

## **Naked Bible Podcast Transcript**

### **Episode 352**

### **Introducing the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation**

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### **Episode Summary**

This episode launches our new series on the use of the Old Testament in the book of Revelation. The series will not examine end times theories or systems. It will also not propose a new system for interpreting the book of Revelation for discerning what God is doing now or in the future. Rather, we focus on how the author of Revelation frequently dipped into the Old Testament to create the book of Revelation and how understanding his strategies in doing so helps us understand what the book is saying.

### **Transcript**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 352: Introducing the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What's going on?

**MH:** What's going on is: The Day That Could Never Happen. Mike is launching a series on the book of Revelation. [laughs]

**TS:** It's been a foretold. It's prophecy.

**MH:** Right. That itself is a sign of the apocalypse, I guess.

**TS:** End Times, yeah.

**MH:** Here we are. Yeah. This is our introductory episode on this series. I never saw it coming.

**TS:** It *has* been a crazy year. We've got the COVID stuff, and 2020 is... What a good time to start this, at the end of all of this madness.

**MH:** Yeah, so you're saying it just fits with the rest of the crazy, apocalyptic stuff that happened in 2020, so why not attach this?

**TS:** Exactly. Couldn't come at a better time. At the end.

**MH:** Yeah, yeah. There you go. [laughs]

**TS:** Well, hopefully you had a good Thanksgiving. I assume Thanksgiving was good, that it was positive?

**MH:** Oh yeah. Yeah, absolutely. We weren't planning on traveling anyway, at least for Thanksgiving. But you know, if we had been, it would've been a different story, with all the weirdness going on. Plus, we don't live in California, so we didn't have anybody breaking down our door and counting the number of people who were in the room, or anything like that. So it was actually pretty normal, except for the weather, since we're in Florida here. But yeah, it was fun.

**TS:** Good, good. Well, Mike, we have an announcement that's been a long time coming, and we're excited to tell people about it.

**MH:** Yes, we are publishing an advent book. So this is going to be Naked Bible Press. We had at least a year ago someone approach us who's familiar with the content of *Unseen Realm* and the podcast (Jeffrey Pitts). He submitted a manuscript to us that, the best way to describe it is basically just what it is. He took the content of *Unseen Realm* (the metanarrative of Scripture with the eye toward the supernatural) and distilled it and made it into a very nice, attractive, and very readable advent book. Now my wife and I have used advent books over the years to read with our kids. And this is pitched as something you could do as a family. This is not an academic work or anything like that. It's an advent book. But again, it's different because it focuses on the content of Scripture and the supernatural metanarrative (the story). So if you're in the habit of using advent books like we did over the years (we're certainly going to use this one this year), I would highly recommend this. It's called *An Advent for the Cosmos* by Jeffrey Pitts. And you can get it when it's shipping on Amazon, which will be imminent. You're going to see links through my social media. They will have something up on NakedBiblePodcast.com. This is something we highly recommend. Jump in. Get it with enough time to start on December 1<sup>st</sup>. And again, Naked Bible Press. This is something that we're putting out and we're excited about it.

**TS:** Well, Mike, I don't want to postpone it any longer than we have to. I don't know if people are ready for this. Although this is not the *official* start; the next episode will be. But at least they'll get a broad overview of what we're going to tackle.

**MH:** So what you're saying is that getting into the book of Revelation, it's "already, but not yet" and it's imminent. You see what I did there?

**TS:** Yeah, with this particular episode...

**MH:** It's affecting my brain already. [laughs]

**TS:** Well, that's good! We want your brain to be in this space. So it's a good sign.

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5:00

**MH:** Yeah. Well, again, for those who might be joining us either for the first time, or they missed when we have been talking about this series, I do want to remind everyone (and inform newcomers) that we're not doing prophecy here. We're not doing End Times. I'm not going to be evaluating End Times systems or approaches to the book of Revelation—who says this and who says what, and which one's right. We're not doing *any* of that. What we're doing is we're looking at the Old Testament in the book of Revelation. The writer (John) does this frequently—dips into the Old Testament *a lot*. And so our thesis is simple: Hey, you know, you've got to pay attention to when John is doing this. And if we understand what he's citing and what he does with it and why, that will help us understand what John is trying to communicate in the book of Revelation, and that's going to matter for the way we handle the book—the way we interpret the book. So that's what we're doing. And it's going to take a while, because Revelation isn't real short (22 chapters) But John does this with some frequency. So we're going to be into this for months and months. And you know, people like the book of Revelation, so we were thinking (when we proposed this as a topic) that they would approve of it, and they did, so here we are.

And as we jump in, what our custom is when we start a series is that I usually have an introductory episode to sort of explain kind of what we're doing and what people can look forward to that we will be encountering in the book. And this is no different. So I want to spend this episode on introduction. What exactly are we looking at here? What are we doing?) And we'll end this episode with a foreshadowing (see, I did it again) of what the next episode will be. I'll telegraph where we're actually going to really start, in the first chapter. You only get a few verses into the book of Revelation and John starts dipping into the Old Testament. So it doesn't take him long. It's not going to take us long. But that's what we're going to do today. (What are we talking about? What's going to be our method? What kinds of things are we going to encounter? And then where's the first jumping in point?)

