

## How (Not) to Read the Bible with Dan Kimball

(December 5, 2020)

The fastest way to become an atheist is to read the Bible. Yeah, you heard me, right. That's a popular meme going around. The fastest way to become an atheist is to read the Bible. Because if you read the Bible, you do, what it appears anyway, seem to see anti-women, anti-science, pro-violence, pro-slavery views. I mean, look, God could ban shrimp, or ban slavery. He chooses shrimp? This is the kind of God we worship. Really?

Well, how do we deal with issues like this? Do the atheists have a point? And by the way, where are they getting the moral standard in order to judge those things? But we'll save that for another program. Right now, I want to introduce to you a man I've known for several years. And he's from New Jersey so he's really an excellent guy. And he's written a fabulous new book. The book is called, *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture*. The man is Dan Kimball.

Dan grew up in New Jersey, but he has been a pastor in Santa Cruz, California, the heart of the beast right there. It's a beautiful place, but it is very progressive in both its politics and its theology. But Dan has served there for many years. He's with Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz. He's also a faculty member at Western Seminary. He leads the ReGeneration Project ([regenerationproject.org](http://regenerationproject.org)), which exists to equip and encourage new generations to think theologically and participate in the mission of the church. And this book, I'm telling you, is excellent.

You know, we've talked about another book similar to this for many years; *Is God a Moral Monster?* Well, this book takes it even a step further than that, dealing with so many of the issues that young people see in the Bible. Particularly, they see it on the internet, and they're like, yeah, why would I believe the Bible? It seems to be crazy. Well, Dan has a great answer to many of these issues here. So, Dan, thanks so much for coming on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

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**Dan:**

Oh, and thank you for having me, fellow New Jersey born and raised person.

**Frank:**

Right?

**Dan:**

Yep. I'm glad I did.

**Frank:**

You grew up in Paramus. I grew up in a place called Neptune, maybe about 30 minutes from there. Give folks who may not have heard about you your history. You grew up in New Jersey, you were not a Christian, what happened?

**Dan:**

Yeah, I grew up in New Jersey. I would have been just, I think there's maybe a God, but didn't think about it too much. Went to Colorado State University. And it was actually at Colorado State University, through some of the, you know, at the beginning of the school year when they put out, like, tables for different kind of groups to join various campus clubs, there was a little track to a Christian group. And I can still remember this, just walking by seeing this thing. And it was one of these tracks that said, Jesus is the only way to God. And I was not searching anything, but basically saw that track and am like, is that what Christians really believe?

You know, everybody else is wrong, but them? And I can say, like, that moment was like, God, is there something there? What is this? I really believe that when I, kind of said, if God's there, how do I answer this, that that started a journey for me just to say, what is true and what isn't? And is Christianity the suburban religion of America? And just because you're born here, that's what you're born into. And it was through reading books, and I moved to England, I was playing in a punk and rockabilly band for many years, lived there.

And an 82 year old pastor that I walked by their church, walked in kind of randomly one afternoon, took me under his wing. He was intelligent. Loved having questions asked to him. Didn't judge me for my haircut, or dress, or music I was into. And it was through a little elderly

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church, the most backwards one you could probably think in London, England, where I ended up putting faith in Jesus through their ministry. And then moved back to California. The bass player got a job in California, or went to California, and ended up here and been here since.

**Frank:**

And how did you get involved in the church there?

**Dan:**

Yeah, just volunteering. I was drumming and I went into a church called, Santa Cruz Bible Church, and knew I wanted to be in a church. Looked up in the phone book. Well, the phone book, right? So, this is dating...the phonebook.

**Frank:**

[laughing] The phonebook, Dan.

**Dan:**

Looked up in the phonebook. But I still remember the feeling, like seeing words like Episcopalian, Presbyterian, I had no idea what those things were. I thought it was, like, viruses or, like, I didn't know what these names were. And so, I saw like, you know, Bible Church. I'm like, that one makes sense. So, that's why I picked that church. And it was the Bible teaching, great church, volunteered, asked me to serve in youth, ended up going full time on church staff with youth then young adults, and then we planted a church, Finish Faith Church, out of that church.

**Frank:**

Well, this new book, *How Not to Read the Bible*, is a great apologetics book that is so sorely needed today, Dan, because, as you know, you've been working with youth for 30 years. Why, now, are youth more skeptical than ever about the Bible?

