

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 382

Revelation 12

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Episode Summary

The imagery of Revelation 12 is familiar to many Bible readers. A woman with twelve stars around her head gives birth to the messiah child, after which that child is caught up to God and his throne, the response to which by Satan (the Dragon) is a spiritual war. The astronomical elements of the vision were addressed earlier on this podcast in Episode 138. In this episode, we focus on the relationship of various images, metaphors, and numbers to Revelation 11 along with the Old Testament contexts for all of those elements. Who is the woman? How should we understand the numbers? How does this relate to the persecution of believers described earlier in Revelation? How will these events play out?

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 382: Revelation 12. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What's going on?

MH: Well, not a whole lot. Boy, well, maybe I shouldn't say that. I took some abuse on social media, so I guess that's new.

TS: Oh yeah? What happened there?

MH: I don't know if you saw that. Well, a podcast I was on (Blurry Creatures) sent me a shirt, and it had a picture of an eye on it. So now I'm a Mason.

TS: Ah.

MH: I think I'm a Mason. Or an Illuminist or something like that. So it'll go on my resume and my application for the Illuminati. For sure.

TS: We have an eye for the Peeranormal logo, so, I mean...

MH: Oh, yeah! But the people with these steel trap minds who are thinking that I'm some occultist now, they never actually noticed that. [laughs]

TS: Yeah.

MH: So yeah, there you go. My question, though, is if you think about the Peeranormal eye, the “eye of God”... It’s been artistically styled of course. But it’s that astronomical photo known as the “eye of God,” with a galaxy or something in the shape of an eye. My question is, how did the Masons get those stars to line up like that? Like, how’d they get them out there, and then how’d they create the eye in deep space? It’s impressive.

TS: Aliens, Mike, come on.

MH: Oh yeah, that’s right. Gosh, I hope the Illuminati test doesn’t have that question on it, or else I’d fail. Anyway, we’re still working on it. [laughs] Still working on the application. [laughs]

TS: Yeah, it’s frustrating. Out of all these years... I mean, gosh. And they *still*... Just when anybody doesn’t understand anything in context now frustrates me. Especially you. They take this stuff out of context and they don’t take time to understand anything and they make assumptions. Or they write a review about your book and they don’t get the full picture. It’s just frustrating.

MH: Yeah. So in the last month I found out I was an amillennialist and a Freemason. So I’m having a good month! You know? [laughs] Maybe we should get a monk costume, like a robe or something with a hood, and put it on one of the pugs, and then he could be a Jesuit: Pugnacious Loyola. Maybe that’ll help. Judd Burton suggested that. I thought that was a great idea.

TS: Yeah, that’s perfect. For us in the know, it is funny, but it just frustrates me that people are going to take that out of context and spin it to make something that’s just not true. It absolutely gets me frustrated. I’ve had to just calm down about stuff like that. And I really want to engage, but I don’t engage purposefully, Mike, anything on the internet, because...

MH: Oh, believe me, I want to engage, because I could just mock it all day long, and it would just be so much fun. But it would take up... It’s not a good use of time. So...

TS: Yeah. And it’s not good for your blood pressure.

MH: Well, it might be good for mine, because it would be so much fun. But it’s still not a good use of time. I think the Lord probably would rather have me do something else.

TS: I do enjoy when our listeners take up the sword, and they’ll fight the good fight. You listeners out there, if you see it, feel free to engage. [laughter]

MH: Oh, man. Yeah, I mean, I'll get some good laughs out of that, too, so that might be worth it. You know, it's worth it if it's funny. You've got to have a little fun every day. You know.

TS: Yeah, that would be our advice. If you're going to engage, keep it funny and don't turn it hateful.

MH: Yeah, that's not what the Lord would want you to do either. So what can we say.

TS: Well, Mike, Revelation 12, there's some stuff in this chapter.

