

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 171

Q&A 23

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Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Dr. Heiser answers your questions about:

- The dates of written documents and their relationship to oral tradition (Time stamp: 4:30)
- What language Jesus spoke, and how that relates to translations (22:10)
- The word “porpoise” in some translations of Numbers 4:5-6 (30:38)
- The completion of the iniquity of the Amorites (36:54)
- Eternal functional subordination (43:41)
- Pre-Adamism and Co-Adamism (46:30)
- 1 Timothy 2:10-15 (59:12)

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 171: our 23rd Q&A. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you?

MH: Very good. Busy as usual, but having a pretty productive week.

TS: Yeah, well, Mike, it looks like Hebrews is gonna run away with our poll on which book we cover next. I guess by the time you're listening to this episode, the voting will probably already be over. But it's such a landslide at 52-53% now, so I think we can pretty much call it and say that Hebrews is going to be the winner.

MH: I would imagine so. I don't think anything's going to change in a few days.

TS: Well, that's good. So back into the New Testament.

MH: Yeah, I'm really surprised that Colossians was just sort of left in the dust, even behind Jeremiah. I'll confess, I am surprised at the outcome. But it's pretty clear.

TS: I think Colossians is the book I voted for.

MH: Well... (laughs)

TS: We didn't win, Mike. I don't know if you voted, but we didn't win.

MH: We didn't win. I didn't vote, but I was kind of hoping for Colossians. I think I could go in and just sort of set up a bot now and vote for Colossians over the next few days and it's not going to make any difference. It got buried.

TS: Well, maybe next time. Since Hebrews is way shorter (laughs) than Ezekiel and Leviticus, maybe Colossians will have a chance for the next vote, which will be sooner rather than later. Speaking of winners, Mike, I just wanted to remind you and everybody out there (all of our listeners in the Nekked Nation) that I am still the current reigning champion of Naked Bible Fantasy Football, which is coming up...

MH: What I should do is just go in and change the name of your team to "Colossians." That would be a metaphor for the year. You're gonna get buried. (laughter)

TS: I. Don't. Think. So. I know it's hard for you to admit that I am the champion, but...

MH: Only because you bring it up all the time.

TS: Well, I... you know. I've gotta say it while it's true, right?

MH: Yeah, you're going to be intolerable if you repeat. I can already see that coming.

TS: My reign is just starting. Just get used to it, folks.

MH: I hear ya.

TS: I need to change my intro. Instead of "layman," it should be "champion." I might have to do that once football starts.

MH: (laughs) Yeah, well..... I don't even want to hear that.

TS: You're speechless. I understand, I understand. I render people speechless—and winless—all the time. (laughter)

MH: It's a long season. It hasn't even started yet!

TS: And my Cowboys are already starting off with some rough news. I don't want to get into it right now.

MH: It's just bad.

TS: It's disturbing. It's painful. But anyway, Mike, I want to remind everybody that I'm still accepting questions for the Melchizedek Q&A that we're going to be having next week, so there's still time to send me a question. I think the cut-off will be next week sometime... Thursday or Friday, I don't know. But if you have a question, just go ahead and send it in to me. We obviously can't answer everybody's questions. We're picking a handful, maybe picking some questions we didn't cover in those four episodes.

MH: We'll try to weed them out. We don't necessarily want repetition. We'll try to zero in on things that weren't covered or weren't covered in too much detail.

TS: Maybe add to the conversation and see if we can't find some of those. So continue to send me those questions at treysticklin@gmail.com. And I guess, Mike, we've got questions ready for this Q&A ready to go, if you are.

MH: Sure.

TS: All right. Here we go!

Our first question is going to be from Ryan. His question is:

4:30

If oral traditions are the norm, why are the dates of written documents important? Couldn't the stories have been known among the people already? When Mike and others use the dates of written documents, the conclusion appears to be that the biblical text comes *after*. Is that a conclusion about the final edited form or the whole history of the story? I realize the original oral traditions are certainly more difficult to track down, but why do scholars tend to agree on the perceived order of the stories? Doesn't evidence exist that the stories share enough differences to indicate that each people had its own background, and the final result may indicate later editing? If so, how do we apply inspiration to this scenario? And are all versions inspired, or only the final version we now have?

5:00

MH: Let me hit the last part of that first. Inspiration is really about the final form of the text. In other words, it's that point at which God's providential oversight of the process—his oversight of the human hands forming the text—was completed. That has to be the case because that's what we have. We don't have the Bible in stages, like to be able to look back at some earlier stage prior to the final form of the text as we have it. We can't just go look it up, like "Let's go check the edits out!" It's not like in Microsoft Word where you can review a document and see all the editorial changes. We don't have anything like that. So inspiration, properly talked about, really refers to the final product of the Providential process. So to speak of inspiration applying to texts that we don't have doesn't make any sense. So that's kind of the way it has to be.

Back to the beginning and this whole thing about oral tradition and dates of documents. When Ryan mentions dates, if he's talking about the relative chronology of, say, some Mesopotamian source versus the biblical version of some story, in many cases those can be dated quite well and quite easily. If it's a comparison between biblical material and Egyptian, Sumerian, or Mesopotamian material, that isn't difficult to do. What we need to remember, though, is that some of that stuff like Mesopotamian material... Mesopotamia has a long literary history, so you might have a flood story written in Sumerian that is older than the biblical material by a couple thousand years. But you could also have a flood story that's in the Mesopotamian corpus that is contemporaneous with the biblical/Israelite material. Even though they're contemporaneous, that Mesopotamian text might actually borrow from the much earlier version of the Sumerian text. This is where the whole dating issue gets a little fuzzy.