**Dan:**

Yeah, I mean, like you said, it was serving in youth ministry, young adult ministry, for 30 years. You know, there's always been generational disconnect. There's always been like, the music, you know, the style of preaching, and different things more cosmetically, aesthetically,

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stylistically. And there's been a generational disconnect with those things. This is entirely, entirely different. Because what I'm seeing going on, is that there's a lot of younger people growing up in churches that have great music, great felt need practical preaching, they are loved, there isn't complaints against the church, like it was a backwards church, or I was I was hurt in the church. This is, I'm now reading the Bible, and all of a sudden, they're seeing things that they had never been taught before.

And that's because of, I really believe, the development, all of you know, of the internet, media, easy access to these things. And I say the activist atheists. There are many, many wonderful atheists that aren't activists and they are kind loving people. And then there's those that are more activists about it, and are posting memes up on Pinterest, Facebook, and it's kind of like renting billboards, you know. I think might have been Charlotte, or somewhere, they rented a billboard, a sort of photo of Bible verses that are about, like, ... this is the part that's changed. The Bible is now being used to discredit the Bible and the Christian faith.

There's Bible verses that are being put up about women be silent. You know, go home and ask your husband's questions. It's, you know, don't speak up in church, slavery is okay in Bible verses. You know, God killing babies and children and putting Bible verses up with memes. And if I have never seen those before, all of a sudden, it's catching me totally off guard. And that's what's going on with so many younger people, and all ages, as well. But that's what makes it so different today. It's not criticism against the style of the church. We've figured out how to do music and smoke machines and all that stuff. But it's now, you know, it's now about seeing scripture that they have maybe, not necessarily, been taught before and it's catching them off guard.

**Frank:**

Yes, I love the Babylon Bee headline, Holy Spirit Unable to Move after Fog Machine Breaks. That's not the issue anymore. The issue now is, these seemingly crazy verses in the Bible, are being yanked out of context and they're put up in memes. They're put up on Instagram, they're put up on Pinterest, or put up on Facebook, on Tik Tok, wherever. And young people never have been taught these verses are even in the Bible. And of course, they haven't been taught about how to actually exegete them. So, what we're going to do when we come back from the break is, we're going to get into how to execute these passages. What are some principles you

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can use from Dan Kimball's new book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture?*

By the way, Dan's website, DanKimball.com. The foreword on this book, by the way, is written by our friend Sean McDowell. You need to get it. Just came out, like, December 1. And I was privileged enough to put an endorsement on it. And as soon as the book came, I said, wow, this book needs to get wide readership. So, that's why I'm telling you about it here. And when we come back from the break, we're going to do that with Dan Kimball.

I also want to mention this Sunday, December 6, I'm going to be at Moments of Hope Church. Actually, it's in Fort Mill, South Carolina. All the details are on our website. Go to our website, [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org), click on events, you'll see it there. We'd love to have you join us. Back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

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**Frank:**

All right, let me go back to my guest today, Dan Kimball. His new book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*. Dan, let's start at the beginning with regard to, you have a section in here that you and I have both taken from our friend, Greg Koukl, who always says this, "never read a Bible verse". Why is that so important? I have a whole section in here on that.

**Dan:**

Yeah, I think underlying the whole situation, what's going on is, both Christians and non-Christians, not understanding what the heck the Bible is and basic Bible study methods. I mean, I think 90% of the problems would be solved if we understood what the Bible is and basic principles for bible study methods. And one of them is the classic, you know, Greg's saying, "never read a Bible verse". Because it's so easy to see, you know, a billboard or a meme that has a verse about, you know, selling your daughter into slavery from Exodus in an image. You know, I've seen like, you know, graphical images of, like, a dad putting his daughter into a van

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with a Bible verse underneath that saying, God endorses that. Or, you know, women be silent, and she's the Bible verse, and her mouth is taped shut, to say, like, look what's happening. And you see the Bible verse. And, like, how can that be true?

And it's what Greg says, and it's basic Bible hermeneutics study methods is, you always have to stop, never look at the single verse, always back out and look at what's the paragraph, what's the book it's in, where in the whole Bible storyline is it, who wrote it, who was it written to? And that will solve so many of the issues. That's why it's not like a scary, you know, it's not this, oh my goodness, we didn't know these Bible verses were in there before, you know. Or it's just that we have not been, many people have not been taught how to study the Bible correctly.

**Frank:**

How are Christians guilty of this themselves, Dan, when it comes to just pulling verses out of context?

