

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 377

Revelation 9

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Episode Summary

Revelation 9 reveals John's vision of the fifth and six trumpet judgments. Several interpretive issues are immediately apparent. What is the nature of the angel with the key to the bottomless pit (Rev 9:1)? Is this angel the same or different than that in Rev 9:11 or Abaddon/Apollyon? Who or what is being released from the bottomless pit (Rev 9:3-11)? These questions take the reader into the wider question of whether Revelation's apocalyptic descriptions should be read in terms of modern analogies. In this episode we discern how the release of evil supernatural beings from the bottomless pit has clear connections to how Second Temple Jewish texts and 2 Peter describe the imprisoned Watchers, the sons of God of Genesis 6:1-4 infamy, and how the odd descriptions of those beings in insect and animal form have clear, abundant antecedents in the Old Testament.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 377: Revelation 9. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What's going on?

MH: Well, I have a pug update. The pugs have now been introduced to the pool properly.

TS: With life jackets?

MH: With life jackets, of course. And their attitude toward the pool has moved from hysteria to mild hysteria. [laughter] They didn't like it. But they took it a notch down because after flapping around in the pool... You know, we held them up. We didn't just throw them in there. You know? But they were willing to stand in the water on the top step. It goes about halfway up a pug. So I think they'll still like it to cool off. But I don't expect to see them swimming laps anytime soon.

TS: Yeah. Well, that's a big step, if they'll at least stand in it.

MH: Yeah.

TS: Do you all let the pugs out and run around in the back yard when you're in the house? Or are you all always out in the back yard with them?

MH: We let them out now. We know they're not going to jump in.

TS: Yeah, that's my fear.

MH: So they're sufficiently spooked.

TS: Yeah. That's why I don't let my dog... Or we don't try to get him to like the pool. Because I don't want to have to think about him jumping in the pool when he's out there by himself. So I'm glad that our dog does not like to swim. He hates it.

MH: Yeah. If they ever got to like it, we'd just have to put the life jacket on and leave it on. Unless it's in the evening when we were going to bring them into the pool. But yeah, the in and out thing, we'd have to leave it on. But there's no danger of that right now. [laughs]

TS: And as we approach summer, how many times... I'm going to say the over/under for visits to the beach by you is 1 ½. And I'm going to go with "under."

MH: [laughs] Well, I've not been there yet.

TS: Exactly.

MH: I almost went this weekend. I told Drenna I would do that, but then she changed her mind and they made some other plan. My daughter was down here. So that wiped that off. So I'm still at zero.

TS: I'm going to leave that over/under at 1 ½ for the whole summer. [laughter] And we're going to revisit and see how many times you made it to the beach, since you live a few miles away from it.

MH: Yep. Yep. So what counts as going to the beach? Like physically walking on the beach?

TS: Yeah, your feet hit the sand.

MH: Okay, they've got to hit the sand, alright.

TS: Touch the sand.

MH: Alright.

TS: Yeah, that's what I mean. If you're driving by it or you're parked in the parking lot, that doesn't count. Your feet have to hit the sand.

MH: I asked because of the parking lot. Because you'll get sand in the parking lot, but there's a fence. So to pass beyond the threshold there, that's what counts. Okay.

TS: Yes, exactly. The sand has to be on sand, not on concrete. It has to be literally on the naturally occurring sand to count. And you can't game it either. So you can't at the end of the summer say, "I haven't been to the beach yet. I want to win this." And you just go to spike the total. Because that's cheating.

MH: No, I won't do that. If I get forced to go or talked into going for some other reason, then we'll count that.

TS: Yeah, you can count that. Alright, there you go, folks. [MH laughs] If you live in the Jacksonville area, keep an eye out for a Heiser spotting. Keep your binoculars handy. And let me know.

MH: I don't think I'll be too conspicuous. Maybe the person that has no tan at all or something like that. But it probably won't count because there are plenty of people who visit it.

TS: I saw a few pictures of you wearing shorts, so I know you're wearing shorts on a regular basis.

MH: Yeah, I'll wear shorts if it gets hot.

TS: There you go. Alright. That's good stuff, Mike.

MH: Yeah. Yeah, this is riveting, I know. This is why people tune in, these sorts of details.

TS: Oh, yeah. We ought to see how long we can go. Because for the people who fast forward, I want them to actually get some of this. [MH laughs] They skip. "Another 30 seconds." "Thirty more seconds." So keep talking.

5:00

MH: We could do musical interludes, and then we start talking about this stuff. That'll trap them. Because they won't know when it begins or ends. We could do that.

TS: That's what we're about: forcing people to listen to our chatter.

MH: [laughs] Right. Yeah, absolutely.

TS: Alright, Mike. Well, hey, we've got an entire chapter all by itself today.

MH: Yes we do. We 're not divvying up anything. This is Revelation 9. And for those people out there who have not been already mesmerized by our preliminary chat here... Try to come out of that. We're going to get back to the biblical stuff here. For those of you who have read *Reversing Hermon*, you've been introduced to my thoughts very briefly in relation to Revelation 9, specifically about the locusts that come out of the pit. We're going to get into that today. So I have said and written something about Revelation 9 prior to today, but we're going to, as the series dictates, go through the whole chapter and look at Old Testament backdrops and antecedents and points of origin for what we read in Revelation 9. So I'm going to cut it in half. The whole chapter goes through Trumpets 5 and 6. And it's kind of neatly divisible. The first 12 verses really deal with Trumpet 5. So let's just jump in there. And then when we hit verse 13, we'll be on Trumpet 6. So I'm just going to read through these 12 verses here in the ESV so we have it in our heads:

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. ² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

¹² The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

So this is Trumpet 5. And again, we're not commenting on End Times systems and goofy interpretations. Let me just make one little comment about that. These are not tanks and missiles and things like that, because they were there to "torment" or "harm" the people on the earth. And here's what we get in verse 5:

They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them...

I would suggest to you that if this is a tank or a missile, people are going to die. So right away the literal interpretation, even without getting into the Old Testament imagery, is sort of ridiculous. And again, I don't think that's going to surprise anyone. What might surprise people is how deeply this imagery is embedded in or can be drawn from the Old Testament. So that's what we're going to get into.