It's not like versions are produced that have no relationship to the earlier material when it comes to Mesopotamia. There are lots of flood stories that come from different eras of Mesopotamian history and literary output. A lot of it predates the biblical material, and some of it is contemporary. But even the contemporary stuff, again, is going to be drawing on much older material than the biblical stuff. Let's just say we're looking at the flood story where Marduk is the centerpiece. Marduk was the high god during the Babylonian era, and that's going to be contemporaneous with biblical material. If you're a Mesopotamian/Babylonian scribe and you're creating your own version of your flood story or your creation story to elevate Marduk, you're going to be using earlier material, but you're also going to be doing contemporary tweaks, that if it's "new stuff" or repurposing that really sort of telegraphs to the reader (or in this case the scholar) that this line here or this idea here was evidently composed during the time of Nebuchadnezzar, we'll say. Well, then you can talk about contemporary sources for the story—biblical and Mesopotamian. It's just not a neat picture where things don't get repurposed and don't get reused.

But if you're talking just about civilizations, yeah. The Mesopotamian material and a lot of the Egyptian material—lots of this stuff—is going to predate the biblical period. In terms of manuscripts, the oldest manuscripts we have of the Hebrew Bible are the Dead Sea Scrolls. They go back to 200, maybe 300, BC. The oldest Hebrew *anything*—anything written in Hebrew that can be called Hebrew (and scholars would call it "epigraphic Hebrew" because these are like stone inscriptions)... Epigraphic Hebrew goes back to the tenth century. That's still, by biblical chronology, 500 years after Moses.

10:00

If you're talking about the alphabet, well then you're pushing back into the biblical period where you have the Semitic alphabet invented. There just isn't a lot of inscriptional material in the Semitic language we would call Hebrew that exists. Think of the tenth century (1,000 B.C.). That's where you're at. And it's not biblical stuff, it's different kinds of inscriptions. When it comes to the biblical material, we're dealing with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

So it's really easy to look at the primary source data—the manuscripts we have—and say that in terms of literary output, what comes first? That's an easy call. It's an easy question. Ryan brought up the whole issue of oral tradition. Having said all that about the literary stuff, Israelites would have had in their experience and in their hearing (I believe, and I don't think it's a stretch at all) knowledge about the stories that wind up in the Bible, including Genesis 1-11. They would have been told stories about how the God of Israel created everything and created mankind. They would have had stories about a flood and the confusion of the languages, the Tower of Babel, the division of the nations... they would have had stories about this that get passed on, along with oral tradition about their own existence as a people.

The way biblical scholars typically look at this kind of thing is they'll say that it's an imprecise science to know at what point any particular part of this process would've happened. But at some point the oral tradition of the Israelites as a people (in other words, Abraham forward, because that's when Israel becomes a people)... that is something that the average slave in Egypt would have heard. They're stories that their parents and grandparents would have taught them. It's completely unreasonable to think that Israelites had no origin story and that, if they did, that they never would have talked about it. It's absurd. No culture in the history of the world does that. They're going to be talking about where they came from as a people and who their ancestors were and what their ancestors did. You're going to get stories about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob encountering God and covenants and all this sort of thing. They're going to have that knowledge, but it's not going to be codified (written down) until much later, and that's where we essentially get Genesis 12 onward. It comes from those oral traditions all the way up into the Mosaic period. Then you start to be dealing with more contemporary events and what-not.

Genesis 1-11 is a bit of a different issue. I personally think (and I think you've heard me say this) that the core events of Genesis 1-11... Israelites are going to have stories, again, about creation, about a flood, about this or that. Because, frankly, every culture in the ancient Near East had these things. We like to say that have "collective memories" or sort of institutional memory about these things. Other cultures are going to have their own beliefs about creation, obviously, and you're going to have certain events like a flood that just become part of the institutional/civilization memory of people. So Israelites are going to have that, too. When it comes down to writing about that stuff, there's a lot in Genesis 1-11 that specifically responds theologically to not only the theological religious claims and beliefs of Babylonians and other Mesopotamians (and Egyptians, for that matter, and you even get some stuff thrown in there that targets the wider beliefs in Canaan of the Canaanites)... You're going to have a collection of chapters—what we call Genesis 1-11—and my view is that most of that is going to be composed later while Israel is in Babylon. The specific outcome is a theological polemic against the gods of the nations and against the

15:00

other religions and belief systems of the wider ancient Near East. To do that, we're not just talking about how they all had similar stories and then Israel gets to sort of write their own. You have specific connections in the Hebrew text of Genesis 1-11 into literary stuff (into the actual documents) of Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are specific connection points, specific things that scribes are trying to draw attention to and critique or attack or respond to in some way, but you're also going to have some overlap because of worldview and a common way of looking at the created world and life. It's going to be a mix.

The point is, Genesis 1-11 has some really specific connections. To do that, you've got to have the literature, and the only place you're going to have *that* is you're going to be living in a place where the literature is. It's very logical that it was during the exile, where you're going to have these texts available to you as a scribe—someone who could read and interact with it—as opposed to... Moses didn't drag around a portable library of clay tablets through the desert. He didn't do that. You could ask if it's conceivable that in Egypt they would've had some of this stuff. Sure, some of it. I think it's conceivable that they might have had exposure to the epics of Mesopotamia. We don't really know that. There's not necessarily a lot of evidence for that. There is evidence that the Egyptian scribes (and you would assume if you were Egyptian royalty, like Moses was, brought up in Pharaoh's household)... that you could read some Akkadian. You want to be able to do that for international correspondence; you don't want to get duped and that kind of thing. So there could have been limited exposure to that sort of thing. It's not completely off the table that someone like Moses would have been able to work in Akkadian, sure.