5:00

MH: Right. So we move from "Mike's a Freemason" to astral theology. Dun dun dun dun... [laughs] Actually we're not going to do that. I'm not going to go into the astronomical, astro-theological stuff for Revelation 12 in this episode because we already did that way back in episode 138, which actually uploaded December 25, 2016, which was sort of a tongue-in-cheek date to put that up. Most of the listeners are going to know that I think that the astral imagery of Revelation 12 is intentional and meaningful. And so I think if you... This wasn't my idea. I'm getting this from earlier writers and so on and so forth. But if you plug that into an astronomy program and you match that with the whole Matthew 2 thing (the star of Bethlehem), what you get is you get a date for Jesus' birthday. And it's not December 25th, which of course basically everybody knows—that December 25th is an artificial date anyway. But if you want to know all that stuff as it relates to Revelation 12, go back and listen to episode 138. And to get the date (to get some good scholarly sources that address different aspects of that date and presumed problems with the date, so on and so forth), you can get that back there. So we're not going to repeat that.

Today we're going to pick up essentially with Revelation 12:6, once we get past that imagery, and then tie this in with Revelation 11, I guess in terms of a strategy. And we're going to start in Revelation 12:6. And I'm going to just summarize things, as the content of Revelation 12:6 and following sort of coincides with or works in tandem with Revelation 11. And when we go through this long summary that I'm going to have here, then we'll go back into Revelation 12, beginning in verse 6, and sort of drill down on a few particulars—a few specific things in the passage. So Revelation 12:6 says:

⁶and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

In the last episode, we talked about the context for a lot of these numbers. And again, it was intentionally kind of mind-numbing because I want people to realize how complicated this is. You know, these numbers have a meaning in their original context, which in this case, going back to the book of Daniel, where you

get this 1260 or 3 ½ years and you get the 1290 and 1335 in Daniel. So we talked about all these numbers and what calendar these numbers make sense in (the 360-day—specifically the Zadokite—calendar). So we did all of that. And along the way, I made the comment about the woman here in Revelation 12:6. Because we're trying to link the 1260 in Revelation 12 with some of the numerical language of Revelation 11. And so we spent some time doing that in the last episode to show that these two passages operate in tandem, and so therefore they ought to be interpreted in light of each other. Let one chapter assist us in interpreting the other chapter.

So the woman, I said in the last episode, was Israel. I'm just going to go through sort of a running summary of a little bit from last week, tying it into Revelation 12, working through Revelation 12, and then we'll drill down on specifics and provide some data or some evidence from the Old Testament for what you're going to hear here.

So the woman, I said, was Israel. And the 1260 days operates in tandem with the same number in Revelation 11:2 (that's where it occurs). And I suggested earlier (in that last episode) that as Revelation 12:6 is really descriptive of the persecution of Israel (the people of God)... When I say "Israel," think "people of God" here. So Revelation 12:6, the woman, i.e., Israel (the people of God) flee into the wilderness. Because Israel is the one who gives birth to the messiah. We know this isn't Mary because there's no New Testament account of Mary being persecuted and having to run into the wilderness, okay? So this is figurative for Israel (the people of God) under persecution, in the days following the birth, the death, the resurrection, and of course the ascension of Jesus. So since it's connected with Jesus, it's not just broadly Israel (the people of God), but it's going to sort of narrow to believers.

10:00 Now there's a debate among scholars whether we ought to think of the woman as believing Jews plus Gentiles who are the seed of Abraham, according to Paul. Again, Revelation is the last book here. So we have sort of an accumulative theology built up before we even get to Revelation, so it's fair to see Israel through the lens of some of these other books in the New Testament. So there's a debate whether the Israel here is the "true Israel" (ethnic Jew plus Gentile—everybody's a follower of Jesus), or if we should sort of divide it up into ethnic Jew just generally (regardless of whether they accept Jesus as messiah) plus the Church. So let's just set that aside for the moment. We're going to talk in broad language here.

So we have the woman fleeing after the birth and the death and the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the child of Revelation 12, who is birthed in the chapter (Revelation 12) but also described as being "caught up to God and to his throne," which is a reference to Jesus' ascension (the ascension of the messiah). So Revelation 11:2, on the other hand (that has this numerical language), that has

the people of God symbolized both by the “temple” language and the two witnesses under persecution. So what I’m suggesting is to look at Revelation 11:2 (like we did last time, we spent our time in Revelation 11)... We wonder, “Well, what’s the temple thing there, and the two witnesses? What are they?” I’m suggesting that if we link the number there to the number in Revelation 12, we find out that we should interpret these things symbolically, that the two witnesses are the people of God. The temple also speaks of the people of God because the temple, which is his body (the body of Christ), which is the temple, which is us—all these New Testament threads tie in together. So the point is that if you take Revelation 11:2 and 12:6 together, linked by the “1260 days” reference, then the following elements can sort of be listed and interpreted in tandem:

- 1) Temple courts being trampled by the Gentiles—that’s a reference to Gentile persecution of the people of God.
- 2) The two witnesses who oppose the Gentile trampling. They preach against it and ultimately succumb to their oppression, but are raised after three days. So what’s up with that? Again, you’ve got this... Essentially, you’ve got opposition to persecution. And basically, the people of God who are under persecution are going to suffer under it, but they’re not going to be left for dead—that sort of thinking.
- 3) The woman who feels persecution, who is supernaturally rescued in language used to describe Israel’s supernatural rescue at the exodus is part of that. So this notion about the two witnesses (the people of God) being raised up after three days, I’m suggesting (again, this isn’t unique to me, this is in a lot of commentaries) that if we go over to Revelation 12 and we look at the woman and try to sort of align the messaging, what we get here is we have to notice that in the flight of the woman, the woman is supernaturally delivered. And there’s actually a quote that we’ll see a little bit later from Exodus 19 that ties Revelation 12:6 (the flight of the woman) back to the exodus. So you have a supernatural deliverance. And that would make sense in the language of chapter 11 of the three days (the resurrection)—being snatched from death and alive. Okay?

Now the wild card with all that, though, is John is writing post-Jesus, so he and his followers are, of course, included in the “Israel” imagery. That’s pretty obvious. The offspring of the woman (Israel) are “those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 12:17). So it’s very clearly followers of Jesus (the Church). Now as I mentioned before, the question is, does that refer to the Church alone, composed of ethnic children of Abraham who believe in Jesus and Gentiles who believe in Jesus, who are theologically called the seed of Abraham elsewhere in the New Testament (like Galatians 3), or do we have a reference here to ethnic old covenant Jews and new covenant Jesus followers (like in separate groups)? Again, that’s one of those things that scholars will wrangle over. The first one makes more sense to

me, that is, what we have here in the Israel imagery is the Church, composed of ethnic children of Abraham who believe in Jesus (they are believers) and then Gentiles who believe in Jesus (who are the spiritual seed of Abraham). And the reason I think that one makes more sense is because of Revelation 12:10-11. And I'll just read that. Revelation 12:10 says this:

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

**“Now have come the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Messiah.**

**For the accuser of our brothers and sisters [MH: that's a reference to the
dragon or Satan],**

**who accuses them before our God day and night,
has been hurled down.**

**¹¹ They triumphed over him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death.**

15:00

It's very clear referent to the inauguration of the kingdom of God triggered by the work of the messiah. So if that's the context for the Israel being persecuted here, it makes more sense (to me, anyway) to say these are followers of Jesus. Because in verse 17, that's what you've got. The offspring of the woman are “those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” Alright? They are a new Israel, defined in New Testament terms. It doesn't negate Jewish presence in there. It doesn't negate an eschatological role for national Israel or anything like that. I've beaten this drum repeatedly on this podcast. I don't like any of the systems. So I've said very plainly that I don't think supercessionism is the way to go. I think it says too much. I think it overstates the data. The other side, I think, understates the data—the continuity here between, or the composition of the Church as a new Israel. Not *the* new Israel, but a new Israel. Because Israel ethnically... Paul did write Romans 9-11, okay? He's still concerned about his countrymen. The same guy that said that Gentiles are now children of Abraham is still concerned for his ethnic brethren and their conversion and their destiny out there in the future—their reawakening after the fullness of the Gentiles is accomplished. I mean, there's still a destiny out here for national Israel of something. Okay? So that's what I think's going on with Revelation 11 and 12.