Now we're going to start in the first verse here. You know, "a star fallen from heaven to earth" at the beginning of the fifth trumpet. Now there are two approaches to identifying this fallen star. And I think this is worth getting into. We're going to traverse into Second Temple literature here. And some of this is going to be a little bit familiar from some things we've had before, up until Revelation 9, about falling stars and this sort of imagery. But I want to zero in on a couple of things here very specifically.

So there are two approaches to answering the question, "Well, who or what is this?" The context at least makes obvious that this is a supernatural being. That much nobody really argues about. The points of controversy, though, are as follows. There are three of them:

- 10:00
1. Is this being is a good angel in God's service (a supernatural being loyal to God) or a fallen (evil) celestial being, perhaps even Satan himself? So that's the first question.
 2. Is this fallen star with "the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit" the same as the angel of Revelation 20:1, which says, "I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain?"
 3. If one opts for the fallen star being evil, is that fallen star the same being as Abaddon in Revelation 9:11 (ten verses later)?

So those are the three fundamental questions you get from the very first verse.

Now I'm going to go through a couple of approaches here to this. In terms of a first approach, Aune in his commentary takes the view that the fallen star of Revelation 9:1 is an angel but is *not* the angel of 9:11. So the celestial being of

verse 1 is not Abaddon of verse 11. That he is an angel, Aune argues, is based on the parallel passage Rev 20:1. Okay?

¹I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.

So he says, if you look at Revelation 20:1, it's so similar to 9:1. And it's pretty obvious that this is a supernatural being and an angel. He further argues that the angel mentioned in 9:11 renames Abaddon (in other words, he *is* Abaddon). So the angel mentioned in 9:11 is Abaddon. The angel mentioned in 9:11 is not this first angel of Revelation 9:1. So that's Aune's view. And he writes this:

John does not say that he actually *saw* the star fall; he says only that he saw the star *after* it had fallen. In 9:1b–2a it becomes obvious that the “star” is a supernatural being, i.e., an angel. In early Jewish literature, stars can represent angelic beings [MH: this is obvious] (Judg 5:20; Job 38:7; Dan 8:10)... Falling stars often represent evil angelic beings or demons [MH: and he has a slew of quotes here] (*1 Enoch* 86:3; 88:1; 90:24; *T. Sol.* 20.14–17; Jude 13), or even [MH: could be] Satan (*1 Enoch* 86:1; *Apoc. El.* 4:11; Luke 10:18 [MH: that's the “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”; Rev 12:9] [MH: again, this “falling” language is his point]. Here the fallen star should be understood as an angelic messenger (see 20:1) and not be identified with the angel of the abyss named Abaddon or Apollyon in 9:11... This angel is named only here in Revelation, and elsewhere in the OT and early Jewish literature is mentioned only in 4Q280 10 ii 7

Let me just break in here. He's saying that we only get the name Abaddon... The angel of 9:11 is named only here and in some early Jewish literature, specifically 4Q280, which is a Dead Sea Scroll. It actually references the “Angel of the Pit, and Spirit of Abaddon.” Back to Aune:

While in 4Q280 and related texts these two titles are alternate ways of describing Belial [MH: who would be the Satan figure in the Dead Sea Scrolls], in Revelation it is not at all clear that the angel of the abyss is a designation for Satan, for he is carefully named elsewhere with a selection of aliases in two different contexts ([Revelation] 12:9; 20:2), and neither Abaddon nor the angel of the abyss is mentioned again. The fact that ἄγγελον [*aggelōn*] is articular here [MH: it has the definite article], however, suggests that the author expected the readers to be familiar with this figure [MH: *this* angel], i.e., that the angel of the abyss is none other than Satan-Belial [MH: he's saying that's possible]... Abaddon is a Hebrew term for the kingdom of the dead (Prov 15:11; Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps 88:12) [MH: these passages reference this term Abaddon with the realm of the dead], used as a poetic parallel to Sheol (Job 26:6; Prov 15:11; 27:20; 1QH 3:16–19 [MH:

a Dead Sea Scroll]), death (Job 28:22), the grave (Ps 88:11 [MH: in the Masoretic Text it's verse 12]), and the abyss (4Q504 = 4QDibHam^a 7:8).

15:00

So he's saying, Abaddon could be Satan. We don't know. But he's saying that Abaddon (the angel there, the angel who is called Abaddon) is different than the one in 9:1. Now the key sentence in all that to parse (in Aune's thinking) is "here the fallen star should be understood as an angelic messenger" based on Revelation 20:1, "and not be identified with the angel of the abyss named Abaddon..." Now I take this as indicating Aune sees a good angel in both Revelation 9:1 and 20:1. Others who are commenting on Aune's work will argue that Aune still thinks the angel of Revelation 9:1 is evil, even though it's not Abaddon. And they draw that conclusion based on Aune's comments about "falling star" language being used of evil angels. I don't think Aune actually says that. And I don't read him that way.

Now here's why it matters. The advantage interpretively of having a good angel in both Revelation 9:1 and Revelation 20:1 is consistency. There is no indication that the angel of Revelation 20:1 who holds the key to the Abyss is evil. There's no indication he's evil. And after all, he's going to bind Satan. That's his mission in Revelation 20:1. So if the angel of Revelation 9:1 was evil, while the one in 20:1 is good, what you'd have is you'd have two different angels with the keys to the Abyss. And that seems to make little sense to me. We'll return to that thought in a moment. But in my reading of Aune here, we have a good angel in both 9:1 and 20:1, that angel being the same entity (it's the same angel)... Again, in this approach, this is how you could understand it—the same angel in 9:1 and 20:1. In fact, they're not only both good, it's the same one. But he has two different missions. In Revelation 9:1 the angel's mission is one of release (the release of forces under the command of Abaddon, a different figure mentioned in 9:11). And in Revelation 20:1, the same angel has the mission of coming back to the Abyss again, and this time he binds Satan. Alright?