So I want to quote a few things here initially. There are several really good scholarly books on this whole topic (the use of the Old Testament in Revelation). And I want to share initially here a quotation from the one by Steve (and I always wonder if I'm pronouncing this name correctly) Moyise. Steve is an expert in the use of the Old Testament in the New. And of course, he has a book called *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*. It's an edited volume as well, with Stan Porter. And it's part of the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series*. It's published by Sheffield Academic Press. And Steve writes this:

During the early part of this century [MH: and he wrote this in 1995, so he means the 20<sup>th</sup> century], studies on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament focused on parallels found in Rabbinic works.

So in the early 1900s, if you were going to get into this subject, you're looking at what the Rabbis say. That's no longer true. So he continues:

This was of value as it showed that the New Testament authors did not operate in a vacuum but were part of a continuous tradition of interpreting Scripture. Unfortunately, the date of these sources (several centuries after the Christian era) [MH: he's talking about the Rabbinic sources] meant that one could never be sure whether they were representative of how things were in the New Testament period.

So he's basically saying, "Look, if you're looking at the book of Revelation and you're trying to find where John's ideas and expressions... If you're looking at Rabbinic material to understand John," Dr. Moyise is saying, "Well, it's not really a great strategy. It has some usefulness. But that material is centuries after John." What we really need is something that situates what John is doing *in* the 1<sup>st</sup> century or even earlier, if possible, reaching back into the Old Testament itself and the Second Temple Jewish period. So he continues and says:

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), however, changed all this [MH: changed the whole strategy]. It has now become possible to make comparisons with a collection of writings that span the New Testament period and even use some of the same texts.

So let me just stop and interject something here. What he's saying is that if you want to study the Old Testament in the New Testament, you're really doing two things. Yes, you're looking at the Old Testament. But instead of going from the Old Testament to stuff that the Rabbis said about the Old Testament to try to understand what John is doing... We don't need to do that anymore. Now we can look at the Old Testament and we can look at contemporaneous Jewish writings (writings from the intertestamental period—the Second Temple period) and how *those* writers were thinking about their Old Testament.

10:00

So what we're going to be encountering as we go through this book is, yes, we're going to be taking a serious look at the Old Testament in the book of Revelation, but to assist us, we're going to be looking at Second Temple Jewish literature as well. Because they're looking at the Old Testament and they lived at the same time as John (or thereabouts). And so we're sort of comparing notes here. Is John doing all of his thinking independently? Maybe John is seeing something in the Old Testament that he also sees in some other writing, who saw the same thing in an Old Testament passage. So this is going to be our source material: the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) and the Jewish sources that are studying the Old Testament, like John is. And they're living at the same time. They're encountering the same things. They're from the same worldview—the same cultural period, cultural setting. John is going to show his acquaintance with

some of that material, too, or at least his material is going to parallel things that other Jewish writers (who were working very hard to understand the Old Testament) were seeing, too. So we really have kind of a two-pronged approach here: Old Testament and then other stuff current with John, also about the Old Testament.

Now to summarize what the situation is, the use of the Old Testament in Revelation, specifically, was somewhat neglected (Moyise says at one point) until the 1980s. Greg Beale's study was the first to appear. That was in the 1980s, and that focused on the book of Daniel. So Beale wrote a book in 1984 called *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John*. This was a major work at the time that really got people to sort of look at the Old Testament more seriously as it's used in the book of Revelation. And this is 1984, so this is (let's just use round numbers) 30-35 years after the Dead Sea Scrolls—so a few decades. These things aren't going to be known to scholars. They're going to have to be published in the scholarly literature anyway. And this kind of thing prompts a new effort (a new line of inquiry) when it comes to what John is doing with the Old Testament in the book of Revelation). Moyise writes:

The main reason for this neglect [MH: just generally] concerns John's particular style of using the Old Testament.

So we don't only have a source problem here, he's going to point out. There was another issue that sort of prevented scholars (or at least discouraged them) from doing this. He says:

Works like the Gospels or Paul's major epistles are easily compared with [MH: Dead Sea Scrolls material and the Old Testament itself, things like ] the Damascus Rule (CD), the Habakkuk peshar (1QpHab) or the florilegium (4QFlor) [MH: this is a wisdom text from Qumran]... These things are easy to compare [MH: the Gospels and Paul's major epistles to this kind of Dead Sea Scrolls stuff] because they all contain explicit Old Testament quotations.

So when Paul quotes an Old Testament passage (he's saying), sometimes some of these other texts also explicitly quote the same passage, and then you can kind of see what the two writers (some Qumran document versus Paul)... how they're interpreting some section of the Old Testament. You can track their writing (what they're thinking) to the same source, in other words. It's easy because they're both explicitly quoting the Old Testament at a given point. But Moyise continues:

The book of Revelation, however, never uses introductory formulae to introduce its Old Testament references...

It's never going to use stuff like "as it is written" to telegraph what John's going to do. He doesn't do that.

[He] never uses introductory formulae to introduce its Old Testament references, but weaves its words [MH: the words of the Old Testament] and phrases into its own composition.