But what we're talking about goes beyond that. There are very specific things in Genesis 1-11 that, since you have somebody sitting on this side of everything and has access to these languages and these texts, can look at the whole mass and say, "Okay, this writer is targeting this because he lifts this line or this phrase or uses this word. He brings a Sumerian word or something into the Hebrew language here. He borrows it for the purpose of telling the story, to get that detail right." Or whatever the reason was. There are just things like that in Genesis 1-11 that have a heavy component from this other material. So that's why scholars tend to look at Genesis 1-11 a little differently than they look at Genesis 12 and beyond. The whole point of the larger question is, do we believe that God was capable of picking people (many of whose names we will never know) to assemble this thing we call the Bible—the Torah, in this case, or even the book of Genesis. Whatever. Is God capable of equipping people for this task—providentially having them do this task—putting together through a combination of sources polemic and oral tradition this thing we call the Torah? Is God capable of doing that or not? This is why I always say we need to let the Bible be what it is. It is useless and counterproductive—and honestly it makes the doctrine of inspiration vulnerable—if we look at the Bible as the product of a comic mind-dump or a paranormal event, because that is not what is reflected in the text itself. If we believe that the text is inspired, we look at the text. How was the text

put together? Why do we need named authors? We don't! We need a God who is capable. We need a high view of Providence. We need some very simple, coherent, theological ideas like this. They all extend from theism—God's existence and his ability to get something done and to prompt people to do things. That's what we need. That's what scripture is.

20:00

Back to the original point where the question began... what about dates and all this stuff? Well, sometimes we can get a relative chronology, where it looks like the odds are that things happened in this order. Sometimes you can do that with a high level of certainty. Other times you can't. And to be honest with you, at the end of the day does it really matter? Well, in most cases, it really doesn't matter. In graduate school, you have all these different fields of criticism, including source criticism—trying to chop scripture up into the original source documents. The fact of the matter is those documents that scholars create are guesses. They're speculations. Same thing for historical criticism. "What were the historical circumstances that led to all the pieces and led to the composition of the pieces? What was going on? Where did this idea come from? What's the history of this idea?" They're speculation. What's *not* speculation is the thing that's sitting in front of you on the table, or the manuscripts or whatever. We have manuscripts. Think of them as artifacts. They are things that exist in real time that can be looked at and handled and read and translated, and so on.

My preference was always that I don't really care about spending my life on speculating how this thing in front of me came into being—how it was put together. I don't really care. I know something happened—a combination of all these things. What I care about is now that I have this thing called the Bible (the *tanakh*—whatever portion or the whole) in front of me, what does it mean? What does it say? What were the writers who put this thing together trying to communicate? I want to study the text as artifact, if you will—the final form of the text. I believe God was ultimately responsible for putting this thing together. It wasn't a cosmic mind-dump. He used lots of people to produce this thing. They came from a specific culture and specific time periods. There are things going on there. They may leave clues to chronology like that and they may not. All I know is I have this thing in front of me now, so let's try the best that we can to read it as an ancient person would have been thinking, because ancient people are the ones who produced the thing.

That's why I landed where I did academically. I wanted to be working in the final form of the text and try not to essentially spend every day speculating about where something came from. I'd rather deal with the thing that we have right here in front of us, and I don't think that it's contrary to inspiration in any way. Inspiration is a process, not an event.

TS: All right. Our next question is from Scott, a Minnesotan in China/Thailand. His question is:

22:10

In the New Testament when Jesus enters a room and says, "Peace be with you," we know he is really speaking Aramaic and saying *shalom* or the Aramaic equivalent, and then it is rendered in Greek as the Gospel writers recount the event. How much of the New Testament can we think of this way?

MH: I would say, to be honest, we really don't know if Jesus was speaking Aramaic. It depends on who's in the room! (laughs) If Jesus walked into a room of Hellenistic Jews or a room with a mixed composition of Jews and Gentiles, he may have spoken Greek. We just don't know for sure what the scene was at any given point. Even if we have a scene in the Gospels, do we have a head count? Do we have an ethnicity count? No! Sometimes we get more of an indication than others, but Jesus is part of a multi-lingual culture. In a multi-lingual culture like first century Judea, we can't really assume what anyone is saying at any given point is in this or that language. We can go with the odds, so to speak. So if Jesus walked into a room full of Jews from his hometown or part of Judea dominated by Jewish presence, well, Aramaic is a pretty good bet. But if the parameters changed, he could have done something else.

Incidentally, getting off into the Aramaic thing a little bit here, Jesus isn't recorded as using Aramaic except in only a few places. There's Mark 5, one in Mark 7... some of these are paralleled in Matthew. There's one in Mark 15. There are people who have studied this. Jeremias, a New Testament scholar back in the 60's, 70's, and 80's, had roughly a couple dozen Aramaic words in the Gospels in total, so that isn't a whole lot. There are still scholars today who would suspect or argue that instead of Aramaic as being the native tongue of Jesus, it might have been Mishnaic Hebrew. That's possible. For those who are interested in this, I'm going to post a few articles on this that I've collected. I'll pick out a few here from what I have. If you subscribe to the newsletter, you'll be given a link in each issue of the newsletter. At the bottom there's a link to a protected folder where I can put articles that aren't publicly accessible so that newsletter subscribers can at least read them.