So as far as an identification more specifically of this angel (the one in 9:1 and the one also in 20:1, the one who has the key to the Abyss, to the pit), the best candidate is Uriel, who is the archangel who, in 1 Enoch, was actually the chief "over Tartarus." Again Tartarus is a reference to the Abyss where the Watchers are held. And you get that from 1 Enoch 19:1; 20:1. Now another option, which is weaker in my view, is this angel could be Saraqael, which is another angel in 1 Enoch who was "over ... the spirits, who sin in the spirit." I just don't think that's as good of a candidate. Because Uriel is specifically associated with the pit, which is known as Tartarus. Now Beale objects to both of these options—both of these (Uriel, Saraqael, and all this stuff)—because he says 1 Enoch never calls either one of them a "fallen star," but reserves that language for evil fallen angels. So Beale rejects the idea totally that the angel of Revelation 9:1 is a good angel. So that brings us to the second view.

So if you're going to see the angel in Revelation 9:1 as an evil being, that takes you in different territory. And this is where Beale is at. So Beale, in his commentary, discusses the issue of a good or bad fallen star entity in Revelation 9:1 this way. Honestly, I think he gets in his own way here, but we'll unpack why. He says:

This [fallen star] image has been given various identifications. The main debate is whether this is a good or evil being. It could be either the archangel Uriel, who was chief "over Tartarus," or the archangel Saraqael, who was "over ... the spirits, who sin in the spirit" (*1 En. 19:1; 20:1–6; 21:1–10; Testament of Solomon 2*). But *1 Enoch* never calls those figures "fallen stars" [MH: neither one of them]. Instead, this description is reserved exclusively for fallen angels under the confinement of the archangels.

The star should rather be interpreted in the same way as the star in 8:10 because of the parallel wording ("a star fell from heaven").

So that's Beale's short take on this. Now the question has to be asked... Let's go to Revelation 8:10. I'm going to read this to you. Because he uses this as part of his justification.

¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood.

20:00

I threw in the first part of verse 11 there too. So he's interpreting that as an evil fallen entity. We have to ask, though, in relation to that verse (Revelation 8:10) as to why an evil angel would fall from heaven. Is this his fall from grace? What does the "fall" language actually mean? And why would he do it when another angel blows the trumpet? Because it sounds like, if this fallen star (this Wormwood) is a celestial being (not an asteroid or something), why is he obeying the trumpet call of another angel if he's evil? Why can't this be an *obedient* angel wreaking chaos in judgment, just like the angels who wreaked the plagues back in Egypt did (back in Psalm 78:49-50)? If there is truly a parallel with the Exodus material (which they're kind of obviously is), then why can't the parallel encompass this point? In other words, why can't the parallel also encompass the character—the nature—of the angel? I mean, back in Egypt, a whole company of angels (according to Psalm 78) were mediating the plagues. And if the plagues are the clear parallel (and they are) to these trumpets (including the one back in chapter 8), why can't we conclude that this entity in chapter 8 is a good guy? And Beale's answer's going to be, "Well, he's referred to as "fallen." You know, again, the argument extends from this one word, even though the parallel characterization doesn't call for that particular characterization of the angels involved back at the Exodus.

But anyway, let's go back to some other problems. If the angel of Revelation 9:1 is evil because of the "fallen" language, is the angel of Revelation 20:1 also evil? Now in Revelation 20:1, the word "fallen" doesn't occur. There's different language in Revelation 20:1. So the specific word "fallen" is absent, but yet they both have the keys to the Abyss. So if they're two different angels (in other words, the one in Revelation 20:1, Beale says, "Well, that's a good guy, because John doesn't use the word "fallen" there"), then, again, now we wind up with a situation where we have two angels, both with the key to the pit. Are there two keys? Maybe there are two keys. Maybe they each have one. Or do the angels hand it off like a hall pass? And if the first angel is evil, why does he respond to the trumpet call? Why obey God's judgment call? If you're an angel in rebellion, why are you obeying now?

Again, it just doesn't make a whole lot of sense. And Beale doesn't address any of these questions. So honestly, I'm skeptical of his skepticism on this point. There's really no problem with having a good angel release the Watchers (and again, I think these guys are the Watchers) because it is part of their day of judgment. It's not a jailbreak. They are being released (ultimately) to their own doom. This sequence of events is initiating Day of the Lord stuff.

Now Justin Bass chimes in here a little bit. His book on the keys of Death and Hades is not specifically about these passages, but he says a few things in passing. But unfortunately, it doesn't really resolve these issues. He writes that the verb about the key, that the key "is given" (it's a passive reference)... He writes that the verb here in reference to the angel of 9:1 being given the key to the Abyss

...occurs 21 times in Revelation and is used twice as much in reference to evil agents than in reference to good agents...

And then he lists the verses where it's a good guy and he lists the verses where it's a bad guy. Now the flaw there is that the fact that the verb form under discussion is in fact used of good agents. It's used of good guys. So that undermines the verb form as a criterion for determining that the angel of Revelation 9:1 is evil. The exegetical answer to this question is not determined by a head count—by a numerical count. That's not how exegesis is done. You don't do numerical counts. Okay? And Bass isn't claiming that. He's just making the observation.

There's also another logical flaw to having the angel of Revelation 9:1 be an evil being, one revealed by understanding what the abyss is. And we'll get to this other logical flaw in a moment. But let's talk about the abyss. Now ESV references "the bottomless pit" or "the pit." The English phrase "bottomless pit" is a rendering of Greek *abussos* (which is "abyss"). Revelation 20:1-3 have this same term as being the place where Satan dwells, and so it can be understood

25:00

as a partial synonym for Hades (at least a partial synonym). It's hard to know how much it overlaps. But it overlaps some at least. So it's a partial synonym for Hades (the place, not the personified being that we talked about weeks ago, when we were on the "keys" passage). And so it can be understood as a partial synonym also for the realm of the dead. Now a quote here from Aune in his Revelation commentary. He writes:

In Revelation the beast ascends from the abyss (11:7; 17:8), and it is also the abode of Satan (20:1–3), of the angel of the abyss, Abaddon or Apollyon (9:11), and of demons (9:1–10).