15:00

So what it comes down to is, there are few if any (and some would say *no*) explicit quotations of the Old Testament in the book of Revelation. Instead, what you get is you get John drawing words and phrases from different parts of the Old Testament or the same section of the Old Testament and using that to create his own content. And since he's only using bits, even when the bits cluster, it's harder to know exactly where he's drawing things from, because that phrase he uses might show up in ten different Old Testament passages, or maybe only one or maybe three. So which one was John really thinking of? It's *hard* to figure out what he's doing. And this discouraged scholars from spending a lot of time in this line of inquiry. Moyise continues:

The index of allusions and quotations in the back of the *United Bible Societies Greek New Testament* reveals that Revelation contains more Old Testament allusions than any other New Testament book, but it does not record a single [MH: explicit] quotation [MH: at length]...

It just doesn't do it that way.

Previous studies on John's use of the Old Testament have been aware that we are dealing with allusions rather than quotations, but they try to get around this by distinguishing between allusions and echoes...

This is what scholars do to try to create categories. He goes on and says:

[T]he presence of a quotation or allusion means that the clues that enable interpretation to take place are coming from two separate sources.

So what he's saying there is, look, when John does this, when he just uses bits and pieces of the Old Testament and then uses that to create his own composition, you're getting both the voice of his source text or texts (whatever they were) and his own voice. So how do those things align? How independent is John thinking? What's his strategy here for doing it this way as opposed to just citing line by line? And that's the difficulty. That's the difficulty. And Moyise uses this radio analogy. He says:

Like a radio dial that is incorrectly tuned, the listener hears several 'voices' simultaneously and may have to choose which to concentrate on. The effect with the radio dial is usually annoyance, but if an author has consciously chosen a

particular quotation or allusion, we can expect the interaction to be more productive.

In other words, if you know specifically what he's using, then you have a better understanding of what he's trying to do.

Thus the relevant question concerning the presence of Old Testament quotations or allusions in the New Testament is not, 'has the author respected the context', but 'in what ways do the two contexts interact?'

So this problem... That's a general issue with New Testament, but it's especially acute when you get to the book of Revelation, because it doesn't have these explicit quotations. It has allusions. And I think, fortunately (but some would say unfortunately), the book of Revelation does this more than any other book. It is definitely drawing its content from the Old Testament. But the problem is it's sometimes hard to know which part of the Old Testament John's doing it from. And that's the challenge. And since this is done repeatedly (in the book of Revelation)... It's another reason why it's more dense than other books as well.

Now my own personal thoughts here. Some of you are already thinking about, "Well, if we've got the Old Testament's voice and John's voice, is John using the Old Testament properly? Can we really know...? Or should we follow what John is doing? What's going on here?" I would say this. This imprecision (in other words, the lack of direct citations)... It is tricky, because that, of course, involves the author's use of... Is it the Septuagint? Or the Masoretic Text? Or is it neither? When it's an allusion, is John just taking a phrase and then using it paraphrastically? (He uses part of it, but then uses his own words to weave it into his own composition.) So it's a little difficult to know exactly sometimes what the source text is. Is it Septuagint? Masoretic Text? A little bit of both? And then sprinkle on a little of John's own head. How do we know? So that's an issue. It raises the questions of what the author is doing and why, obviously. I can be more blunt here. Is the author being faithful to what the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint actually says?

Now my own opinion here, broadly, on this question is that we need to ask whether the Masoretic Text or LXX (the Septuagint) can sustain where the author lands, regardless of how precise or not the citation or the allusion is. Since the author of Revelation is living post-Jesus and consequently has the benefit of that hindsight, is his use of the Old Testament to articulate Jesus-influenced theology at least one of several possibilities of messianic interpretation that could've been obtained using only the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint prior to the advent and the work of Jesus? I think that's the key question.

So is what John does by his allusions to the Old Testament... He's going to interpret it in light of his experience with Jesus. That's just out-of-the-gate, by default, no kidding. But where he lands when he's doing that, is that sustainable

20:00

in the Old Testament itself before Jesus was around? In other words, is John's interpretation still possible... Could you be looking at the Masoretic Text or thinking about the Hebrew underlying the Septuagint or looking at the Septuagint itself... Can you still discern the messianic interpretation that John lands on even before the messiah was here? Because if you can, then that's a legitimate use of the Old Testament by John, even though he has the benefit of hindsight. He's not making anything up. You know, scholars disagree at points on how to answer that question. I just gave you my spin on it or my approach.

Now I know of no passage in Revelation that makes use of the Old Testament that scholars would unanimously contend violates the Old Testament. I don't know that there is any such a thing. Some of what goes on in the book requires careful thought as to the author's strategy (for sure). And various scholars have sought to expose his train of thought by a variety of means. And that's what we're going to run into. We're going to run into what John does with the Old Testament, and it's going to raise the question (either I'll raise it or in a listener's mind) as we go through this material. Could somebody have seen that in the Old Testament before Jesus? Is that a legitimate messianic way to think? Or something else related to what John's doing. And my answer is that I don't know of any example where it's not legit.