Now the question is, when is this stuff that is being described going to happen, or did it happen? And again, the timing issue is a big deal. Because again, the systems that try to approach the book of Revelation are going to land somewhere on the “when” question. And again, this is just me talking now, I think all the systems are a little bit too sure about their answer to the “when” question. I think that this is a bit more open—a bit more elastic—than either side likes to admit. But a few thoughts here. Let’s ask ourselves some obvious questions. Were Jews or Jesus-followers rescued in 70 A.D. in a manner like unto the miraculous deliverance from Egypt? In other words, when we get the woman fleeing into the wilderness who is snatched up, like she gets eagles’ wings—that’s the Exodus 19 reference... When did that happen to the Jews in 70 A.D. in the aftermath of the temple destruction? I don’t think it did. I mean, what are you going to point to? So the content here of Revelation 12 doesn’t really align very well with the idea that what’s being described here is *only* about events of 70 A.D. This is a significant missing element. Okay? So if it doesn’t get its fulfillment in 70 A.D., that would suggest there’s a more distant future persecution and deliverance yet to come. Kind of like some other aspects of prophecy. You have an act, and then a reenactment. You have these repetitive cycles in Scripture of prophetic things. You’ve got the “already, but not yet” thing working. So I don’t think we can pin this to 70 A.D. Because I don’t know when the Jews got miraculously delivered from the Romans. Seems like the opposite happened. Okay? So it seems more coherent in light of the 70 A.D. problems and Revelation 12:10 to see this persecution and deliverance as operating on an “already, but not yet” continuum. Again, this is my perspective here, and I think it’s consistent with lots of other passages and lots of other themes in eschatology.

What I mean by that is for sure after the ascension of Christ (think of Acts 1), the kingdom and authority of Christ came. Great Commission wording (“all authority is given to me in heaven and on earth”)... We have the new covenant inaugurated at Pentecost. I mean, all these things are happening. We have the kingdom... In Revelation 12’s language, we have the kingdom. Let me go back to verse 10 and read it again to you.

...the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down.

So for sure, this stuff’s happening. And for sure Satan’s claim over people as lord of the dead ended when the kingdom begins. Now my view (and you know this from *Unseen Realm*) was that this is either proleptically foreshadowed in Luke 10, or Luke 10 marks the beginning. “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” I take that as sort of a legal (if I can use that terminology) judgment on Satan, basically telegraphing the idea that, “If you are a member of Christ’s kingdom, which we’re starting now because I’m sending out the 70, giving them power over demonic forces and so on and so forth... If you’re a member of Christ’s kingdom, Satan has no claim on you.” He can flap his gums all he wants to. Because if

20:00 you're a member of Christ's kingdom, you will have everlasting life. Death no longer has dominion over you, okay? He has no power over you. He has no authority over you. You are a member of Christ's body and his kingdom.

So that language here in Revelation 12 is, I think, working in tandem with Luke 10 and some other passages too. So for sure, Satan has no ownership over... He can't bring any meaningful accusation against anyone who's part of the kingdom of God. So for sure that's the case. And also for sure believers were persecuted. All these things are transparent. And neither the kingdom nor the opposition ended in 70 AD. This is my point. Okay? If this kingdom stuff precedes 70 A.D.... And it *has* to, I think with Luke 10 and a few other things, like Paul's statement in Colossians ("we have been translated into the kingdom of his dear Son")... If the kingdom is around conceptually prior to 70 A.D., well then we would expect if 70 A.D. is the culmination of prophecy or something like that that it would go away or be altered or something, or there'd be this miraculous deliverance on the other side of it. And we don't have that. So there must be a future Day of the Lord. There must be a future persecution. There must be a future deliverance. And there will be a future kingdom consummation.

So these images in Revelation 11 and 12, I'm taking together in tandem that they describe the persecution of the people of God in what they certainly imagined to be the Last Times. But the way it worked out was, we don't have the fulfillment of all these things at that historical time in 70 A.D. You know, the Day of the Lord context, you go back to Revelation 11:15-19. You get all this Sinai imagery (the flashing lightning and all this kind of stuff). Well, again, all of those things—the Sinai imagery we've seen before in the book of Revelation... We've seen plenty of the antecedents for those things in the Old Testament. It's Day of the Lord imagery, it's judgment imagery, so on and so forth. And the Lord will return to earth (will come to earth). Christ will return and punish the wicked and vindicate his own people and rescue them on into the eternal state, the new heavens and new earth and new Jerusalem and all these things that we're familiar with.

So I think all of that is actually fairly clear. But the mystery here is the timing, which is related to the number of days. So how does this futuristic stuff relate to these numbers? Because the numbers sort of look specific, you know? And in discussing Revelation 11 last time, I suggested, based on the observations of Boccaccini (we read long sections of his article), that Daniel 12 gives us the "when" answer in association with those numbers. And so this is why he argued that Daniel situates the 1260 days (which is the same as saying "a time, times, and half a time"—3 ½ yrs), that that's 1260 days by a very specific calendar, and that the 1290 is adding a solar month (30 days) to it. And then the 1335 is adding another solar month plus a half solar month (45 more days). And at the conclusion of the 1335 you have the time of the very end. That takes us in the book of Daniel to the general resurrection, after the Day of the Lord. This is when everything ends. This is the end of days.