So again, this clearly... The abyss thing sounds like it's the realm of the dead and where Satan lives and all that kind of stuff. Now there's a reason why I say "partial." We'll get to that right now. In 1 Enoch 10:12-13, the abyss (*abussos*)... It's the same term in the Greek text here of Enoch. This is the place where the offending Watchers (or sons of God of Genesis 6:1-4) are imprisoned "for seventy generations." The partially synonymous relationship between the abyss and the realm of the dead is indicated by the fact that some members of the abyss are imprisoned and they're unable to leave (that would be the Watchers from Genesis 6) whereas others (Satan and demons) are *not* imprisoned. So there can't be a complete, total overlap between the abyss and the realm of the dead. It's better to view the abyss as some sort of compartment or subset or something (part of, the neighborhood)—a subset location of the realm of the dead. Enoch, in the book of Enoch, actually visits the abyss in 1 Enoch 21:7-10. I'll read this to kind of give you a flavor for how Jews would've thought of the abyss. This is why I'm getting into Second Temple literature—because John is using the same terminology. And again, this is no surprise. John has referenced Enoch and Enochian material before. But here's 1 Enoch 21:7-10:

⁷ I then proceeded [MH: Enoch is narrating this] from that area to another place which is even more terrible and saw a terrible thing: a great fire that was burning and flaming; the place had a cleavage (that extended) to the last sea, pouring out great pillars of fire; neither its extent nor its magnitude could I see nor was I able to estimate. ⁸ At that moment, what a terrible opening is this place and a pain to look at! ⁹ Then Ura'el [Uriel], (one) of the holy angels who was with me [MH: remember, Uriel's the one who's supervising this place], responded and said to me, "Enoch, why are you afraid like this?" (I answered and said), ¹⁰ "I am frightened because of this terrible place and the spectacle of this painful thing." And he said unto me, "This place is the prison house of the angels [MH: specifically it's going to be a reference to the Watchers in context]; they are detained here forever."

You probably know that the "forever" language here and elsewhere just means "a very long time." Because elsewhere in Enoch it's going to be "seventy

generations,” or “unto the time of the end” or something like that. There are other phrases that are used of this place and their punishment.

So this abyss, then is... This is the chief parallel to the lake of fire alluded to in Rev 20:10 and also Matthew 25:41 (“made for the devil and his angels”). This is the place of the final judgment ultimately of both human unbelievers and “the devil and his angels.” So this overlap points to this other point of incongruence with Beale’s notion that the angel of Revelation 9:1 is evil. Now here’s the point. If Jesus... I mean, think back to our earlier episode when we talked about Revelation 1:18 and Revelation... Let me just look up the phrase “Death and Hades.” So it’s in one of these episodes. It’s the episode on Revelation 1:18. Revelation 1:18 is where we get the reference to Death and Hades. And we discussed that verse in relationship to... Let’s look up the word “keys.” Because there were two of them in Revelation. And also Revelation 3:7. So the episodes where we talk about the keys of Death and Hades (and in Revelation 3 it’s the key of David)... I believe it is the episode on Revelation 3, because we deferred talking about the keys of Death and Hades until we got to the second “key” reference.

30:00

But you recall from that episode when we talked about the keys of Death and Hades, Jesus took them. He took the keys of Death and Hades from (again, if you remember the discussion) those personified entities (Death and Hades). Hades wasn’t just the place in that discussion and in these passages. These places have a personification of an evil supernatural being called Death and Hades. And Jesus takes the keys from them. In other words, he is now the master of life and death because he descends there. This is one of the things he does. And of course, he rises from the dead. So if that’s the case, it makes zero sense for Jesus to hand the key back to an evil agent in Revelation 9:1 (or anywhere else). So again, this is why I am simply not persuaded of Beale’s position, regardless of the “fallen” language. Again, he’s too focused on this one adjective. And he’s not considering the wider context, especially the keys of Death and Hades and who holds them. It just makes no sense. It makes no sense at all. Because not only would you have Jesus giving the keys back... (Like why would he do that? It destroys the imagery and the theology of what that means.) But you also now have either a situation where you have two evil angels... They each have keys. Or there’s a good one and a bad one. They each have keys. Or they pass the keys from one to... It just doesn’t make any sense. It’s far better to just have one good angel in Revelation 9:1 and Revelation 21 who has the single key. Again, if the angel is loyal to God and loyal to the risen Christ, then you could see it make sense to hand that key to the angel and say, “Go unlock the abyss,” or, “Go do this and that.” It doesn’t make any sense if you’re handing it over to a rebel. Zero.

A few other items. The abyss is also an Old Testament metaphor for chaos. We should mention this, because again, this is good Old Testament imagery. Aune writes:

The term *abussos*... means “without depth,” i.e., “fathomless, boundless,” and was used to refer to the infinite void or a subterranean region beneath the earth (in accordance with a three-level view of the universe). The term *abussos* occurs seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3). Five of these occur in two passages in which the three-level cosmology of Revelation is implied (9:1–11; 20:1–3).

Now Beale and McDonough, in the commentary on *The New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, add this:

The abyss in the LXX is always related to water, whether it be the chaotic waters—the “primeval deep”—of the creation account [MH: and the obvious reference is Genesis 1:2, but you get Psalm 104:6 in the English] (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 103:6 [104:6 ET]), the waters of the sea [MH: is another way it’s described] (Isa. 63:13), or the waters below the earth (Ezek. 31:15). Because all of these could be symbolically associated with evil forces [MH: remember, the sea and waters are chaos metaphors in the Old Testament], however, by NT times the abyss was spoken of more broadly as the place of punishment and/or confinement for wicked spirits...

And again, we have all these passages in *Enoch* and Revelation that we’ve already quoted. He adds here *Jubilees* 5:6–14; 2 Pet. 2:4 (that’s the reference to Tartarus); *4 Ezra* 7:36; *Pr. Man.* 3. So Beale and McDonough say:

This clearly is what is in view here.

So what this means is that we’re dealing with... It’s a three-tiered cosmology, which doesn’t conform to a scientific worldview. We’ve talked about this many times before. It also deals with the afterlife and the supernatural world, because this is where spiritual beings live. Either the disembodied dead or demons or Satan or Abaddon... These are celestial beings. These are by nature disembodied beings, all of them. So we’re not in the physical world anymore. So the three-tiered cosmology isn’t like, “Well, if you dug a hole deep enough into the earth, you could find this place.” That’s false. It doesn’t have latitude and longitude. So that’s not what is going on here. And that’s why, since it’s actually a... These are all metaphors for the part of the spiritual world where evil exists and is confined and ultimately the unbelieving dead—that sort of thing, those lines of thought. That’s why it can be referred to as watery and also fiery. Because both of those things, especially the water, are chaos symbols. They are symbols of judgment and death and something frightening that can harm you. So

on and so forth. This is why you get this seemingly... Physically these things don't pair (water and fire). But it doesn't matter because we're not talking about a place with latitude and longitude. So I think it's important to bring that out, and I think Beale and McDonough have a nice little paragraph there to summarize that.