**Dan:**

Yeah, I mean, I think what we've had is...I mean, not all churches. There are some churches that have been very faithful and have been teaching through, you know, how to study the Bible and all of that. I think the broad amount of churches, however, generally, we focus on the good Bible verses, the positive things that are being taught. You know, extracting truths from scripture about how to apply today to the day to day life to help us with marriage with, you know, looking at money, looking at how to treat people, good principles from the scriptures. But we've pulled these verses out, and we put them on coffee mugs, and you know, and will memorize...and it's good, good verses.

But what we haven't been doing is, what about the verses that blatantly say, put women...you know, First Samuel 15:2-3, put women, children, infants to death, right? You don't see that verse on a coffee mug in a Christian bookstore. You don't see that as the one that people are memorizing. And we, kind of like, skip those a little bit or don't focus on them. And so, Christians have been guilty of the same thing of only focusing on the happy verses. And now we're seeing those that are kind of trying to discredit Christianity, pulling out all of the crazy sounding, evil sounding verses, and saying, look at what you Christians believe. Do you even know it's in there?

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**Frank:**

Well, you do a wonderful job in the book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*, on how to get the right context. So, let's dive in on a few of these. Why don't we start with the slavery issue? We've covered this on this program before but just say a couple of things about slavery. What about this verse that seems to say you can sell your daughter into slavery? Where does that come from? And what is the true context of that, Dan?

**Dan:**

Yeah, that's Exodus 21:7, and what it talks about, again, let's look at what we just talked about. So, I see a verse and, you know, there's even a graphical image that someone is mocking the Bible saying, look, there's a dad putting his daughter into a van getting money for her, like with a Bible verse. I see that and it looks horrific and evil and, like, what is going on there? So, if I'm only looking at that and saying, look, there's a Bible verse, I can walk away saying, I can't believe that that's what God would say to do. What you don't do, is then, never read a Bible verse, recognize that the Bible was written for us, but not to us. That was a story. That's a John Walton, from Wheaton, saying.

That is, you know, there's a story going on, there's a context, what's happening in the ancient Near East world. Who is that written to? It is written to the Israelites that were leaving Egypt after 400 years of slavery, going into new land. And so, then God was laying out instruction for people in that culture. We're not in that culture, so we can't expect to understand it. But to answer the question, you then go into that culture, and that, in all likelihood, is dealing with, when poverty was happening, if there was famine going on, if there was a family that could not afford food, and was in a desperate situation, a family unit could...and the word translated often into the more recent versions of Scripture will say, servant, not necessarily always slavery...you always have to say, what was the word. And it meant that a dad was then caring for his daughter, and it was like putting your daughter into a situation where that she could have food, shelter, not have to go to prostitution or something else to make money. And it was because there's no social security system, there's no Medicare, there's no welfare. That was kind of the welfare system of their day to do that.

And what you see God doing is, actually giving instruction of how to make sure it was a caring situation, not a bad situation. And God...this is really, really important. And I know you talk

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about this all the time. You know, God didn't start this stuff. This was part of the culture already. God was using what pre-existing conditions and then helping guide them to a better way of doing it. So, that is a totally misreading of just looking at a Bible verse and saying, look, what's going on. It was actually a caring situation for a family member that we can't understand in our minds. But going back to that culture, it makes a lot more sense. And it was not like modern day slavery, kidnapping and putting someone against their will, and all of that, in there. Again, very quick answer to a very complex verse. But that's my response back.

**Frank:**

And you unpack it so well in the book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*. You also point out that when we see the word slavery in the Bible, it doesn't mean the same kind of race based slavery we had here in America. It was more indentured servitude, as you point out, Dan. And so, that makes a lot more sense in the context you put it there. Without the context, we don't understand how this could mean something good, when, in fact it does, as you pointed out. You're actually caring for your daughter by giving her food, shelter, caring in another family. It wasn't selling her into some sort of forced servitude where she had no rights at all.

How about the others passage that always comes up, that you hear quite a bit, and you cover? There's a whole chapter on it, so we can't cover it in detail. But this idea about, women be silent in the church. Women be silent in the church. Paul seems to mention that First Corinthians. He also mentions it in First Timothy. What is the situation there?

**Dan:**

Yeah, okay. Well, again, a classic one. And you see this, in fact, in the book, it might have been North or South Carolina where this came out of. There was a news story about someone that put First Corinthians 14:34-35 on the back of their truck. And it was trying to say, like, read your Bible, you Christians, you are so anti-women and idiots for believing this stuff. Because that verse says, I'm looking at my Bible right now, "34 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."