So again, there's Day of the Lord stuff in Revelation 11. There's Day of the Lord stuff in Revelation 12. There's certainly Day of the Lord stuff in the book of Daniel that links back into this. And why don't we just read... We've actually covered a little bit of this in earlier episodes of the podcast when we talked about phrases like "great tribulation" and how it links back to Daniel. But let me just read Daniel 12 so that you can see how Daniel 12, lo and behold, sounds like stuff in Revelation 11 and 12 [laughs] because this is where he's getting it. This is where John's getting it. So here's Daniel 12, starting in verse 1:

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.

25:00

Let me just stop there. We referenced Daniel 12:1 in earlier episodes of the podcast, where we had phrases like "great tribulation" or this unprecedented time of trouble. And we talked about the linguistic connections between those phrases in Revelation and here in Daniel 12:1. So this language isn't used very often. But here it is, and here's the specific point. This "great tribulation" language in Daniel is not linked to the beginning of a seven-year period. It's linked to a time that will coincide (the end of it, when it's over) with the general resurrection of the dead, essentially the Great White Throne idea. So that alone sort of impinges upon traditional premillennial systems. In my view it does not rule out the return of Christ and the rule of Christ literally on earth. Because I think that's really talking about the new earth, not a 1,000-year millennium according to some of these systems. So that's why I'm not... Conceptually, I'm aligned with a premillennial thought (that the return of Christ is on earth, the nations will be reclaimed on earth in real time and all this sort of stuff), so I'm with it, but the 1,000 years is too limited. Because again, I think the better view is that what happens after this time of great trouble and the Day of the Lord (the return of Christ) *is* we get the new heavens and new earth.

Now when we get to Revelation 20... Because people are used to reading Revelation as a linear chronology, and they're going to think Revelation 20 interferes with that and so on and so forth. Well again, according to one system of thought it does, but according to other systems of thought it doesn't at all. So it just depends. But I'm not an amillennialist, contrary to this reviewer that I mentioned at the beginning of this episode who reviewed my *Demons* book. No, I'm not an amillennialist, friend. Okay? You can't say what I just said and be an amillennialist. I don't define the kingdom as some ethereal, eternal state that isn't happening in real time on earth. Wrong. Okay? But I'm not using the vocabulary that a premillennialist would be sort of intimately familiar with. It's an "already, but not yet" thing in operation, and the final culmination is Eden returns to earth, like right here, not somewhere out in outer space or something. It's here on the planet—the planet made new. Hit the reset button for Eden, and all that sort of thing.

So back to Daniel 12. So Daniel is told Michael will arise, there shall be a time of unprecedented trouble.

But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

Hmm. There's that deliverance language again.

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Again, here's that general resurrection thing.

³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

This is our glorification.

⁴ But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. ⁶ And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" ⁷ And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end [MH: when this persecution comes to an end] all these things would be finished.

And it comes to an end at a time, times, and half a time, 1260 days. This is where the numbers come from.

⁸ I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" ⁹ He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall

understand. ¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. ¹³ But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Now recall from Boccaccini, again, the two verses here that he fixates on are verses 11 and 12.

¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

30:00

So that's something... Do we have here this abomination thing is the trigger point, and then we go 1260 days, plus 30 (1290)? That's what it seems like. And then the real blessing comes with an extra 45 days (this 1335). And again, I realize this sort of flies in the face of eschatological systems, but I don't really care. Because this is... We're trying to align Revelation with Daniel. And we're trying to take the calendar that Daniel's thinking about and situate it in its Jewish context. And we're not trying to situate it in the context of an eschatological system. So the assumption is that the Day of the Lord clock starts ticking when the abomination happens. Then it's 1260 days plus 30 more.