Now let's get into verse 3, really verses 3-10. Who or what is released? Now I've already hinted that I think this is the release of the Watchers imprisoned—those sons of God from Genesis 6, known as Watchers in Second Temple literature from before the flood. And I'm not alone here. This is not just Mike. There are a number of people who take this view. Now Steven Thompson writes in his article, "The End of Satan..." This is from *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. It's a 1999 publication. He writes:

The most suitable sequel to the time of imprisonment described in 1 Enoch 10...

We just read *1 Enoch 21*, but chapter 10 is a lot the same. This is where the Watchers are sent.

The most suitable sequel to the time of imprisonment described in 1 Enoch 10 can be found in Rev[elation] 9 where the key to the abyss is given to a fallen star (or to the fifth, trumpet-blowing, angel?) [MH: he as a question mark there, so it's an ambiguity in his mind] who uses it [MH: this fallen star uses it] to open the shaft to the abyss and facilitate the release of imprisoned demonic forces who emerge to terrorize earth dwellers.

Frankly, the point is that this is the only group. It's the group from Genesis 6, i.e., the Watchers. This is the only group of evil, supernatural beings (fallen, sinful, supernatural beings, so whatever term you want to use) who are imprisoned in all of Second Temple Jewish literature. So the fact that they're *releasing* some from the same place in Revelation 9 really narrows the possibilities as to who these could be. There's clearly a textual relationship between Revelation 9 and Enochian material and Second Temple Jewish material that has the original offending Watchers imprisoned in the pit to await final judgment. Again, this is in 1 Enoch in a number of places: chapters 10, 18, 19, 21, 54, 88, 90; *Jubilees* 5; 2 Peter 2, as we read a few moments ago. And 2 Peter 2:4 is important, because it uses the verb *tartaroō* (sent to Tartarus). And Tartarus, according to *Enoch*, is where the Watchers are imprisoned and is supervised by Uriel. So the abyss is also home to these guys, but also home to their disembodied offspring, the demons—disembodied giants who were killed. And again, this is familiar territory if you've read *Unseen Realm* or the *Demons* book. The main source here is Archie Wright, his book on the origin of evil spirits. You also get Wahlen's book on unclean spirits that I reference in my *Demons* book. There's just a truckload of material on this, going through Second Temple Jewish literature, to talk about the origin of demons being the disembodied spirits of the giants—the descendants of the Nephilim in that regard. You get the Rephaim show up in Sheol in Isaiah

14:9. You've got a reference in Luke 8:31 which is kind of interesting. Let's go to Luke 8:31 real quickly. This is the "Legion" episode. And the demons who are cast out by Jesus in verse 31:

³¹ And they begged [Jesus] not to command them to depart into the abyss.

Now if they just... It wouldn't make any sense if they begged him not to [make them] depart to where they live. But specifically it's the abyss. Okay? This is the prison. It's not bad if you get sent home. It's real bad if you get sent to the prison, because then you can't get out. So again, there's a reference... This is very consistent. The New Testament is part of the Second Temple environment. We all know this. But the literature is actually very consistent. This whole subject, by the way (where do demons come from, the imprisonment of the Watchers) is one of the very few subjects in Second Temple Jewish literature where basically all the texts agree. That is really unusual. But this is one where you've got overwhelming agreement on this issue.

So again, you've got the Watchers in here. You've got demons in the realm of the dead, but specifically in the abyss (the prison). That's a very specific group: it's the offending Watchers. But Satan and these other dudes—these other rebels—are in the realm of the dead, but the abyss is a special compartment in hell, as it were. Again, it's a prison. So onto the way they're characterized. As I wrote in *Reversing Hermon*:

40:00

The bizarre description of the beings released from the Abyss as "locusts" (Revelation 9:3) that were "like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth" (Revelation 9:7–8) does *not* undermine their identification as the fallen Watchers. Hybridized theriomorphic [MH: that's an academic word that means "animal-shaped" or animal-like] descriptions applied to demonic spirits are common in ancient Jewish and classical literature.

Again, this is just a way that supernatural evil spirits are described to try to convey their voraciousness, their violence, their ugliness, their freakishness—all these things. This is how writers would describe features and facets, character portraits. This is a profile. These are contributing elements to a profile of the nature of these beings. And so they use animal imagery. This is not uncommon.

Now on the imagery, Beale and McDonough in the commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament note Old Testament connections to the appearance of these locusts, which textually there's only one candidate: the fallen Watchers. Let me just say, it's the fallen Watchers (and again the disembodied spirits of the Watchers are also in the same realm), but it's the

Watchers that are not allowed to move. They're not allowed out. Just so we're clear on that. They write:

The portrayal in 9:7–9 is based on Joel 1–2, which describes a plague of locusts devastating Israel's land (cf. Jer. 51:27). The locust judgment in Joel 2 is introduced and concluded with the phrase [MH: get this] "sound the trumpet" (2:1, 15) [MH: is that ringing a bell?]. This judgment in Joel is modeled on the plague of locusts in Exod. 10... Jewish tradition held that in Sheol and Abaddon there were "angels of destruction," who were in authority over thousands of scorpions...

Again, that's Jewish tradition—rabbinic stuff. Now we're getting into Ginzberg: *The Legends of the Jews*. This is Beale and McDonough's source. So this is rabbinic talk here. This is not Second Temple. It's not Old Testament. Ginzberg notes that:

The sting of the scorpions [MH: that were thought to be, in rabbinic tradition, in this place] was lethal (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1967: 1:11–16). However, some of the stings do not kill, but only torment the inhabitants of hell (Ginzberg 1967: 2:312)."

And if you have Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*, that's Volume 1, pages 11-16, and Volume 2, page 312. Now in Beale's own commentary, not with McDonough, but Beale's own commentary, he adds another thought. He says:

Testament of Solomon 2:2–4 speaks of demons who have wings, fly, and resemble human-like lions.