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Now, I don't know the Bible much and, all of a sudden, I see the Bible verse and then the reference on a truck, on a billboard, on a meme, then I have a graphic with a woman, you know, with their mouth taped shut, or something worse that I've seen graphically. I'm like, that's in the Bible? At face reading this thing, if you and I didn't ever read a Bible and, all of a sudden, we see that verse, it's saying, be in submission, be silent. It's disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church, right. I would say like, that's a horrible religion. And then put a graphic to it. Oh, my goodness, that's wicked.

So, what do we do? That is a scripture. So, what happens is, then you have to say, what's going on there? One, who wrote it? Paul. Who's it written to? A specific church, right. It's a specific church and a specific time period in a specific situation. Three chapters earlier, Paul encouraging women to, actually, prophesy and pray in the church gathering. So, he couldn't mean total silence. So, when you start looking into it, there's several different options. And I did write about them...and I know you write about them and talk about them...of saying, this is not saying women just be quiet and can't talk and only can go home. There's cultural things that could have been, you know, where the cultural setting of a woman in that time period, in a Greek or Roman context, in the city of Corinth, it would have been inappropriate in any situation to just be blurting things out.

Paul was using customs and how they're trained to learn at that period. And unless you understand the culture, you're seeing it as something totally rude. And the same author, Paul, in Galatians, says women and men are equal before God's sight. Again, I can talk so much on this because it's taking verses, twisting their meaning through easy clever memes and graphics. and then it disrupts people's confidence in Scripture. I'm kind of rambling here, but I'm just telling you, like, as you well know, there's reasonable responses to all of these. And that's the sad part about it.

**Frank:**

And those reasonable responses are in Dan's new book. We're talking to Dan Kimball. The book is called, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*. Just came out just a couple of weeks ago, or a week ago actually. Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture. It's an easy read. And Dan, another thing I love about the book; you have so many illustrations in here, you have some of these memes that we're talking

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about, you have them actually printed in the book, you have a great section in here on what the Bible is all about, what the big picture is. And since, in fact, the big picture is in a picture actually, it shows us what the six phases of the Bible story is about when we come back. We'll talk about those six phases briefly, and then get into some more of these issues that we want to discuss regarding how to properly interpret the Bible.

Dan Kimball is my guest; DanKimball.com. Seminary professor. Also, a pastor; worked with youth for many years. He knows what's going on in the culture and this book will help you if you have young people, in particular. Back in two minutes.

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**Frank:**

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org). If you haven't downloaded our app yet, why not? It's free. Two words in the App Store; Cross Examined. Well over 200,000 people have downloaded that app. They're finding it helpful. It has a quick answer section on there that can get you answers to some of these problems we're even talking about today.

Today, my guest is Dan Kimball, who has written, really, a wonderful new book that anyone can read and understand. It's called, *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture*. Dan is a seminary professor at Western Seminary. He's also pastor out at Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California, and he's done some wonderful work here. Now, Dan, so much of understanding anything is understanding the big picture. In order to understand the details, as you point out, you have to understand the big picture. What is the big picture of the Bible? You

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have, like, a six phase way of looking at the Bible, or six act way. Can you kind of tell us what the big picture is?

**Dan:**

Yeah, I mean, the Bible is, when I'm saying a story, I'm not talking about a fictional story or Lord of the Rings story. But it definitely is a unified story that all points to Jesus. And whenever you open the Bible...I can't over stress this as a source of why this is such a problem today is when you open up the scriptures, every page, you're opening up, it's a library of books, different genres. You have to say, like, when you walk into a library and you pull a book off the history shelf, you're not going to interpret it like you would, you know, a logbook or a poem. So again, these are basic Bible study methods.

But underneath, all of these books are in a grand story. And when scholars look at the grand story, and you know, I didn't make this up, kind of, you can see it almost like in six acts. Almost like a play in many ways. But it's a beautiful story that God has laid out to tell us about who he is, how he created a purpose, the future. And the six acts are really important, because when you open up the Bible, you're being in one of those acts, you know, you're part of that story.

So, if you're reading, say, the First Act is, God creates and he's dwelling with people and in the Garden of Eden and his presence is with them. Then humans rebel and there's a fall away from God and also a loss of his intimate presence. And that's really important, because then that changes the story. Then it goes into another, you could say, another that's Act Two, of humans rebelled. And there's Act Three, of redemptions initiated. And it's talking about a promise that, one day a savior will come through the lineage of Abraham. It's a thrilling story. That's why genealogies are so much fun to hear when you understand the story.