What typically happens is, you get the New Testament author citing the Old Testament (let's just say just generally here) any place in the New Testament. And there are places you wonder, "Boy, how in the world did he get *that* out of that verse?" And so we're tempted to think that the New Testament writer's just making stuff up. I have found by experience that that is quite a premature interpretation or a premature conclusion to draw. Because sometimes what they're doing is so subtle, it might depend on a word or a form of a word, or this word used in conjunction with another word and not this other word over here. Sometimes what they're doing is so subtle that it would never occur to us in terms of method to do what he just did, to do what we just saw him do. The standard here is not *us*. We're not going to sit in judgment on John and say, "Well, he should've taken my hermeneutics class. In my hermeneutics class in seminary, we were never taught to do that with the Old Testament! So I don't know about John. He's just freewheeling out there. He should've read this or that book that we had assigned to us in seminary. Then he'd know how to use the grammatical-historical method properly." That's nonsense, okay? That's just nonsense. We're not going to sit in judgment on John's strategy because John isn't going to do anything that other writers of his day aren't doing. What makes John different is that he had all this time spent with Jesus. He's living in a post-Jesus context. So he's going to see certain things a little more clearly. But what we're going to find is that the general messianic character of what John is doing, others could've done the same thing, and did, even though their methods would not occur to us. It's not how *we're* taught to do hermeneutics (the grammatical-historical method). And I'm not here to pooh-pooh the grammatical-historical method. I use it on every episode of the podcast, okay? But we have to realize



that the rules that we create to help ourselves know how to approach the Bible did not exist in the first century. Our rules are not being followed by writers that lived 2000 years ago. We are trying to understand how to do a particular task. And unfortunately, the way we teach hermeneutics...

25:00

Remember, we just had John Hilber on. Just the whole thing about relevance theory and semantics and metaphor-over-literal. You're not taught *that* in seminary, either. But that is the way language works, okay? It just is. Out-of-the-gate, by default, most of the time we're in metaphor as opposed to literal mode. But that is not how hermeneutics are taught. And that should change. I would like to see that change. And this is another area where I'd like to see hermeneutics (the way it's taught) change. Maybe we would benefit greatly if we as part of a hermeneutics class studied ancient first century approaches to the Bible. If we looked at the Old Testament in the New...

I'll tell you what happens, just to be bluntly honest here. People go to seminary. They take the hermeneutics class and their Bible study methods class. They learn the grammatical-historical method. They probably learn how to use software and look up things and count the number of this and the number of that—all these procedural steps. And then a few of those people will later trickle into Master of Theology programs or doctoral studies, and then, *then* the floodgates open. *Then* you're forced to take classes on the Old Testament use by New Testament writers and you see that the New Testament writers didn't take our hermeneutics class. They're doing something different. They're not thinking the way about the text that we were just taught three years ago in our first semester seminary class on how to do this. And I've actually seen this. I've seen both things. I've seen this just explode people's minds, like, "This is just awesome. I finally can understand what in the world is going on in the Bible (this particular passage)." And I've also seen the opposite. "The New Testament writers are just cheating. This is all contrived and made up. This is not 'proper method.' They're not using 'proper method' and so I can't look at the Bible positively the same way anymore." I would say you need to climb down the pole of your elitism at that point.

And I think this would be less of a problem if we just taught people initially in hermeneutics classes what the New Testament writers actually do with the Old Testament and how their methods are consistent with the methodology of *their day*. What were *their* strategies? How did *they* look at the content? Not "*how do we look at the content?*" Those are two quite different things. There should be overlap between those things, but that's what typically happens. You get one method of teaching hermeneutics taught to everybody, and then when you get to your doctoral students, "Oh, now we're going to show you what's *really* going on." I disagree with the methodology. I have had three hermeneutics classes. In my experience they were all... One was in Bible college and the other two were at two different seminaries. And I can tell you right now, what I just described is what happens. I have seen it over and over and over again. And what we've

been trying to do, leading up to this class, is to illustrate (demonstrate, get it in your heads) how Old Testament content is repurposed—the subtleties of it, the strategies of it, what the writers are doing. And that’s what we’re going to do in this whole series.

So for those of you who are either now or maybe at some point later on [thinking]... “Boy, I just don’t understand how in the world... That just doesn’t seem like a legitimate mode of interpretation (or method). Boy, I took a hermeneutics class. I never learned to do *that!*” Well, that’s too bad. Maybe the problem was your hermeneutics class instead of John. Maybe that’s the answer. And I’m going to suggest it is. But anyway, I’m going to get off my little hobby horse there.

30:00 Speaking of methods, Beale has another book. I already mentioned his book on the use of Daniel in the book of Revelation. He has another book, just more generally, on *John’s Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*. And what he does there in that book is really nice. It’s really handy. He categorizes the methods of the author at one point early in his book. So given what I just said, given the above description of all these issues, and given the fact that the author of Revelation doesn’t cite Old Testament passages completely in word-for-word precision, how does the book use the Old Testament? It’s a logical question. What does he do? Scholars specializing in the field have created various categories to understand this. And Beale gives us a nice list. So I’m going to follow his list and give it to you in summary form. And so as we proceed through this book on the podcast, you’re going to detect all of these strategies at some point of linking the content of the book of Revelation back to the Old Testament in some way. So here we go. We’re going to go through the list here.

1. Beale says, “Sometimes John (the author) uses segments of the Old Testament as literary prototype. Now what that means is this: This method description refers to how John models his own material after patterns he sees in the Old Testament. That is, sometimes John follows a content sequence or a structure of an Old Testament passage in order to then write some portion of his own book (the book of Revelation). And in addition, sometimes John will pull clusters of allusions from specific passages in the Old Testament and use those clusters in specific sections of Revelation. He uses it for fodder, to produce his own material. So for example, Beale refers readers to the presence of content items drawn from Daniel 2 and 7 (the beast with the heads and the horns and all this stuff). Beale refers people to, “Look at Daniel 2 and 7. There’s a lot of things that are in those two passages that John uses to create the content of Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 (the beast from the sea).” You don’t have direct citations, but you have a lot of content drawn from those two passages in those two chapters in the book of Revelation. So that’s one example of what John will do: using segments of the Old Testament as literary prototype.