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But there's one by Stanley Porter: "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek," from *Tyndale Bulletin* in 1993. What Porter argues in this is that yeah, he could have taught in Greek. Porter acknowledges that this is a minority view. Most other scholars would give Jesus fluency in Aramaic or Mishnaic Hebrew, but Porter thinks he would have been trilingual. He spends thirty pages laying out his case that Jesus could have taught in Greek, too. There's one by Grintz: "Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language in the Last Days of the Second Temple." Another by Emerton, "The Problem of Vernacular Hebrew in the First Century A.D. and the Language of Jesus." These are going to get into Jesus being an Aramaic speaker and a Mishnaic Hebrew speaker. It's not unreasonable to think that Jesus could have been trilingual, so we can't really assume much about which language Jesus is using when he walks into a room. You'd have to know about the context. If the context is really, really, really distinctly Jewish, Aramaic

could be a good bet, but if we could time travel we might have heard Jesus speak in Mishnaic Hebrew. We don't know. I wouldn't base any sort of exegetical or theological conclusions, necessarily, on some of these assumptions. I think we need to try to think about all the possibilities when it comes to this. It's really hard to reimagine not only what Jesus (or anybody else) would have been speaking or doing, but when it comes to literary output, that's a whole different issue. I think it makes very little sense to have much more than Matthew and Mark, we'll say (two of the Gospels, possibly) written in Aramaic originally.

This whole discussion takes us into the Aramaic New Testament issue, so I might as well say something about that here. There is no manuscript evidence that any portion of the New Testament was written in Aramaic. There are some who argue for that. Again, Mark and Matthew usually become the targets for that. Certainly, Luke was not. Luke was a Gentile and he was writing to a Gentile. Why would he write in Aramaic? Paul's epistles are written to predominantly Gentile churches. Why would he write in Aramaic? "Hey, I'm going to write you a letter, but I want half of the congregation to not be able to read it!" It doesn't make any sense. John is much later. He lacks Hebraisms in many cases, like Matthew. He has little to no literary dependence on Matthew and Mark. If you're familiar with the Synoptic debate... Matthew, Mark, and Luke... who wrote first and the other two are dependent on that one? John is not in the Synoptics for a reason. Most of the content in John is not in the other three. So he doesn't have a literary dependence on the Synoptics. Again, that would suggest, anyway, that even if Matthew or Mark were written in Aramaic originally, John doesn't really care. He comes later, he's not interested in tracking on that material, so Aramaic doesn't really make much sense for John and what he writes.

Maybe the Targums... he might have used some Targums or been influenced by Targums, like in the Word theology ("in the beginning was the Word"). We've talked about this a little bit on the podcast before in relationship to the Two Powers in Heaven idea. Where does John get that? He gets it from his Old Testament. And he may have been familiar with the Memra material—Aramaic Targums of the Old Testament, where you have the Second Yahweh figure. *Memra* is the Aramaic word for "word," where you have the Word of God inserted into certain passages. He may have been familiar with that, so there may be an Aramaic influence there with John, but there's no reason to believe that the Gospel or Revelation were written in Aramaic. Revelation, in fact, is oriented to Asia Minor. The churches in the first two chapters... this is Gentile territory and predominantly Gentile churches. Why would you write in Aramaic? Even the general epistles that are aimed at Jews in the dispersion... where's the dispersion? It's out in the Gentile world! So you're going to have letters that are written to a Jewish audience, but chances are they're going to get passed around among groups of believers—many of whom are Gentiles. It just makes no sense to have an Aramaic New Testament is what I'm getting at. Again, maybe Matthew, maybe Mark... an early Gospel or something like that. But even if it makes sense for those two books, we don't actually have any manuscript

30:00 evidence for it. I'm not really sure in my own mind why people... I'm not saying this is the case for Scott, but I've met some people in the course of being online that really, really care—and I think to an unusual degree—about Jesus speaking in Aramaic, and Aramaic being the language of the New Testament. I really don't see what the concern is, but again, I don't really read that in Scott's question. I think this is coming from curiosity, not some sort of ideology. But I've met people who are in the latter camp and it just doesn't make any sense to have an Aramaic New Testament, so I don't think we have to get hung up on at least that part of the question.

TS: Okay, Dana has a question about Numbers 4:5-6 in the New American Standard Bible:

30:38 **A porpoise skin is unclean. I'm surprised it's used to cover the Ark of the Covenant. After more research, the Hebrew *tahash* says "fine leather." It's not animal-specific. Why would Hebrew scholars choose this as an acceptable translation?**

MH: Well, they would choose that because the meaning of "porpoise skin" is nothing more than a conjecture. *Tahash* here, to try to make this succinct... Some of these things don't really translate well to being verbal on a podcast, but I'll take a stab at this. Many scholars have argued that this Hebrew lemma has an Akkadian background and, ultimately, therefore, a Sumerian background. The ESV renders it "goat skin." Dana mentioned "animal skin." Some other scholars, like Milgrom in his commentary, opt for "yellow-orange" (like a color) as the meaning of *tahash*. Both the color and the neutral animal skin idea really comes from the assumed etymology—the assumed bringing in this word from the outside (Akkadian and Sumerian) into the Hebrew lexicon.