And then it walks into another act of, when Jesus then comes, and that's redemption provided that was promised. Then it goes into Act Five, there's a mission that the church is on right now. And then Act Six is redemption completed, new heavens and new earth.

And whenever you open the Bible, you're opening up to one of those sections to the story. Say the Leviticus laws; you mentioned a little bit earlier. That is in Act Three. Again, when I'm saying act, I'm talking about actual a real story; what happened. When you open up, say, the Levitical

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laws, and you're reading something which is the mockery, you know, GodHatesShrimp.com. There was a website, GodHatesShrimp.com, mocking Christians. You eat shrimp, you're eating bacon. You play football...have you heard that one?

**Frank:**

Of course.

**Dan:**

Yeah. And that's right. This is the madness of this. And this is why I can feel myself almost tensing up like this. It's madness is that you're reading, say, a verse like you know, do not eat shrimp, or don't eat shellfish, don't eat shrimp, and then it gets plastered up in a billboard, a mocking Bible verse. And then I'm seeing pop culture celebrities saying, well, Christians do you eat shrimp? You know, like, saying you're hypocrites, your stuff in the Bible that you're not practicing, yet you're focused on other things.

And so, something like those dietary laws, and the Leviticus laws there, were written to specific people coming out of slavery into a land where there's many other people groups around them that were worshipping all different types of gods and doing very horrible practices and worship; infant sacrifice and things that you talk about. And so, God laid down some laws that we would, then, not participate in mimicking the things of the surrounding cultures. So, you say, does that matter for us today? If you continue the storyline an act for redemption is completed. There's a new law, that's the law of Christ and what's written out in the New Testament. We can eat shrimp all we want today. And that's why the storyline is really important to know so we're not pulling things out of context, not placing them in the right storyline, and then totally misapplying them and then thinking the Bible is crazy when it wasn't written to us.

Well, I mentioned the story of, like, laws that don't make sense to us, right, today. I just talked about the illustration. This, allegedly, is still a law in Arizona, where it says, you cannot have a donkey in a bathtub. And that's the legal last fill in the books.

**Frank:**

Yeah, your donkey can't sleep in the bathtub.

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**Dan:**

Yeah. And you read that today, like, that's insane. And, like, that's ridiculous. But it wouldn't have been ridiculous to them back then, because back then, this was a true story, you know, where a farmer, or someone, kept a donkey in a bathtub, there's a dam that broke, or something in the bathtub was washed into a mud basin, they couldn't get it out, it was a big struggle. And so, they said, hey, you can't do this anymore. And they put a law in, don't keep a donkey in a bathtub. Now, if you were living in that town at that time it would have been, of course, we better not do that. It sounds absurd to us today. But that's why the scriptures, you got to go back into the storyline, what was going on, to understand their world. If you don't, it's going to sound insane to us in our modern world.

**Frank:**

You have another word in here. And this is from chapter five, Dan, of, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*, with Dan Campbell. You say, in Kentucky, it is illegal to carry ice cream in your back pocket. And you explain why. Go ahead. Explain why...

**Dan:**

Yeah.

**Frank:**

...you can't carry ice cream in your back pocket in Kentucky.

**Dan:**

So, we hear that today. Like you could say like, that's crazy. And it was because of horse thieves. You could put ice cream cone in your back pocket, horses then would follow you, because they were roaming at that time. And it was to prevent horses from following people that put ice cream in the back pocket. Right? Crazy to us today. We're not in that world, but [unintelligible] is an actual law.

**Frank:**

[laughing] Quit horsing around. So, let's just take shrimp, for example, or shellfish. Why would Yahweh tell his people, the Israelites, not to eat shellfish? What's the point of that? Do we know?

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**Dan:**

Yeah, I mean, again, the shellfish one there's various opinions about it, as you know. It could be for health. It could have been for mimicking some of the dietary practices of surrounding people groups. There's some different thoughts on that specific one. And then there's other ones, like, you know, mixing two fabrics, or the tattoos, that are very easier to understand, because then the surrounding people, those it was saying, don't be parallel with the worship of other gods that were out there. And so, those type of practices were then mimicking some of the worshipping of other gods.