2. Second is the thematic use of the Old Testament. So in other words, the author of Revelation at times develops important Old Testament themes or topics. Some obvious instances here would include the divine warrior theme... Think of the return of Jesus in Revelation on the white horse. It's a military depiction with an army. So we have the divine warrior theme. We have earthly cataclysmic language (like earthquakes). We have frightening celestial events (like eclipses and hail). These are all drawn from Old Testament Day of the Lord passages. So sometimes John will take stuff he sees in those passages and picks out some of those themes and then develops them or uses them to produce his own content.

3. Third, there's the analogical use of the Old Testament. This is where John repurposes well-known Old Testament persons, places, and events to produce or illustrate his own content by analogy. The most prominent example of this would be the Exodus plagues. So there's a lot of Exodus plague imagery in Revelation 8:6-12 and Revelation 16:2-13. John's not citing the plague passages directly or explicitly, but he uses the imagery a lot in these sections. So there's an analogy—an analogical use of the Old Testament.

4. Fourth, Beale has this one characterized as the universalization of Old Testament theological content. Sometimes this is the writer's strategy. This method involves the author of Revelation taking something that the Old Testament applies to Israel and recasting it as speaking of the rest of the world (in other words, the Gentiles and the nations outside Israel are looped in). For example, John applies the famous description of Israel as a "kingdom of priests" to the Church, which includes Gentiles. He does that in Revelation 1:6 and Revelation 5:9-10, by way of example. So sometimes stuff that's meant for Israel will be universalized. Everybody else will be looped in to what the Old Testament is saying about Israel at any given place.

5. Informal, direct prophetic fulfillment uses of the Old Testament. Now that sounds like a contradiction: informal but direct. This is how Beale has it worded. What he means by this is, while not in the form of direct quotations, Old Testament passages do get referenced in the book of Revelation in such a way as to imply that John sees fulfillment of those passages in events related to Jesus, or that *will* involve the return of Jesus. For example, the allusion to Zechariah 12:10, which says, "when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced." The allusion to Zechariah 12:10 in Revelation 1:7 is palpable. It's the most explicit (if I can use that word)—the most transparent—example of this where John doesn't quote the whole thing. He doesn't cite it directly, but he alludes to this idea by saying this in Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him..." So he takes a little phrase "on him whom they have pierced" (it's not even word-for-word)... But he takes enough of the phrase that you know he's thinking about Zechariah 12:10, and he implies—he suggests—that it refers to Jesus. "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced

35:00

him...” So sometimes, Beale says, even though John doesn’t explicitly cite passages in a direct manner, he *will* use the Old Testament and then by implication, John says that this was the fulfillment of that thing over there. He’ll do that.

6. Indirect prophetic (i.e., typological) fulfillment. Now with respect to foreseeing the future, a prophecy (we know this) is a verbal prediction of things to come. In a similar manner, a type (typology) is a nonverbal foreshadowing of something to come. Now in Virkler and Ayayo’s hermeneutics text, they write this. Just thought I’d throw this in so people don’t think this is my self-styled definition of a type. A type is a nonverbal prophecy, a nonverbal foreshadowing. So they write this:

The Greek word *typos* to which the word “type” is related has a variety of denotations in the New Testament. The basic ideas expressed by *typos* and its synonyms are the concepts of resemblance, likeness, and similarity. David Baker provides a solid general definition identifying a type as “a biblical event, person, or institution which serves as an example or pattern for other events, persons, or institutions.” A typological relationship exists between an initial event that through divine inspiration foreshadows a corresponding event occurring at a later time in salvation history.

So that’s the definitional part of what we want to say here. But like other New Testament writers... New Testament writers generally do this. They use types. They use typology. The author of Revelation sees items of Old Testament stories and narratives as prefiguring something yet to come. So Beale gives us an example of this. He says:

Isa. 22:22 is an Old Testament reference which deserves serious consideration as a typological use in Rev. 3:7b, and serves as an example of how other similar Old Testament passages in Revelation could be treated...

So Isaiah 22:22 has this language in it:

**‘the one having the key of David, the one who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens’**

Now if you look at Revelation 3:7b (the second part of 3:7):

This second part of Christ’s self-description of v. 7 is not identical to any phrases from [MH: earlier in the chapter, like 1:18] where Jesus claims to ‘have the keys’... Whereas these keys are called the ‘keys of death and of Hades’ in [MH: Revelation] 1:18b, in 3:7b [MH: John is using Isaiah 22:22 as a substitution] for ‘of death and of Hades’: ‘the one having the key of *David*, who opens and no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens’...

So what Beale is saying is, “If you look at Revelation 3:7 and you have this language about the keys, you might think that the same reference is the one back in 1:18,” but he’s saying, “No, what John’s doing is a little different here. He takes some of the language that he used back in chapter 1 and he uses it here, but this time he loops in Isaiah 22, where it talks about ‘the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens.’”

The substitution is meant to amplify the idea of the original phrase in 1:18b by underscoring the sovereignty which Christ holds over the sphere ‘of death and Hades’.