Here's how it goes: there is a term, *dušû*, and that refers to a stone of a certain color. You have to have a little bit of Semitic language background here. You say, "Well, *dušû* doesn't sound like *tahash*." That's true, but you can have a word in one language that doesn't have all of the consonantal similarities in another language still speak of the same object. We have this today in modern languages, and it often works that way in the ancient world. Every Akkadian word, for instance, doesn't share the same consonants as every Hebrew word. Akkadian is Semitic and Hebrew is Semitic, but Akkadian is Eastern and Hebrew is Northwest Semitic. There's geography to it and there are different language groups and dialects and sub-groups and all this sort of stuff. The reason why this seems like a good correlation is you have *dušû*, and that comes from Sumerian *DU_g.ŠIA*. That is alignable to a Hurrian word, *tuhsiwe*. So now you're getting into the *tahash* sort of phonological neighborhood. By virtue of Akkadian and Hurrian... The Nuzi dialect is Hurrian. You may have heard of the Nuzi tablets when it comes to the patriarchs. Because Hurrian and Akkadian sources align these two things (*dušû* and *tuhsiwe*) to speak of the same thing, scholars take that and notice the correlation with the Hurrian dialect and they say, "Okay, that

sounds a lot like *tahash* and let's go look and see what that meant in Akkadian." And in Akkadian it referred to stone of a different color. So some scholars would argue that *tahash* refers to the particular color that resulted from dyeing leather (there you get your animal skin idea) in the culture.

35:00 Now you notice in all of that, we didn't say anything about dolphins or porpoises. I don't know of anybody who would really defend that idea—the whole porpoise skin thing. I hate to put it this way, but it probably comes from older English translations or traditions about the translation. However, to be fair, I've looked this up in Levine's Numbers commentary and he says that "dolphin skins were used quite extensively in the ancient Near East and in certain cults." That's what he says. He doesn't ever say that this term means that, but he happens to discuss that at one point in his commentary. So we don't really know why "porpoise skin" or "dolphin skin" would be an acceptable translation here etymologically. Again, if you're doing the comparative Semitic vocabulary, it seems that a better option is either to translate it as "the thing being dyed" (i.e., the animal skin) or the color that results. That's where you're going to find that most commentators land because of Akkadian and Sumerian and the Hurrian linguistic evidence.

Having said all that, I can't find any passage where this lemma (*tahash*) occurs in a description of something unclean. *Tahash* doesn't occur in Leviticus at all, for example. So I don't really know why the unclean element is part of the conversation. Maybe under the assumption that we're dealing with a porpoise skin and that relates to some other animal group... I'm not sure. I don't want to sit here and search through everything. That makes for a really boring podcast. But again, a quick search of the lemma shows that it doesn't occur in any passage that names unclean things. So I'm not really sure why that's part of the question, but I thought I'd throw that out there. Maybe some people thought it was unclean because Near Eastern cults used dolphin skins and then they just made that correlation. I can see how you would get there, then. But the fact of the matter is, if you actually look up this lemma's usage in the Hebrew Bible, it doesn't occur in passages that list that. Maybe it has a homograph, I don't know at this point. But again, from what I do know (just fielding the question), that's how I would answer it.

TS: Marian's question is about Genesis 15:16.

36:54 **What does it mean that the iniquity of the Amorites is not complete? What does "complete" mean? Is God waiting until a certain amount of time has passed or until the iniquity has reached a point where he will no longer allow it to continue? It almost sounds as if the Amorites have the protection of the unseen realm with the prior agreement that they could sin up to a certain point in time.**

MH: I would think the last part there is reading a lot into the passage. There's certainly nothing in this passage (or in any other passage) that indicates that God sort of just winks at sin (or apostasy or whatever) like there's a quota to fulfill before he gets angry. There's nothing like that. But I understand the trajectory, though. I think to start off, it's good to remind ourselves that "Amorites" is a generic term in some cases and some contexts (and I would make it part of this context) relating to giant clans. I wrote about this in *Unseen Realm*, where there are places in Joshua (like Joshua 7:7), which referred to the occupants of the land as Amorites. You certainly get that in Amos 2:9-10, referring to those who were driven out—and also specifically the ones who were very tall—as Amorites. That's important because it's abundantly clear that there are other ethnic groups in the land. You've got Perezites, Hittites, Hivites, and that whole list. But the Amorites... in certain contexts, this is an umbrella term for the giant clans. So I think that's important to sort of have running in the background when we think about this. I actually think there are two options here, neither of which is about what I would loosely refer to here (just for the sake of the question) as a "sin quota" or an "evilness quota" (if that's even a word).

40:00

Option number 1... I think the easiest parsing of the comment is that it's an expression that means something like, "It's not yet time to punish the Amorites," for whatever reason. We wouldn't be given a reason. It's not that they're not quite wicked enough for God to get angry about them. I don't think that's the point. I think it's that God has his own reasoning and his own timing, which may factor into the second option. But just look at it like, "It's not yet time to punish the Amorites. I've not decided yet to act on the Amorites." Now, you could also read it, though, that God's judgment of the Amorites wouldn't necessarily wait until the conquest that we think of under Moses and Joshua. God was about to initiate it and it would take a long time, but Abraham's seed (since he's talking to Abraham in Genesis 15) would be the vehicle through which the Amorites would ultimately be judged. But it would occur over a long period of time. So I guess I would put the second option this way: You could argue that it means the Amorites haven't yet been fully punished for their iniquity, or that their punishment is about to be launched and will be in process for a long time. That option would presume (as I write about in *Unseen Realm* in the discussion of Og's bed) that "Amorite" is sort of a conceptual play on the idea that Babylon was the source of evil and chaos. You get there because *MAR.TU* (which was the Sumerian word for Amorite)... there's a Sumerian term here at the base of "Amorite." That's what I'm trying to say here—*MAR.TU* is the Sumerian word. *MAR.TU* in Sumerian vaguely refers to the Aryan population west of Sumer and Babylon—that general area. Since that was the term there, maybe "Amorite" comes from *MAR.TU* and then that links the Amorites to the Babylonian part of the world. Once you do that, the whole Babylonian complex of ideas in scripture (especially Genesis 1-11)... So why is the world so messed up? As I've said many times here, there are three reasons for that: it's the Fall, Genesis 6, and then the Babel event. Well, the Genesis 6 event and the Babel event, if anybody's read *Unseen Realm* and especially if you've read *Reversing Hermon*, you know that episodes 2 and 3 are