So there you get the lion teeth element. Now all of that hardly captures—it barely captures—the Old Testament antecedents. I'm going to read a long excerpt from Beale's commentary. And even *this* is partial. I just want to give you a flavor of how much Old Testament backdrop imagery there is to the description of the released Watchers—these released supernatural prisoners that exist. I mean, there's just a lot. There's a truckload of stuff. And I'm doing this to telegraph the point that I already did at the beginning. We're not talking about helicopters and surface-to-air missiles and lasers. We're not talking about any of that. All of this stuff comes from the Old Testament somewhere. And even in Joel 1-2, the locusts, the sound of the trumpet... How much more explicit could it be? But here we go. Beale writes:

In exercising this power the locusts execute judgment, as has already been intimated by their association with "smoke" (see on 9:2). Could Isa. 14:29, 31 also stand in the background [MH: this is the flying serpents], since it strikingly portrays an enemy who will oppress and "demoralize" (see below on 9:5–6)

45:00

unbelieving Philistia as “a flying serpent” associated with “smoke”? The harmful nature of the judgment in Rev. 9:3 is also expressed by the description of the beings here as “locusts” going out “into the earth.” They are destructive as a swarm of locusts devouring all vegetation in their path. The wording of this expression is based on Exod. 10:12 (“let the locust come up on the land/earth”), which introduces the locust plague against Egypt. Therefore, the fifth trumpet is partly modeled literarily and thematically on the exodus plagues, as were the preceding trumpets... The locusts in Exod. 10:15 destroyed “the land and devoured the vegetation and all the fruit of the trees... [and] there was no green thing left on the trees” (so also Ps. 105:33–35). But the locusts here are commissioned “not to harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree.” They are to harm only unbelievers, “those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” but have the “mark of the beast” “on the forehead” (13:16–17)... Deuteronomy 28 also predicts that “in the latter days” (so 32:20; 4:30) Israel will suffer the plagues of Egypt (vv 27, 60), including the plague of locusts (vv 38–39, 42), because of idolatry (e.g., v 14; 29:22–27; 30:17; 31:16–20)... Detailed description is now given of the locusts. The use of “likeness” (*homoïōma*) and the repeated “like” (*homoios*) in vv 7–10 expresses the inability of John to describe precisely what he has seen [MH: he just says they’re “like” this or that]. The vision sparks in his mind similar scenes from the OT, as the following verses reveal, and his approximate portrayal of what he has seen is based on his understanding of how the vision relates to the OT prophetic tradition...

The portrayal in vv 7–9 is based on Joel 1–2, which describes a plague of locusts devastating Israel’s land (whether the description there is literal or figurative for an invading army is not crucial for the present purposes). Just as here a trumpet has signaled the coming of the locusts (Rev. 9:1), so also in Joel 2 the locust judgment is introduced and concluded with “sound the trumpet” (2:1, 15).

This judgment in Joel is itself modeled on the plague of locusts in Exodus 10 (note the clear allusions in Joel 1:2 and 2:2 [MH: compare those verses in Joel to] [Exod. 10:6, 14]; 1:3 [MH: compare to] [Exod. 10:2]; 2:9 [MH: compare to] [Exod. 10:6]; 2:27 [MH: compare to] [Exod. 10:2; 8:18, 22]). It is natural, therefore, that John uses Joel to supplement the description from Exodus already alluded to in vv 3–5... The locusts are said to be “like horses prepared for battle.” It is hard to know if horses are only one metaphor for the locusts followed by others or whether all the pictures in vv 7–10 are part of a larger horse metaphor... But this ambiguity does not affect the overall meaning. The locusts (or horses) have “faces like human faces.” Similarly, Joel 2:4–7 describes the locusts there as “like the appearance of horses, and like war horses so they run ... like a mighty people arranged for battle ... like mighty men... like soldiers... “Iron breastplates” is a general description of part of the armor of a soldier (or battle horse; cf. Job 39:19–20; *Targ.* Nah. 3:17 likens the scaled armor of Assyrian soldiers to the

scaled thoraxes of locusts). This may allude partly to Job 39:19–25 (LXX and MT), which describes a war horse going forth only at the “trumpet sound,” clothed “in terror” and “in perfect armor” ...

So now we have Job 39 using the trumpet language and the armor language, the “war horse,” and “who leaps” (this is also Job 39:19-25). These horses that are armored and go forth at the trumpet “leap like locusts.”

“The sound of their [the locusts’] wings as the sound of chariots, of many horses running into battle” alludes to Joel 2:4–5: “their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses, so they run, like the sound of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains... arranged for battle... Included likewise are echoes of Jer. 51:14, 27: “I will fill you with people like locusts, and they will cry out” (the targum has “troops of nations who are as many as the locust, and they will lift up their voice”); [MH: the Jeremiah 51 passage also uses the phrase] “Bring up the horses like bristly locusts.” This allusion is confirmed in that: (1) Jer. 51:27 is introduced by [MH: again, here we have a *third* reference to] “*sound the trumpet among the nations*” ...

So we’ve got three references that associate locusts and trumpets from the Old Testament. Back to Beale:

... in the same way that a trumpet has signaled the coming of the locusts here in Revelation [MH: you get these Old Testament passages doing it]. (2) The second trumpet (8:8–9) has already alluded to the burned out mountain cast into the sea from Jer. 51:25, 63–64, so that what we have here is a continuation of the earlier allusion.

50:00 **Let me just stop there. Beale is saying, “Look, the earlier trumpets used Jeremiah 51. And this trumpet (#5) is using Jeremiah 51 as well for the locust stuff.” Back to Beale. The third observation he makes is:**

(3) The LXX of Jer. 51:27 [MH: and] (28:27 LXX) [MH: as well] is closer to Revelation than the Hebrew is: “bring up horses against her as *a multitude* of locusts.” The allusion reinforces the idea that the trumpet woes are directed to a significant degree against idolatrous persecutors outside the church, since Jer. 51:14, 27 is an announcement of coming vindication for Israel against idolatrous Babylon [MH: catch that: “the context of Jeremiah 51 is *Babylon...*”] (51:10, 17–18), who has wrongfully come against Israel and its temple (e.g., 51:11).”