40:00

So what he’s saying here is, we need to compare. We need to compare 1:18 with 3:7 and realize that John is using Isaiah as a foreshadowing of this idea of the keys over death and Hades. It has something to do with being the key of David, because the key of David is this thing that “opens and no one can shut it, and shuts and no one can open.” So John is actually looping in Isaiah here and is explaining his reference in chapter 3 and also wanted you to think about it with respect to chapter 1. So Beale says:

The point of the quotation [MH: what John’s doing here by linking the two together and then looping in Isaiah 22] is that Jesus holds the power over salvation and judgment [MH: because salvation comes through the line of David, and so does judgment]. In 1:18 the stress is on his sovereignty over death and judgment, while in 3:7b the emphasis is on his authority over those entering the kingdom.

Israel and the king—this whole idea of the monarchy... In the Old Testament, this is yet another waystation along the storyline of trying to kickstart the kingdom of God—the rule of God on earth—so that we could work our way back to Eden. So this idea of David... You can only enter this kingdom by being a resident of this people and having the approval of the king, who is in command. The king is the one who has power over this. He makes the rules. He’s the gate. He’s the conduit. And there’s a lot of other things that we already talked about in the Old Testament associated with the person of David that are going to get accrued to Jesus. So it’s a mix.

If you look at Revelation 1 and you look at Revelation 3, it’d be nice if John quoted just one thing from the Old Testament. “Oh, okay; I got it. Here’s where he’s getting this idea. It’s real simple. So what is John thinking now?” That isn’t what happens in the book of Revelation. John will start pooling resources. And in this case, he will take something like David. David foreshadowed another king to come, and so it’s typology. And so we have to think about, “Okay, in what way does Jesus resemble David? And it’s not just going to be one way. It might be ten or 12 ways. Which one of those ways is John thinking of and why?” So he

uses David as a type here to loop several passages together with the vocabulary... It's really complicated. [laughs] I mean, John.... It would be so nice if he just had a footnote that tells you, "I went to this one place for this one idea." That is not what the book does. The book pools ideas. It sees types. It sees foreshadows. It takes little bits and pieces and clusters from different passages and weaves them together into a new composition. It's not easy, is the point. And I hope you're already getting a sense that, "Well, goodness! My prophecy teacher... Not only did he not bother us with looking at the Old Testament for these ideas. He had kind of a cool interpretation about the keys being this or that." Maybe some piece of military hardware or something. So if that's where you're coming from, you basically have my pity. But even if you have someone that's trying to teach you that John is using the Old Testament, it's really still complicated, because he doesn't just go to one place and go to that place clearly. There's a lot floating around in John's head, and he feels very free to mix things. And that's part of the challenge.

#### 7. The inverted use of the Old Testament. By "inverted" Beale means that:

There are some allusions which on the surface are distinctly contradictory to the Old Testament contextual meaning. [MH laughs] Further study again reveals, however, the imprecise nature of such categories.

45:00

So he's saying, "Look, we're going to be looking at some things in the book of Revelation that it's going to look like John is getting something out of that passage that is just contrary to its original meaning—its original context." But Beale is saying, "That's a surface observation. If you look more closely and more deeply you're going to realize that that categorization doesn't really work—that John actually is doing something that you *could* find in that passage. You just have to look either hard enough or approach it from a different angle." By way of an example, certain passages in Isaiah depict Gentiles bowing down before Israel in recognition of their elect status as Yahweh's chosen people and recognize them... Gentiles bow down to Israel. You're elect. And we recognize you as God's chosen people. For instance, Isaiah 45:14; Isaiah 49:23. I'm going to look up one of those here, just to illustrate the point. Isaiah 45:14:

**<sup>14</sup> Thus says the LORD:**

**"The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,**

**and the Sabians, men of stature,**

**shall come over to you [MH: speaking to Israel here] and be yours;**

**they shall follow you;**

**they shall come over in chains and bow down to you.**

**They will plead with you, saying:**

**‘Surely God is in you, and there is no other,  
no god besides him.’”**

Isaiah 49:23:

**<sup>23</sup> Kings shall be your foster fathers,  
and their queens your nursing mothers.  
With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you [MH: O Israel],  
and lick the dust of your feet.  
Then you will know that I am the LORD;  
those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.”**

So you have those passages, very clearly the people of the nations bowing down to Israel. And then you go to Revelation 3:9, which says this:

**<sup>9</sup> Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are  
Jews and are not...**

By the way, that’s an important line. This is not shooting at Jews. “These say they’re Jews, but they’re really not.”

**<sup>9</sup> Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are  
Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down  
before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.**

Now this is written to a church in Asia Minor that is going to be dominated (because of the geography) with Gentiles. So Revelation 3:9 inverts the imagery by having Jews that persecute believers in Jesus submit to the Church. Or those who pretend to be Jews submit to the Church. It’s a direct inversion. And so you could look at that, “Well, John... He just takes this passage and makes it stand on its head.” Really? I’ve got news for you. It’s the same God. It’s the same God in Isaiah that is God incarnate—in Christ. So is it really different? Well, it is, but it isn’t. The point is the same: “I am God and there is no other.”

So what Beale is saying is, look, you’ll get these inversions. But when you really think about what the teaching point is in both places (not just John—not just Revelation—but back in the Old Testament), you’ll see how the theology actually aligns. It’s actually consistent.