So, there's restrictions on doing those things, that if you're an ancient Israelite, you'd have known what was going on. Today we don't understand it. Why would God do that? And so, it's the summary of all of those things. It all comes down to studying where in the storyline, and who was written to; enter into that world and then it makes a lot more sense. And it's kind of cheap shots at the Bible to take a Bible verse out of context, put it up on a billboard, or on a meme. And of course, it's juicy looking. It's, like, amazing, look at this. But it's such a poor usage of the scriptures.

**Frank:**

And logic. Yeah, exactly. We're talking to Dan Campbell. His new book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*, is a book that everyone should read, especially if you have young people around you, because they're seeing these memes all over social media. And if you can't help them, answer them, they just may walk away from the faith and say, this is a ridiculous faith. Why should I ever believe in any of this? Now, Dan, generally, why is it that the Old Testament laws don't apply to Christians today? I know they do, when they're repeated in the New Testament, but you know, thou shalt not murder still applies. But you know, the dietary laws, the civil laws that governed the nation of Israel. Why are they no longer applicable to Christians today, or binding on Christians today?

**Dan:**

Yeah, now they were very binding to the people of Israel, right. At that time, those made sense, it was for them. Then what you see is, then when Jesus came, and then he was the fulfillment, like, of all of the things in the Old Testament that were pointing to someone coming, and it was him. And he lives his life, he teaches, and he teaches things, like, now you can eat all foods. You

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have to then study what Jesus then taught when he went to the cross and died, rose again as a payment for our sin, which again, the whole concept of atonement goes back to the Old Testament. Jesus is our atonement, putting faith in him. The Atonement of Jesus makes even more beautiful sense when you look at the whole Old Testament and what they're doing pointing to him. And then the new law starts, and that's the law of Christ, that is through him and how we have life and his teachings.

And then you study the New Testament, when Jesus takes the law, and he doesn't say, just don't murder physically, he starts talking about murdering people in your heart. Most of the moral, the sexual ethics, all of those type of things, they continue in the New Testament. You see a continuation, and even a sharpening, of those moral laws generally, and you don't see the dietary laws anymore, or the civil laws that were laws instituted to the people of Israel. Those are no longer for us today. But clearly, then you can see what is for us today and what the New Testament teaches. You know, and it's a beautiful thing. And that's why it's easy to see this when you simply know the storyline. But this is what's the madness. I keep saying this is madness. Like, you know, the classic West Wing little clip about the Bible. And if you type in, YouTube, West Wing, Bible, you'll see this.

**Frank:**

20 years ago, this program was on TV, for those of you who don't know.

**Dan:**

Yeah, it was it was a TV program 10 years ago, or something like that.

**Frank:**

Probably 20 now. Yeah.

**Dan:**

Yeah, it's still popular. You know, watching the repeats of it. But it was a Globe Award winning TV show. And they have the one classic episode where the President walks in, Martin Sheen, and then he's kind of, like, quoting Bible verses to a Christian radio show host. And then she doesn't know how to answer. And he's talks about, you know, selling your daughter into slavery

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and don't touch the skin of a dead pig, right. And then he mocks her, and he says, you know, so that means we can't play football because of the pigskin.

**Frank:**

Right.

**Dan:**

Well, think of this. This made it through the script writers. This made it through the actors and actresses, like, talking it all through. Then they filmed it. And then no one caught that that's an absolutely ridiculous thing to say. Not only because of the Bible verse, like the touching the skin of a dead pig isn't applicable in our culture today because of Jesus and the law. That's a law that is not for us to practice today. But then the whole pig's skin thing; the footballs are not made of pig skins, right. And that was a nickname about, it was a pig bladder that they used to put deer skin on back in Europe, and then it got a nickname. And footballs are not made of pig skin. How did they not recognize what an absurd thing to say?

**Frank:**

It's just illiteracy. And they wanted to do that; they wanted to mock the Bible, Dan. You know that. Of course, the writer of Hebrews said, the old covenant's obsolete, and it is. It doesn't apply to us anymore. We got one more segment with Dan Kimball. This great book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*, you need to get. I'm Frank Turek. The show is, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Don't go away. We got another segment with Dan. Back in two, friends.

**Ad:**

Frank Turek here. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist is a listener supported radio program and podcast. So, if you like what you hear here, would you consider donating to [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org)? 100% of your donations go to ministry, 0% to buildings. We're completely virtual. So, if you can help us out, we greatly appreciate it. Thank you so much.