That’s Jeremiah 51:11. Now I’m going to just stop there. Now this is a fraction—it’s a *fraction*—of what Beale has here. It’s probably over half. But still... Why go through all of this data? It might feel a little mind-numbing. Well, here’s why. If

you're going to read this passage like it's black helicopters, you might as well just throw out the Old Testament that John is using. Just throw it out.

Let's move to Revelation 9:13-21. And this is Trumpet 6, in the time we have left for today. So I'm going to go to Revelation 9 and read starting in verse 13:

¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

²⁰ The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Basically they stayed unbelievers. They stayed hostile to the Lord. So some of this language has already been dealt with in the first part of Trumpet 5 with the description of the hordes that are released. Ultimately, what you're going to have is, this describes the release of supernatural evil. There's no more... The prison is emptied in the abyss for a short time. Ultimately, this is going to lead to a showdown. It *is* judgment. God uses them to judge the unbeliever on the earth. And it's also going to lead to the big showdown in Revelation 20, which is going to be their ultimate doom. And that's where everything is going to be wrapped up.

So we don't want to go back and rehearse all that. I want to pick a few things out of here that are different from the first part of Revelation 9. Essentially what you have described here is the prison is emptied, because now we've got all the players back on the chessboard. The final conflict is going to be a war between all of the supernatural forces of evil (and those humans that are loyal to them) against God. Okay? [laughs] Against Jesus. This sets up the ultimate showdown.

It's spiritual warfare in its ultimate... And the target is earth, because they're going to surround Jerusalem and all this sort of stuff. So it's the old "wars of gods and men" kind of thing going on here. And this is preparatory. So the prisons are emptied, everybody goes back on the chessboard, and now we're going to end it. We're going to have this one final showdown. So let's just pick a few things of interest out here, in the rest of the [chapter].

Revelation 9:13 – the golden altar. Revelation 9:13 mentions this altar, which is an object already encountered in the book elsewhere. Aune has a quote here:

55:00

The term *thusiastērion* [MH: which is the term translated "altar"] occurs eight times in Revelation, four of which refer to the heavenly counterpart of the Israelite [MH: earthly] *incense altar* (8:3[2x], 5; 9:13), and four to the heavenly counterpart of the *altar of burnt offerings* (6:9; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7) [MH: it could be either one]. Since it is explicitly said that the golden altar is "before God," the voice from the four horns of the altar cannot be the voice of God. In 8:3–5 an angel functioning as a heavenly priest was depicted as standing by the golden altar, and it is possible that this unidentified voice could be his.

So you have a portion of Revelation 9:13-21 hearkening back to some of these things. But the altar is new. But even that we've seen before with some of the heavenly furnishing and all that stuff. Because again, it's the throne room of God. It's temple and all this stuff, the heavenly temple, so on and so forth. So that's the backdrop for that. Earlier back in Revelation 8 we talked about this. Revelation 6 we also hit the altar. So you can go back and look at those episodes for more.

Now Beale and McDonough comment about the rivers. We should say something about the rivers.

That the four (presumably wicked) angels are held back at the "great river Euphrates" evokes the OT prophecy of a northern enemy beyond the Euphrates whom God would bring to judge sinful Israel...

There's a lot of reference to this. This is the "foe from the North" idea that I say something about in *Unseen Realm*. So you have Isaiah 7:20; 8:7–8; 14:29–31; Jeremiah 1:14–15; 4:6–13; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20; Ezekiel 38:6, 15; 39:2. Joel 2:1–11 is part of the "enemy from the North." And it's not just the geographical north, if you recall, if you've read *Unseen Realm*. It's the cosmic north. It's *tzaphon*. This was the domain of Baal. This was where Baal and his council were. This is language... The *tzaphon/saphon* language of the Old Testament relates not just to human warriors coming down from the Fertile Crescent to wreak havoc in real time (all these invading armies that Israel had to put up with), but it's also the idea that there are cosmic powers to the north. (Think of where Ugarit is and you get the image, and Baal's mountain.) So it's cosmic evil comes

from the “North,” the supernatural North, the celestial North, if you will. So this is what’s in view here. Back to Beale and McDonough, they also write:

In both cases [MH: this “North” in either scenario] the invaders were characterized as a terrifying army on horses/chariots arising from the north (Isa. 5:26–29; Jer. 4:6–13; 6:1, 22; 46–47; 50:41–42; Ezek. 26:7–11; 38:6, 15; 39:2; Hab. 1:8–9... The echoes of Jer. 46 are especially strong [MH: in this part of Revelation 9]... The description of the creatures in the sixth trumpet echoes Job’s portrait of the sea dragon, the symbol of cosmic evil (Job 40–41). This enhances the identification of these creatures with Satan and his deceptive work.

So they’re talking there about the serpentine imagery with the horses’ tails—very consistent with the sea dragon idea, which is Leviathan. It’s cosmic evil. It’s chaos. So while it’s clear that the hordes here are demonic, that conclusion should not be used to eliminate the possibility of human armies. Like I said before, you’ve really got both going on. Now I’m going to disagree with Aune here, but I want to quote him just to give you sort of a flavor for what some do with this. He says:

[The army of ten thousands of ten thousands] appears to be a demonic rather than a human army. Huge armies of destroying angels (though not this large) are twice mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud. In *b. Šabb.* 88a, it is said that 1.2 million angels of destruction punished the Israelites who sinned in the golden calf incident.