8. Lastly, stylistic use of Old Testament language. Now this is the most technical of the method categories. And I really didn’t know that I should include this or not,

but I thought, you know, we're probably going to get into some of this, so I might as well. But this is the most technical of all these categories. I find this fascinating, and some of you in the audience who've had a little Greek are going to find it very interesting as well. Scholars working in the Greek text of Revelation have frequently noted (and depending on who they are, they sometimes criticize) John's propensity to use poor Greek grammar in his writing. All is not what it seems. Beale explains:

50:00

This use [MH: category] represents the most general [MH: broad] category so far discussed. It has long been recognized that the Apocalypse [MH: the book of Revelation] contains a multitude of grammatical solecisms [MH: which is a term that means mistakes in the given language]. Charles claimed it contained more grammatical irregularities than any other Greek document of the ancient world. He accounted for this with his famous dictum 'while he writes in Greek, he thinks in Hebrew, and the thought has naturally affected the vehicle of expression', a judgment which has met with subsequent agreement, especially recently.

But was this intentional on the author's part or an unconscious byproduct of his Semitic mind? It seems that his grammatical 'howlers' [MH: that's Beale's term] are deliberate attempts to express Semitisms and Septuagintisms in his Greek, the closest analogy being that of the LXX translations, especially Aquila. The fact that most of the time the author does keep the rules [MH: of grammar] further points to the solecisms being intentional.

In Beale's book, Beale has an extended discussion (he spends five or six pages) in his book on the use of the Old Testament in Revelation going over solecisms. And he does the same thing in his massive commentary on Revelation. Basically, Beale thinks that when John makes "mistakes" intentionally in his Greek, it telegraphs something specific about the way it would be expressed in Hebrew. Because Hebrew grammar often doesn't conform in the way it would accomplish some communicative task to Greek. Like John wants you to notice something here because John's Greek is fine for most of the book, but the book is littered with these boo-boos. And what Beale and others are saying is that the boo-boos are there to make us look. They're there because John is trying to express something specifically the way the Hebrew text would have it or the way the Septuagint words things very specifically. It does something very specific.

So occasionally... I'm sure we're going to run into these, where the answer or the interpretation (the meaning of the content in Revelation) is actually going to be assisted by John's intentional boo-boos. This is a whole subfield of studying the book of Revelation. And Beale has actually devoted a lot of time to this and produced a lot of good content on it. But I mention that because, yes, it's overly technical. This is not a Greek class—all that kind of stuff. But there will be occasion where we're going to run into these, and I will use the word "solecism"



and remind you that it means “mistake” and something important will derive from that. So just put that on the radar.

Now lastly, before we telegraph what’s going to come in the next episode, I want to make a comment on the distribution of Old Testament books used in Revelation. So which books does the author of Revelation allude to most often? A quote from Moyise:

Unlike other New Testament writers, it would appear that John’s primary interest was not the Torah, but the prophetic literature along with the worship language of the Psalms.

And he has a chart in his book illustrating this. So basically, by his count (and the count of others) there are 82 allusions to the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) in the book of Revelation. There are 97 in the Psalms. There are 122 in Isaiah. There are 48 in Jeremiah; 83 in Ezekiel; 74 in Daniel; and 73 from the Minor Prophets. So the Torah is dwarfed in terms of John’s interest in what’s going on here. Again, right now that’s sort of a statistic to keep in mind. But John is really tracking with the Prophets (prophetic literature) and the Psalms (outside the prophetic literature). And the most prominent of all of them is Isaiah. Just in terms of citations, it’s Isaiah first, Psalms second with 97, and then Ezekiel with 83. And then the five books of the Pentateuch combined are 82. But he cites Daniel 74 times. So he almost has the same number of allusions from one book (Daniel) that he does the first five of the Torah. So that’s just the general point. John is a lot more interested in stuff outside the Torah than in the Torah.

55:00 So where are we going to start next time? We’re going to start with Revelation 1:4 (the first half of the verse) and also verse 8 because there’s something in verse 8 that repeats what’s going on in verse 4. So I’m just going to read both verses to you:

**<sup>4</sup> John to the seven churches that are in Asia:**

**Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come...**

**<sup>8</sup> “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

Now you say, “Well, why are we starting here?” The important phrases are “who is and who was and who is to come” and then this “Alpha and Omega.” There are several issues here we’re going to talk about next time. But I’ll just give you three of them.

1. The Greek here reflects the Septuagint, not only of Exodus 3:14 (that’s the burning bush incident) but other places. At the very least, the Septuagint

rendering... Remember the Septuagint is Greek, and John's writing in Greek of those Old Testament passages might tell us something about how the meaning of the divine name (YHWH) was perceived by Jews during John's time. It might just do that.

2. Less obvious, we'll discover that the threefold name ("who is and who was and who is to come") is very similar to threefold designations of other gods in the Hellenistic era, which overlaps with the Second Temple period. So might John be trying to accomplish something there?