deeply entrenched in this idea of Babylon as the source of everything that is contrary to the way the God of the Bible wants it to be. And so there could be this thing going on with the term "Amorite." You might have this in play—that God is about to act, they haven't yet been punished for their iniquity but it's right around the corner in terms of God's perspective (because he doesn't really care about time), but he's going to raise up the mechanism for punishment through Abraham and his seed. And that's ultimately what happens in the biblical story.

To add another layer here, we know from Deuteronomy 2 and 3 that the punishment of the giant clans was an ongoing process involving Abraham's descendants—Abraham's seed versus the giant clans. We know that because if we read Deuteronomy 2 and 3, it's the descendants of Esau that were used to get rid of the giants in the Transjordan—at least most of them. You know Og of Bashan is still left, and of course, Moses and Joshua are going to take care of business there. But in the process, you've had other descendants of Abraham actually being the agents to address the Amorites. So maybe when God speaks to Abraham in this way ("the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full"), he could either be saying a little bit neutrally, "Hey, it's not yet time to punish them—we'll get to that" or some idea that "well, they haven't been fully punished yet for their iniquity, but we're about to start that ball rolling." There's a bit of a time differential between the two options, but in neither case is it about the Amorites sort of meeting some bar of evilness, some bar of iniquity, so that now they're punishment-eligible. They're punishment-eligible long before they get what's coming to them. So I don't think that's the point. I think the point is something about either God's timing or the amount of time—the process through which the Amorites would be judged.

TS: Travis has a question:

43:41

Do you have a view on the eternal functional subordination debate? It seems like an area dominated by New Testament scholars, but I would think the "eternal" part would have to draw on the revelation of the Godhead prior to the incarnation. So I wonder what you think in light of your work on the Two Powers idea.

MH: This one's a little hard for me to care about. I think Travis is suspicious... I read a little bit in to this when he asks if I have a view on it. Both sides of this are not going to deny the eternality in terms of ontology of the persons of the Trinity. So I don't really care if the subordination of the Son and Spirit are eternal or temporary because I don't think a subordinate relationship detracts from the essence or the ontology of the Spirit or the Son. Frankly, I don't really consider arguments to that effect to be at all persuasive. Subordination is really about role relationships between the persons of the Trinity. It's not about essence or ontology.

45:00

I'll try to use an analogy here, and all analogies are imperfect because we're talking about deity and a godhead, so bear with me here. But if you had three human clones created from scratch, as it were, they could have a hierarchical relationship between them, but they'd all be fully human and they'd all have the same DNA. In other words, the roles that each took wouldn't make one of them ontologically inferior to any of the other ones. This is how I view the whole thing with the Trinity. I think there's a theological problem if you have a difference of ontology. Ontology, again, is what a thing *is*. If you had a difference of ontology between the persons—if you were talking like that—I have a problem with that because you can't really have degrees of deity. The persons are either the same in essence or they're not. But that's ontology. Subordination is really about how they relate to each other. Again, I don't really compare if their relationship to each other is something that grows out of eternity or was temporary. I can't really say it any other way. I don't really care too much about the debate. Ultimately, I don't think it's something we can know for sure. We're only going to find about that later with any precision. So I don't really spend a whole lot of time skinning that cat, to be honest with you.

TS: Darryl from Newton, Mississippi, has two questions. His first one is:

46:30

I heard Dr. Heiser mention that the earth was populated with other people while Adam and Eve were in the garden. Could you please elaborate on that?

MH: Well, Dr. Heiser doesn't claim that. What I claim is that this is one way that you *could* read certain passages in Genesis. I don't really feel compelled one way or the other. Again, it's just this or that passage could be read as evidence that there were other people besides Adam and Eve, but there are ways to read the same passages that would get around that or explain the language. So I'm not going to be married to the views, but we want to be honest about what the text says and how it could be read.

With that set-up, this gets us into the two views of this. There's pre-Adamism (that there were humans around before Adam that were precursors) and then there's co-Adamism (there were humans alongside of Adam and Eve). Co-Adamism... I don't know. It might be easier to argue than the other one, but either view is based on circumstantial evidence. Circumstantial evidence isn't exegesis, but again, the text could be read in certain ways. I'll try to illustrate that.

The argument for other people besides Adam and Eve (let's leave the pre- and the co- out as much as we can, just to simplify) being part of the biblical world at the same time period of Adam and Eve really operates on two trajectories. One is there are passages that suggest there were other people besides Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel. *Suggest* is the operative word. They don't state it, but they can be read to suggest that. I say Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel because those are the only two children we're told that Adam and Eve had, up until Abel is murdered

and is then replaced by Seth. So we're really only told about Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and those two lineages. That's who we know about in the early chapters of Genesis. Nevertheless, we read stuff like this. Here's Genesis 4:14-17. This is the Cain and Abel story, and this is after Cain has killed Abel. We read in verse 14, where Cain is talking to God:

¹⁴Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

Cain's expecting that somebody might find him. Well, where did they come from?

¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.

What, a thousand years later? Five hundred years later? A hundred years later? It seems like when God puts a mark on Cain to protect him, that the protection is needed right then.

...the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

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¹⁷Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.

