my newsletter. We're in the process of creating a TV show that will not air until probably close to 2018, but it's a response show to all things strange and weird—all things fringy. It's not a debunking show. It's not a beat-down kind of show. It's "Here's this fringe topic. What's worth thinking about? What's real and what isn't?" It's about clear, logical thinking, primary sources—linking what

you think to evidence that's real and then sort of going from there. If you've listened to Peeranormal (our podcast) it gives you a bit of an idea, but we're going to condense it into episodes that are 20-25 minutes long. We have a studio now with nice props. We have some people committed to give their time. There are things in process that I'm not going to take podcast time to go into too much detail about. If you want to know, you have to subscribe to the newsletter. That's when I'll give links to pictures of this or that or talk about it in more detail.

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Lastly, I should mention here that my employer (Faithlife) has also stepped up to the plate here and created at least something that we hope will get other Christians interested in the topics so they begin to treat the topic of UFO's and all that weird world (UFO's and Ancient Astronauts)... that they'll begin to see this is a real issue. It's a theological/spiritual issue. So Faithlife has a streaming TV channel and almost a year ago (last summer) we filmed what has become a 90-minute sort of documentary that we're calling "Aliens and Demons: The Search for an Unseen Realm?" You could actually watch the trailer. It's a full-length film. It's 90 minutes of interviewing me about these topics. Honestly, they really put a lot of time into it. The visuals are really nice. Trey has watched the trailer. It's really well-done. It's nicely done. They're going to be using that to get people to sign up for Faithlife TV, where there's lots of other content (including some of my content) of other scholars and people that are just interesting as far as interviews and courses and what-not. If you want the link, I'm actually not going to reveal it here. If you want it before a week or two from now when it will actually be unveiled, subscribe to the newsletter. I will stick the link to the documentary in there, and if you sign up for Faithlife TV (like \$5 a month) you can watch the whole thing. This isn't me—I don't make any money off it. This is my employer. But it's a well-done piece of work in this area. So I'm getting some help there, too, just to do useful things for the post-Christian person, the post-modern, post-Christian person that this is their worldview. This is their faith. As much as you think it's just silly and nonsense... honestly, a lot of it is! But the way it's marketed in the wild world of the internet and TV shows like Ancient Aliens (now in its eleventh season, if you can believe that)... it's pretty slick and it attracts a lot of viewers. Frankly, it seduces a lot of people intellectually. If there's no response to it, I guess the outcome is kind of academic at that point.

**TS:** Yeah, Mike. I believe that documentary comes out April 14, which means it's already out.

**MH:** Ok. I don't pay a whole lot of attention to the dates. I knew it was close, but there you go. April 14 is when it came out.

**TS:** And also, Mike, at the beginning of the show you mentioned you're speaking in Florida on May 20, but you've got a couple more speaking engagements. Chicago on May 2... You want to give them a shout-out? And then another one in Washington.

**MH:** On May 2 I'm going to be at Oakton Community College. It's a one-hour lecture on Nazi occultism. If you've read *The Portent*, it's going to be some of that content. I don't know what the facility holds in terms of the room that they're going to have us in, but you could go up to my website and click on the event on the calendar to get the contact person's email (a professor there at the Community College). May 13th will be here locally in Washington at Sunrise Baptist Church. A friend of mine here at the company (Miles Custis) who works in our editorial department... Miles has a Master's in Biblical Studies/Biblical Languages. His church is having me in for a day to talk about where we got the Bible. So that's actually a whole day event. We'll have lunch in between. Those are the things coming up in May.

**TS:** Sounds good, Mike. That's it! Just like that, we're done. I just want to remind people not to forget to send me your questions at [treysticklin@gmail.com](mailto:treysticklin@gmail.com). When you do send me your questions, don't forget to include where you're from. Mike, we appreciate you answering our questions. Just want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.