**Frank:**

This book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*, is so good that there will be a study guide coming out in January. And it's a free study guide that you can get. And if you go to [DanKimball.com](http://DanKimball.com), you're

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going to be able to get this study guide for free. Is that right, Dan? Will you get it on your website? How do you get it?

**Dan:**

Yeah, we're putting up teaching helps. There'll be study guides, a youth study guide, animated videos that Zondervan, the publisher, is putting together for each section. We're going to be having the slides, all the images in the book, and the memes, will be available to us. If you're teaching, I think the greatest way to teach youth, young adults, or churches, is put up some of the images that are being the criticisms of the Bible, put them up, make them comfortable, you know, ask them how they would solve it, and then show them how to solve the issues. But use the graphics that are familiar out there and then teach through it. So, those will all be up in January, up on the website.

**Frank:**

Excellent. Again, the book is called, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*. Dan Kimball is the author. He's my guest today. Dan, I do want to talk a little bit about the science section that you have here in the book. And part of the problem that, of course, many Christians have, at least they think it's a problem. There's controversy. Just how do we interpret Genesis one? Is this supposed to be some sort of scientific explanation of how it happened scientifically? Or is this something else? How are we supposed to look at Genesis one? Because you know, Christians argue. They try and think the days, you know, 24 hour days and all this, and the earth is 6,000-10,000 years old. Other Christians say, no, no, no, these are long periods of time. How do we deal with this?

**Dan:**

Yep. Well, this is one of the principles like, the Bible was written for us, but not to us. You have to say, who is Genesis written to? I mean, like, who is the book of Romans written to? The Roman church. You know, we learned from it. Who is Genesis written to? It wasn't written to us today. It was written to the people of Israel. Like, this is so, again, critical [unintelligible] to think through. Basic Bible study methods. It was written to the people of Israel, who were in a polytheistic culture in Egypt, where they worshiped many different gods and goddesses and people and animals, and they lived in that world for 400 years.

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Remember, there was no written scripture at that time, so it was oral communication. Probably a lot of confusion. God rescued them by specifically showing He was God. The 10 plagues were all about various gods of Egypt that he was showing, I am God, not those things. And then brought them into, whether it was the Sinai Peninsula, wherever he was for the 40 years of wandering. And then, at that point, is when he was communicating the words of Genesis to that people group. And so, he was answering their questions and communicating to them.

Their questions were like, are we going to survive here in the desert? Are we safe here? Is there really only one God? What about the Egyptian gods? Like, are they going to be angry at us? Who are they? Are they real? Is this God who rescued is still here with us? You know, should we worship the sun? So, like, those were their questions. So, God was through the Holy Spirit through Moses, you know, writing what they wanted to know. And that was, I am the One God who created the sun. You don't worship the sun; I created the sun. These Egyptian creation stories that you have heard, they are not the real story. I'm going to tell you, now, the real story. I created everything.

You know, there's some interesting theories about, you know, John Walton, and others, will have the theories of the six days of creation [unintelligible]. Kind of like an inauguration of a king. You know, so like, was God using language and thoughts that they were familiar with? And we have to understand that the questions for us today, like, we want to know questions like, how old's the earth? 6,000 years? 6 billion years? What about the fossil records? You know, what about amino acids? Like, all of these different things. Were there dinosaurs on the Ark? Those were not the questions of the people of Israel. And if we try to solve that, we're going to get caught into so many side arguments that miss the point of what God was trying to communicate to the ancient Israelites.

**Frank:**

In fact, you write this on page 173. You say, "there were several Egyptian creation stories. But the basic storylines are similar that before creation, there was nothing but a dark, watery abyss of chaos. Out of these waters, arose one of the Egyptian gods who separated the water from the land." And one of the big differences that you point out here, Dan, is that, in this situation in the Egyptian creation story, the so-called Egyptian gods are part of creation. They're not over creation, like the Christian God is. The Christian God is outside the universe and creates the

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universe. The Egyptian god is somehow in the universe already and he's the one that's separating the water and the land. And so, it seems to me that, as you say in the book, this seems to be more like a polemic. You don't use that word, polemic. But you're basically saying that these people that just escaped Egypt, 400 years of slavery, they want to be taught, really, who created the universe and who is the true God. And it seems like Moses is using the stories they may have heard in Egypt to point out that, no, he's the true creator.