3. In verses 4-5 (and I only read part of verse 4) Jesus is clearly distinguished from "him who is and who was and who is to come." The one about whom it is said "who is and who was and who is to come" is God, and then Jesus is brought into the picture. So they're distinguished, yet in verse 8 that phrase ("who is and who was and who is to come") is paralleled by "I am the Alpha and the Omega." It's still attributed to God, but later (in Revelation 22:13—the last chapter of the book)... We're in the first chapter now, but in the last chapter of the book... They're kind of bookended. The Alpha and the Omega is parallel to "I am the first and the last," which is used to describe Jesus back in the first chapter! So you've got this "first chapter, last chapter, back to first chapter" thing going. And in some places, the language is used of God. In other places, it's used of Jesus, therefore identifying Jesus with "him who is and who was and who is to come" while also distinguishing them. So they're aligned. They're identified with each other, but yet they're distinct. So what's going on with that? Why does John do this in the whole book? Because he knows people are going to pick up on this phrase. It's an important phrase. It's not a cryptic one. John is doing certain things with it. Jews are going to know it, in the Septuagint. Gentiles are going to know it because it's used about other gods. And then John happens to mix it in with other phrases that refer to both God and Jesus. So what's going on with all that? So we're going to tackle those things. We're probably going to hit some other things about the divine name next week.

But that's where we're going to jump in: Revelation 1:4. So it doesn't take long for John to start dipping into the Old Testament. A few verses in and there he goes. And that's where we're going to be for a very long time, looking at what John's doing with his Bible (the Old Testament).

**TS:** Alright, Mike, it sounds good. A very long time is good with me. I still can't get over the hermeneutics not being taught to the level that you're talking about. Is that true they really wait till grad school to tell you more, or tell you how it really is?

**MH:** You're lucky in a hermeneutics class... You'll probably get one or two paragraphs in a hermeneutics textbook that says, "Hey, the New Testament writers use the Old Testament a lot. And they do some kind of interesting things with it that other Jews did."

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**TS:** I just can't get over that.

1:00:00

**MH:** And then cue the crickets. [laughs] It really... You're forced to get into when you get into Greek exegesis classes, which again... If you're in a standard MDiv program, you might get one or two years of Greek. Exegesis classes are third year and beyond. So let's use Dallas Theological Seminary as an example. When I was there... (This is quite a long time ago, but structurally their program is very consistent.) You're required to take two years of Greek and two years of Hebrew. If you're going to get into book studies, if you've saved your electives for that, then you're going to have room for a couple of book studies in either Greek or Hebrew. At that point, you *could* take a class in Old Testament Use in the New. But by and large, you're going to have to go another *year* to get a separate degree (the next degree—the next level) to get into that stuff. But in your standard seminary program, many seminaries don't even require biblical languages anymore. You're *never* going to get this. You're never going to get it. You might have a good textbook to read. And the textbooks are designed to... It's like an MDiv program. This is not a criticism of the MDiv program, okay? An MDiv program is designed to be a mile wide and an inch deep. It's supposed to, by design, expose someone going into the ministry to everything that they're going to have to be thinking about and will keep working in. So you'll get a few Old Testament classes to get your feet wet. You'll get a few New. You'll get some systematic theology. You'll get some Church history. You'll get some Christian ed. You'll get some homiletics. You get a little smattering of everything that's involved in "being a pastor," both in terms of content delivery and your personal study, and then your practical stuff that you have to do in church. Discovering the Old Testament use of the New Testament writers is not on that radar, by design. It's a "next level" kind of thing. So the most that anybody's going to really hope to get is a little bit of a section in a hermeneutics textbook. If you're doing papers, you're using commentaries, you could run into it there. But there's no drill-down class on it for a standard pastoral training.

**TS:** Well, I guess that makes sense. You really do...

**MH:** On one level it does.

**TS:** Yeah. You've got to get exposed to everything. And I guess it's a lifelong journey to go as deep down as you can.

**MH:** It is.

**TS:** So... And there's so many...

**MH:** But do our listeners realize what we're saying? You're getting things here that you will not get in seminary.

**TS:** So is it safe to say, if you're going into seminary, or you are *in* seminary, or you've been to seminary, what will you gain or come out on the other side of listening to this podcast?

**MH:** You will gain familiarity with the fact that A) this happens in your New Testament. B) It happens a lot. And C) we should be thinking about what to do in our preparation for preaching and our own personal study... We should make it a point to not leave a passage until we examine what the writer is doing with the first three quarters of their Bible. In other words, it should become a reflex. You should have your senses tuned to the fact that it happens and then start developing some skills in how to get something out of it. And that might mean brushing up on your languages. It might mean being more skilled in terms of your Bible software, searching for... Penetrating beyond the English, whatever that is. And that's something that anybody can do. You don't need a degree to do that. You just need to know that, "Hey, I'm supposed to do that. There's a reason why I would do this." And then developing through listening to the podcast, you're going to be hearing how scholars handle certain things—handle certain passages. And that will (I don't want to say "by osmosis," but you get the idea) illustrate the kinds of things you need to do procedurally in your own study so that you can start to develop those skills on your own.

**TS:** Okay, sounds good to me, Mike. We will be looking forward to the first episode of Revelation next week, and then many months after that. We've got some interviews mixed in there, too, and of course our Q&As. So when Mike says "many, many months," don't get too discouraged [MH laughs] if you're rolling your eyes, because it took us a while to convince him to do Revelation, so while we're here we're going to make it last as long as we can. Right?

**MH:** I don't know if it's going to be as long as Ezekiel. [laughs] I don't know. I haven't looked at how many weeks we actually spent on some of those books.

**TS:** Hey, it's okay. Nobody's complaining. Alright, Mike, with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.