Where did Cain's wife come from? Did Cain build a city by himself? How could one guy build a city? Maybe Enoch helped, so now there's two guys. Maybe his son helps. So you have two people building a city? It seems like to build a city, or even a decent-sized town or village, that you'd need help.

So in verses 14-17, you've got several things in the text that can be read as though they just assume that there are other people around. It continues. If you keep reading in Genesis 4, you hit verse 25. Listen to this one:

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." ²⁶ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh.

So now, who do we have? We have Adam, Eve, Cain, we've got Seth replacing Abel, and then Seth has a son, Enosh. So we've got five people. Then the ESV has:

At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

That raises a question of why the verse would be translated that way. When you translate it "people," it begs the question of why you don't just say "*they* began to call on the name of the Lord?" Which, of course, begs another question, like who have they been calling on before? Why not just say "*they* began..." or why not say "Adam and Eve and their children began to call on the name of the Lord?" If you actually look at the text, the translation of "people" actually derives from an uncertainty as to what to do with the Hebrew text. You essentially have a word for "at that time" (*az* in Hebrew) and then you have "began to call." The word translated "began" is third masculine singular, so you could translate this a couple of different ways. You could say, "he began," but that doesn't really make sense because which one... who began to call on the name of the Lord (even though you could translate it that way)? A corporate translation implies that everybody in the group began to call on the name of the Lord. You could say, if you want to deny that there are other people around besides these five people, that that's the way you should translate it—"they began to call on the name of the Lord." These five people here. Okay, you could do that, but some would object and say, "Didn't they have a relationship with God already? It seems to suggest, at least to the mind of some, that "they" (some other collective group) began to call on the name of the Lord. It's an observation that sort of marks out other people besides the family of Adam and Eve, whom we would assume are already doing this. So there's ambiguity in the text and, frankly, that's just what you get with the whole thing.

We read a couple of instances here just to try to summarize it. We read Genesis 4:14-17 and then 25-26. And so some people look at these passages and they ask the questions that I've vocalized—that I've mouthed here as we proceed through the translation—and they would argue that the wording here suggests that there's somebody else around besides Adam and Eve and their kids. It's suggestive; it's speculative. It's not exegesis; it's circumstantial evidence. It's things that are there in the text that could be read a certain way. Honestly, that's about the best you can do here, but there are some who would look at the text and say, "Well, I think we *ought* to read it this way" because of some other thought, some other issue, or some other thing. One of those things, as I put on

55:00

the blog, could be the whole discussion of human evolution or genetics or DNA statistics and all this kind of stuff. We did a series a few years ago about the historical Adam and statistical genetics and that whole debate. That discussion, in some cases, prompts people to look at these passages and say, "Well, the scripture actually could be read in such a way." Legitimately, you could read it as assuming that there are other people there. And then that becomes your touch-point for addressing some of these scientific concerns or what-not. You're still making a text-based argument, you're just going with a reading of the text that could be possible. But the other side could just as well turn around and say, "No, we shouldn't look at the verse this way." That's one trajectory—these kinds of verses.

The second trajectory on which this idea is based might sound a little more arcane, but I think there is something to this. I don't know if it means that there were other people on earth besides Adam and Eve, but the implication is that it could point us in that direction, and that is, is Adam a deliberate analogy to Israel? Are Adam and Israel, in the biblical story, designed... are these stories told in such a way that we are supposed to draw a link between Adam and Israel? Are we supposed to think of one when we think of the other?

I don't think we did an episode on this, but I think I've blogged about it. I've talked about Seth Postell's work: *Adam as Israel*. Seth does not believe that there were other humans other than Adam and Eve, but his book actually draws attention to the number of correlations between the way Adam is described in his part of the biblical story and the way Israel is described in its part of the story. Both are, for instance, the son of God. Both are raised up supernaturally. You get the idea. You're trying to draw analogies—points of correlation—between the two. So as Israel was a people selected out of all the other people on earth to be God's people... that's not quite a good statement because Israel is actually produced supernaturally from Abraham and Sarah. But Israel becomes *elect*, they become the body of humanity—the subset of humanity—that becomes God's people. They're elect—they're chosen—from among all other peoples. God could have chosen people who already existed, but instead he creates anew—he creates Israel from Abraham and Sarah. Some people would say that's just like what he does with Adam, at least possibly, so there could have been other humans around (look at Genesis 4). And so God just decides to choose Adam as his son and his line as his people, and then that line becomes part of the people that he would select later. There's a lineage that leads to Abraham and, of course, Abraham is the progenitor of Israel. So as Israel was a people selected out of all other people on earth to be God's people, is it the same with Adam? Is he selected out of a larger group? Again, there are people who make literary cases—and good ones (these are good text-based cases)—for a conceptual and literary link between the portraits of Adam and Israel. So the question becomes the second trajectory... "Well, if that's the case—if we're supposed to think of one and then think of the other, and if we really press the analogy that there were other humans around when Israel was created—could we presume the same

thing of Adam (that there were other humans around)?" So God picks Adam and then the biblical story becomes about this one person and his wife and their children.

Who knows? These are arguments by circumstantial evidence and suggestion. It's not that you can do exegesis and build a really strong argument from that idea that cancels out the other ones. You can't really do that. But to be fair, there are things in the text that if you approach them a certain way you could come out with this view.