Now Boccaccini says... He actually starts talking about Passover at this point. If you remember the last episode, he links this extra 30 days to Passover. Well, why? It's because he apparently presumes that this 3 ½ years completes the last seven-year “week” or cycle in the 360-day calendar. Passover would be in the first month of the next year. Okay? So this Passover in his thinking, apparently, is something that happens after the close of this last cycle. It brings it to an end. And now this Passover in his thinking accounts for spilling into the next 30-day month in the solar calendar. Now for Christians, this would be the marriage supper of the Lamb—lamb, marriage supper of the Lamb, lamb, Passover. Okay? This is like a heavenly Passover thing, because Jesus is the Passover Lamb.

So if we were plugging this into sort of more familiar language, you've got the abomination; you've got 1260 days. Then that's going to spill over into the marriage supper of the Lamb. And then 45 more days after that (that takes you to 1335), now you've got the glorification of the believer. You have the Great White Throne judgment and everybody's resurrected to everlasting life or everlasting death. That's how this plays out just in a reading, if you're following the Zadokite calendar logic that we talked about last time with Boccaccini. This is all he's trying to do. He's not arguing for a particular eschatological system. He's trying to come up with an explanation for the numbers that make sense in a calendar Daniel would have known and used. That's all he's doing.

Now what's interesting is if you go back and sort of look at the calendar, that extra 45 days brings us to the month in which would occur the feast of Shavuot, which we mentioned last time (that's the feast of the harvest, the feast of Weeks). The harvest is complete. That festival in the Israelite calendar is something that would take place when the harvest was brought in. So in this system (if you want to call it a system)—in this reconstruction—the 1335 signifies the harvest is now complete, which would make sense because now you've got the general resurrection. The end comes, and the final resurrection—final judgment. Now what's interesting is that if you're going by the old Israelite calendar, that's really close (the 45 days) to the marking of Pentecost, which would be 50 days. Now Boccaccini doesn't really deal with this. I don't know if we need to care. Is it close enough? I mean, who knows? But if you're thinking Pentecost, it's almost like as the harvest was begun (speaking specifically of the fullness of the Gentiles, at Pentecost), so it's going to end with another Pentecost. But this one will be the Big Pentecost. Now I don't know if that's correct because it doesn't quite align. But it's very suggestive. I'm just throwing it out there.

So we have the ingathering of the nations being complete. And the book of Revelation, by the way, after the Great White Throne, ends with that line about the healing of the nations. Is that a coincidence? Well, I don't know. Again, there are these things to think about. Because what John's doing is he's linking his language back to Daniel, he's linking his language back to a sacred calendar, so on and so forth. So this is how we're trying to contextualize what's going on in Revelation 11 and 12.

So after this long persecution, the woman and her offspring are persecuted. They're going to be preserved at the end. And how are they delivered? Well, some are going to survive it, but some are going to be delivered. They're all going to get eternal life (everlasting life) in the new Eden—the new kingdom, the consummated kingdom. They're miraculously delivered. They're present at the marriage supper of the Lamb and then go off into the new Jerusalem. So again, these are big picture themes that we're talking about.

35:00

Now as a sidebar, you know, we had an earlier episode (Episode 206) on the feast of Booths (Sukkot), which would follow in this reconstruction by several months. Now the feast of Booths ultimately... The reason we did this episode (Episode 206) was that there are 70 bulls mentioned in Numbers 29. And there were some that were arguing that these are offerings to the national gods—the 70 gods of the 70 nations. And I took objection to that. I think rather, according to Zechariah 14:16, Sukkot (70 bulls) would be the time when the remnant of the Gentile nations celebrate Sukkot in Jerusalem, when they are reclaimed and now loyal to Yahweh. So maybe that follows as well. Maybe there's actually the celebration of the epic Sukkot by the Gentiles regrafted into the family of God in the new earth. Maybe that's how we should be thinking about this if we want to align it with some of these other calendrical things. You know, it's all speculation.

We don't know this for sure. In Revelation this would occur in the New Jerusalem (this ultimate Sukkot). "All the nations are back home." Which is kind of an awesome image, when you think about it.

But the flip side of that is, in the new Jerusalem, there's no sun. In other words, there's no time; there's no calendar. So how does this factor out? How does this figure out? Yes, Revelation 22 has "the angel showed me the river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God, and the Lamb in the middle of the street." We have the tree of life and its 12 kinds of fruit, "yielding its fruit each month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." It's a really wonderful capstone image. But I can't sit here and tell you that this is absolutely the way these feasts and festivals are going to work out in relation to Daniel and in relation to the language of Revelation. You could build that case. I've sort of just sketched it here for you.