Well, obviously, there’s nothing in the Bible about that. It’s just Jewish rabbis making stuff up. But again, you get the idea. Aune is saying this is a demonic army. I would say that an entirely demonic army would be inconsistent with Revelation 20:7-10. Now see, there’s the Revelation 20 connection back to Revelation 9. Why do I say that? Let’s just read Revelation 20. Because I’m going to argue that what’s being articulated here is a release of the Watchers; you put all the pieces back on the chessboard; and this is an essential element. Yep, they’re going to wreak havoc. Because this is God. God is ultimately going to use them to judge those who have the mark of the beast and so on and so forth. But that’s just the set-up. That’s window dressing. Okay? It is like the plagues in that respect, but it’s going to lead to an ultimate showdown at Jerusalem, for everything. And that’s going to involve both supernatural forces and human forces. Because that’s what Revelation 20 has. So it says:

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and

1:00:00

surrounded the camp of the saints [MH: the holy ones] and the beloved city [MH: obviously Jerusalem], but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Now that description... Just think about it. In Revelation 20:8, instead of “myriads upon myriads” and “thousands of ten thousands,” you have the more familiar description, “like the sand of the sea.” And that coincides with the language of Revelation 9. But in Revelation 20:7-10 that we just read, we have *nations* deceived and Jerusalem being surrounded. That description has all the marks of an earthly army. Revelation 20:10 has the devil deceiving this force, so the army must (at least in part, and I would say perhaps substantially) be understood as *human* enemies and warriors. The point is that demons don’t need to be deceived to march against Jerusalem. That doesn’t make any sense. So I think what we have here is *both*. We’ve got both going on, back to the old “war of gods and men” that the final apocalyptic conflict/Armageddon kind of thing...

And I know if you’re into prophecy you’re thinking, “Well, Mike, you’re confused. It’s Revelation 20:10, it’s after the millennium. And Armageddon’s before that.” Okay, that’s what a theological system tells you. If you want more information on Ezekiel 38 and stuff like this, go back to the series on Ezekiel and look up the episodes on Ezekiel 38 and 39. Again, there are things in Revelation 20 that occur earlier in the book of Revelation and that attach to Ezekiel 38 and 39, namely Gog and Magog. And at least in this portion of Ezekiel, or with these elements, this is not a linear chronology. It is a reiterative cycling through of the same events. So I’m not confused. I’m just not following a theological system. What we have here is a description of the characters, things that are going to be taking shape in two different passages. When we get later in the book of Revelation, you’re going to see how these things cycle through and mirror each other. There are things (just to telegraph it) in Revelation 8 and 9 and 13 and 17 and 20 that are basically the same. And this is where we get what’s called “the recapitulation view of Revelation,” where we don’t have a linear chronology of events in Revelation. We have *some* linear chronology. I mean, there *is* a progression. But we also have events that are described in cycles. Describe an event with five or six motifs; and then the same event five or six motifs, maybe you add another one, gets done later; and then it cycles through a third time and a fourth time. It’s like loops. It’s like a Ferris wheel. They’re connected. It’s not linear. It’s repeated cycles of the same thing. That does happen in the book of Revelation. And if you’re used to interpreting Revelation as only a linear chronology, you never even run into that idea because you’ve been taught *not* to see it, *because* you’ve been taught to approach the book as a linear chronology only. And again, that’s why you have the theological system you do, and why somebody else has the theological system they do. I don’t care about systems.

All I care about is how these things hook back into the Old Testament. And the passages do bounce off each other.

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And ultimately, we have a much greater amount of clarity if we take Armageddon not as a conflict over Megiddo sometime during the “great tribulation,” maybe or maybe not Armageddon... Throw all that out. If you understand Armageddon as a war for Jerusalem, because it’s the Hebrew tongue *har magedon*, *har mo-ed* (the mount of assembly, the place where God dwells and where God’s council is)... This is Zion. This is Zion theology from the Old Testament back and forth and three times over. If you understand it that way, then you can see how some of these things repeat. And it doesn’t really matter if we understand all the repetitions. What matters is, all of this is building to the climax for Zion. It’s a war between supernatural forces and human forces *for God’s holy city*, for Zion, for Jerusalem. That is what the book leads to—this conflict.

So again, you can clean up a lot of the clutter that systems develop and all this presumed precision of events and linear chronology (most of that just doesn’t work) if you’re looking back at the Old Testament. Because these passages that recycle hook into the same Old Testament passages. Again, that’s another clue that John is using. In this case, what does he use? He uses Joel 1-2; he uses Jeremiah 51; Jeremiah 56; a couple of other things in smaller ways. But he’s going to use these passages again elsewhere. And he’s *already* used them in some places. Exodus imagery... we’ll see some more of that. John is using a fairly small set of Old Testament passages and he keeps dipping into them to describe the same series of events. That’s what he’s doing here. That’s why you see him dipping into the same passages. He’s not dipping into them to say something different. And if it’s a linear chronology, why would he keep going back to the stuff he’s already alluded to?

So again, I don’t want to drift into system analysis here and all of that, but I know there are going to be some in the audience that just think when I’m talking about Revelation 20 and I hook that into Armageddon, that I’m hopelessly confused. No, actually, I’m not. I’m just not following a system. So I just wanted to add that.

So we’re going to end here. There’s more that we could say, but this brings us really in Old Testament terms to the end of Revelation 9. So next time we’re going to hit Revelation 10. And again, we are through six trumpets now. There’s one to go. But there’s obviously other things that are going to pop up here in the book. And we’re going to just keep doing the same thing: what John’s doing has deep Old Testament antecedents, and so what are they and what might they indicate? In this case, it’s both demonic imagery (it’s imagery that he and other writers used for supernatural evil beings) but it also doesn’t exclude (in fact I would say in some respects it certainly would *include*) human armies as well. And if you think back to the Deuteronomy 32 worldview, this is the way things work. The human enemies of God (the human empires against God’s people) are

being controlled and manipulated, they are under dominion, they are under judgment, they are being held captive—enslaved—by supernatural “princes” (to use Daniel’s language in Daniel 10) but that language is drawn from Deuteronomy 32 (the judgment at Babel). If you’ve read *Unseen Realm*, this is all familiar to you. If you haven’t, you need to go read the book, just to get up to speed here. But with that, we’re going to end here. And on to Revelation 10.

TS: Yeah, when I first learned to not read Revelation in a linear fashion, that was a big concept for me.

MH: It was for me. Because I was taught the other way very, very thoroughly. I think you get both in the book, but the important thing is not to assume the linear approach. Because you’re just going to run into places where it’s not really a good way to go.

TS: And you also referenced Justin Bass, who we’re going to have on our show here several weeks from now. But we do plan on interviewing him!

MH: Yeah, we’re looking forward to that and doing some other things. You know, we’ll dip back into his book, maybe with the keys a little bit. But he’s done some other things, too, we want to talk about.

TS: Alright, Mike. With that I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.