TS: Timothy's second question, and the last question of the episode, is:

59:12 **Can you explain 1 Timothy 2:10-15?**

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MH: (laughs) No. Not in a Q&A (laughing). This whole passage is about women not teaching and being silent in church. This is, of course... the passage is related to the larger women in ministry/women in the Church issue. Honestly, you can argue both sides pretty well from the text. For people who have followed my website, my blog, for any amount of time... Years ago, I did a blog series on the women in ministry issue with John Hobbins. John and his wife are both pastors. I told John I wanted to do this and I said, "Your job is to make me care about the issue." Because my view is this is so far down my list of things to really care about because I see ambiguity in the text at key points, and that is what allows us to argue both sides well from the text. So I said, "John, if you can make me care—make me feel like I need to land somewhere and diss the other side—go ahead." He failed. (laughs) I still feel the same way about it, but it was fun.

I tend to not get terribly invested in issues where positions get stalled in textual ambiguity. To me, they become (by definition) issues of conscience. For instance, that's what I would tell my daughter if she came up to me and said, "Hey, I feel God is calling me into the ministry." I would say, "That's between you and the Lord. I can't honestly say that I'm sure you're doing the right thing or the wrong thing. I don't know. But do well, and be a blessing." That's exactly what I would tell my daughter: "Do the best you can and be a blessing. Have a good ministry. This is between you and the Lord."

So when it comes to 1 Timothy 2 (this little subset of the women in ministry issue), the passage itself has a few workable possibilities—some that might seem better than others. But there's no one view that renders all of the other possibilities fundamentally incoherent and indefensible. You're dealing with a difficult passage that has certain ambiguities about what's in the text.

To illustrate, I'll make one exegetical observation about 1 Timothy 2:10-15, and I'll use that as a basis for a position. In other words, I'm going to pretend here. This is a thought experiment for the sake of the questioner and the podcast. So I

could look at the passage and say, "Paul, in this passage, really makes his judgment deeply personal." He says:

¹¹ Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

If we go back into the passage, just looking at that, it looks like when he says "I do not permit" that he's making a personal argument. The exegetical point is that Paul uses the first person: "I wouldn't do X, Y, or Z." And I could interpret that and say that this means his advice is maybe just that—a personal preference based on the rationale that he gives about Genesis. But, you know, Paul conveniently leaves out that the man sinned willfully. He's concerned that the woman was deceived and not the man, but he leaves out the fact that Adam sinned with a high hand, so to speak. He sinned with full knowledge. So if Paul's point is that women shouldn't teach because they fall victim to false teaching more than men, why not flip it around and say that men are more dangerous to have as teachers because they can turn around and deceive people deliberately? Well, he doesn't do that. The fact that Paul leaves something so obvious out of the discussion suggests to me that this is a personal preference, born of some situation that influenced his thinking. Or perhaps it's the familiar model of Judaism (that he was a Pharisee and all that).

At any rate, I could argue that the passage can be read as 1 Corinthians 7, for example, is read—where Paul just tells people where he's at. "Hey, I wish that you were all like me." Or, "I'm going to give my judgment on this." He's trying to give good advice for reasons that may not make complete sense to us, but did make sense to him and others because they were living in a certain context there at Corinth or here with Timothy. We may not be aware of every reason that prompted Paul to say what he said, but my exegetical observation here is that he uses the first person, which means that he's giving personal advice.

I can do that all day long. I can take some other point of the passage and argue for a totally different view. And this is the problem with 1 Timothy 2. It's the problem with the women in ministry issue. On any given point, I could argue either side of these questions pretty clearly and pretty effectively using the text as my touch-point, not caring about gender issues, feminine issues, this or that group, this or that ministry that takes a position. I don't care about any of that. The question is, what can the text sustain? And depending on what you emphasize in your exegesis, you can come down at different points and still build an exegetical argument on either side.

1:05:00

For those who are interested in this, you can go back and look at the exchange between myself and John. His job was not to convert me. His job was to make me care enough about taking a position. And like I said, he failed, but it was fun. I can't say it any other way: I really don't feel that it's a good use of my time or that I should really be pontificating too heavily on an issue that... really, in this one there are three or four passages that will make the issue turn in one direction or the other. The honest thing to say is that it could go either way because there's ambiguity built up in the text. It's just *there*. You'd have to be omniscient to really sort this one out. That's the most honest thing I can say.

If you want to use the prophecy thing as an analogy, it's like the rapture. Are you a splitter or a joiner? When it comes to descriptions of the Lord's return, should we put them in two piles or one? If you put them in two piles, you have a rapture and a second coming. If you put them in one, you've got one event. Which one is the right answer? I don't know. I just don't know. I can build an argument for either one and have it look wonderful and elegant, but at the end of the day, I have to tell you that I am landing here because I just decided to emphasize this over that. And that's what you've got with the women in ministry issue. It's what you have in 1 Timothy 2. By the way, we didn't even get to the last part of the passage—the whole thing about "she shall be saved through childbearing." That's a whole separate issue. This passage would take probably two or three episodes of the podcast to just sort of navigate the waters through this passage and, of course, since this is 1 Timothy 2, the whole wider issue of how you'd argue the women's issue in either direction. That would take probably three podcast episodes. For those of you who might think that sounds like good news, I would tell you not to expect that any time soon because we are about to start into a new book study. I care about that, honestly—the book study—more than I care about this issue. At least that's where I'm at right now.

TS: All right, Mike. Well, that's it! Maybe in the future, 1 Timothy will come up as a voting option where we can spend some time on that, huh?

MH: Or we could just leave it off the list, right? (laughter) We can make sure that never gets on the list.

TS: There you go. If we covered all the books, it'd take us like sixty-something years. So expect it within the next century, I guess.

MH: Who knows?

TS: Well, just like that, we can end it. We want to thank you again for answering our questions, and I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.