**Dan:**

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, you said it beautifully, just then. I mean, that was their worldview. And so, God was using their worldview, and then to communicate he is the one personal, intimate God who is with them. And the people weren't slaves to this God, like with the Egyptian gods, and all of that. So, he was showing, like, you've heard these stories, let me tell you the real true story of the real true God, and he can use elements of certain things. You know, it's the same thing. What we do have to understand looking at the Bible is God can use symbolism and things that aren't...like, say the word heart...you know, like, back in that time with the Egyptians and the ancient Israelites, they actually would have thought that the heart is would be our brain today.

So, like, when they're using the word heart, and they're saying, God wasn't then misleading people when he's, like, you know, your heart will lead you. You know, because they didn't know that the brain was the brain. So, God didn't say, there's something called the brain. He used what they were familiar with using the heart. So, we have to understand that God's just, like, he's teaching children certain things and using language and images that they would understand in their world at that time. And again, that's why all of this is so solvable if we just put basic Bible study methods into place.

**Frank:**

Now, the Bible does get it right, ladies and gentlemen, on the big issue. The big issue, of course, is that God created the universe. He's outside the universe, he created the universe, he created space time and matter. How this is described, though, is described in a way that would make sense to people that lived 3500 years ago and had just left the slavery situation in Egypt. And that's what Dan says in this book. A great book, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*. Dan Kimball is my guest, again. DanKimball.com, if you want to go further. Now, Dan, before the show wraps up,

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we do need to talk about how important it is to provide answers to young people, whether you're a parent or grandparent or a young person yourself. Explain why that is.

**Dan:**

Yeah. Now I've worked, like I said, I've been in ministry with people long enough and see cycles of questions and different things. And I think a lot of times church leaders, parents, grandparents, they're more concerned, like, you know, are my kids going to, you know, enjoy being in the church, and enjoying youth group, and is [unintelligible] connect culturally. But what's going on now is then...there's a university students that I talked to, he started reading Exodus, right. Great. You're reading Exodus in your campus study. And then he starts reading God...you know, he never thought of the Passover before. And he said, God's killing children here, the firstborn, the Egyptians, and it confused him. He started reading about slavery, all of this stuff.

He goes to his youth pastor. At first, he went to his parents, and his parents didn't know how to answer. Now, it wasn't their fault. Their church never...well, maybe it was...the church never trained them. They weren't prepared. But what he said was, seeing his parents, kind of, go blank about it, like, is that in there? And that really affected and undermined his...well, maybe they, you know, maybe they don't really know what they believe. Then he went to his youth pastor and other leaders. And he said, they were giving answers like, well, in heaven we might know the answer. And he said, intellectually, he could not, you know, say, like, okay, I guess I'll just believe it anyway. And he said, that undermined his confidence. And then he did an online search. And he found a website, evilbible.com. It's still up. I looked at it. And then he said, he was overwhelmed with what he found there. Because then they're listing all of this.

And my high encouragement to parents is, you don't have to be an expert in all of these different things. You just simply have to be earlier on raising up the contemporary criticism of the Bible and having your children and your youth be aware of these things, so that when they do hear them, and all the many others that I don't even talk about in this book, there's hundreds of others, to just say, like, oh, don't be surprised. There's plenty of stuff like there. Let's show you how you can make sense of it. I plead with youth pastors and senior pastors, please talk about this stuff, because it is what's surfacing up now. And it's just so sad to see the undermining of faith and all the deconstruction stories. There's usually something behind it,

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you know, maybe reasons in their personal lives or situations going on. But a lot of them are now saying these kind of Bible verses, and blaming the Bible, and I can't believe this anymore. And the sad part is that's not true. There are reasonable responses to these. And I plead with parents and grandparents and youth pastors and senior pastors, please be teaching this stuff earlier on. It's critical and don't ignore this stuff today.

**Frank:**

Yeah, the ironic thing is, in order to criticize the Bible, they have to steal from God to argue against him. They have to steal a moral standard to say that the God of the Bible is evil. Where are they getting the standard from? And so, this book, Dan, is so good that I just can't say enough good things about it. It's, *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture*. Dan Kimball is the author. He's been my guest today. The foreword is by Sean McDowell. It's endorsed by just about everybody, for good reason. So, Dan, thanks for putting this together and remind people where they can learn more about this and more about you.

**Dan:**

Yeah, DanKimball.com. It's kinda like I post up there but there's a book page that we'll be putting up all the resources on next month, right after Christmas. We'll be putting them all up for free. You know, and I've even offered, like, if anybody can't afford the book, tell me, I'll send you one. Like, I don't want that to be ever a barrier. I want people to have confidence in the scriptures.

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