But what we're trying to do... Again, this series is the book of Revelation in the Old Testament. How does the Old Testament get used and repurposed here? And what my argument here (building on the work of other people; it's not original to me) is that we need to take the language of Revelation 11 and 12 and hook it back into Daniel to understand these numbers, and then try to sort of extrapolate accordingly. And when you do that, you come out with the idea that these are symbolic things—that the temple language in Revelation 11, the two witnesses language, the woman language of Revelation 12, this is symbolic for the persecution of the people of God who will ultimately be rescued supernaturally after a specific period of persecution (this 1260 days). And then we have to go back to Daniel to think about the extra 30 days to get 1290. And then 45 more to get 1335. And so the suggestion is, Daniel 12 might actually give us sort of the chronology—the flow of events. And then you'd have to ask, "Well, what are the numbers? Why the 30 extra days?" Boccaccini says, "Well, that's when they're going to be celebrating an eschatological Passover. And for Christians, that's the marriage supper of the Lamb. It's very obvious." And then the next 45 takes us to the resurrection, either to eternal life or eternal death. And we are glorified. We're brought into the new Jerusalem. And then, in theory, we have the mega Sukkot to celebrate the return of the nations into the family of God in the new Jerusalem, where they will now be followers of Yahweh. Okay, that doesn't really conform to any typical Christian eschatological system. I mean, people are going to talk about it, but then they're going to throw in other certain assumptions that sort of are drawn from other theological systems. And if you want to do that, fine. My hope is that listeners will grab a hold of some of these ideas. And I'm not telling anybody to endorse or give up a system of End Times. But what I'm saying is, your system needs to sort of be rooted in an Old Testament Second Temple context. That's all. That's my summary here.

Now let's go back and drill down into a few specific things. So Revelation 12:6, 13. This is the woman who birthed the messiah. So I'm going to read both of those verses so we have them in our heads.

⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

And then verse 13:

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

40:00 And the male child, of course, harkens back all the way up in Revelation 12 to verse 5: "She [the woman] gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron..." It's Jesus. It's the messiah. ... "but her child was caught up to God and to his throne." Revelation 12:5 doesn't go through the whole history of Jesus. It doesn't talk about his ministry and the crucifixion and the resurrection. It skips all the way to the ascension, "caught up to God and to his throne," because that's the seat of authority, because a few verses later he's going to say in verses 11 and 12 that followers of the Lamb have conquered the dragon by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony. There's victory here. We've got this language of "the kingdom has come"—all these sorts of things that are going to be mentioned later in the book. So there's a certain logic to it.

But let's just spend a little time on the woman. I'm going to quote from Beale and McDonough here, actually several times during the rest of our time here. Because they put things into a nice summary. This is from the really massive commentary on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. And Beale and McDonough were the ones that wrote the section on Revelation. So they write this about this chapter:

There are allusions in [MH: Revelation] 12:2 to OT metaphors representing Israel as a pregnant mother whose birth pangs refer to the suffering of foreign captivity, with the imminent birth alluding to her future deliverance from foreign oppression and salvation [MH: i.e., through the messiah]...

By the way, the birth pangs being equated with foreign captivity... When the messiah comes, the exile ends. Okay? That's what's going on with that imagery. And they reference here Isaiah 26:17-18 in the Septuagint, Isaiah 66:7-9, Micah 4:9-10, and Micah 5:3. So we have "the imminent birth alluding to her future deliverance from foreign oppression and salvation, where either..." You know, in these passages, you have either Judah or Jerusalem depicted specifically as a woman in labor. So again, Isaiah 26, Isaiah 66, Micah 4, Micah 5. This image of

Jerusalem as a woman in labor, ready to deliver in association with this captivity of the exile and the deliverance and so on and so forth—that’s not coincidental. So we have an allusion by John to some of these Old Testament texts. Beale and McDonough say:

Also noteworthy is Isa. 51:2–3, 9–11, which speaks of “Sarah, who gave birth ... in pain” to her child the woman Zion, whom God promised to “comfort” in “all her desert places,” redeeming her out of captivity, as he did at the exodus when he “cut Rahab in pieces ... and pierced the dragon” [MH: you know, that’s just interesting language in light of dragon, Revelation 12, the woman fleeing, getting miraculously delivered] (note also that Zion is viewed as a mother with “seed” [*sperma*] [MH: with child] in Isa. 54:1–3; 61:9–10; 65:9, 23; 66:10, 22). These prophetic texts themselves and Rev. 12:2 were inspired by Gen. 3:15–16, where it is prophesied that Eve will bear in the pain of birth a future seed who will smite the head of the serpent (see commentary on Rev. 12:17 below), which, of course, in Rev. 12 refers to Jesus Christ as the fulfillment. The Qumran text 1QH^a XI, 7–12 [MH: that’s 1 Qumran Hodayot, column 11, 7-12] makes use of similar imagery of a woman enduring the agonies of childbirth in order to bring forth a child who appears to be a messianic deliverer.

So somebody at Qumran was tracking on the same thing that John winds up tracking on in Revelation 12.

Let’s go back to Revelation 12:3. You have the dragon—the catalyst of persecution. Beale and McDonough write this:

The imagery of the dragon is used throughout the OT to represent evil kingdoms that persecute God’s people, and this is in mind here. “Dragon” (*drakōn*) is another word in the OT for the sea monster that symbolizes wicked kingdoms that oppress Israel [MH: the Leviathan/chaos image]. Often the wicked kingdom of Egypt is portrayed by this emblem. God is spoken of as defeating Pharaoh as a sea dragon at the exodus deliverance and at later points in Egypt’s history (Ps. 74:13–14; 89:10; Isa. 30:7; 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2–3; Hab. 3:8–15; *Pss. Sol.* 2:29–30; see Ps. 87:4, where “Rahab” is a synonym for Egypt [MH: Rahab is one of the words in Psalm 89 for the chaos monster]; cf. Jer. 51:34, where Babylon is the subject [MH: in the same context]; see also Amos 9:3)...

45:00 So there’s a lot going on here with dragon imagery, and Babylon and Egypt, enemies of God, and so on and so forth. And the Egyptian connection is interesting because the woman that’s going to be delivered in Revelation 12 is given eagles’ wings. Again, that harkens back to the Exodus 19 passage. Again, what John’s doing is he’s describing something, but he’s linking it back to certain events and images back in the Old Testament. Beale and McDonough also write:

The image of the dragon in Rev. 12:3 represents the devil (so see confirmation of this in 12:9) who instigates the evil kingdoms of the world to persecute God's people.

So we're not forgetting the devil in all this. It's very clear language in Revelation 12. Now of Revelation 12:6 again, in light of the dragon stuff and the flight of the wilderness, Beale and McDonough add this:

The fleeing into the wilderness is an allusion both to Israel's exodus from Egypt [MH: again, think of the dragon and Egypt connection] and the anticipated end-time exodus, which was to occur during Israel's latter-day restoration from captivity. First, it refers to the time when Israel fled from Egypt into the wilderness and was protected and nourished by Yahweh...

Again, think of the harvest, think of Sukkot, all these things—this preservation motif, God providentially preserving his people. And then they have a whole grocery list of verses referring to when Israel fled from Egypt into the wilderness and was protected by Yahweh:

(Exod. 16:32 [MH: that's the manna passage, that one's obvious]; Deut. 2:7; 8:3, 15–16; 29:5; 32:10; Josh. 24:7; Neh. 9:19, 21; Ps. 78:15, 19; 136:16; Hos. 13:5). The same pattern of fleeing into the wilderness is observable in the cases of Elijah (1 Kings 17; 19:3–8) and Moses (Exod. 2:15; [MH: and they note here that Josephus in his *Antiquities* volume 2.256, notes the same connection] Josephus, *Ant.* 2.256) [MH: so "the same pattern of fleeing into the wilderness is observable in the cases of Elijah and Moses"], who symbolize the church in [MH: Revelation] 11:5–6.

Now let me stop there. Beale could have said "the two witnesses who symbolize the Church," which is what I've been saying, but he actually calls them "Elijah" and "Moses." He does that for sort of obvious reasons: Elijah was taken away and didn't die a natural death. And Moses was a little odder, because Moses does die, at least according to the end of the Torah. He doesn't land on Enoch, anyway. But anyway, he's just saying that these two (the two witnesses) and where he lands as far as the Old Testament reference here represent the Church—the people of God. So we're at the same place there. But I'm not willing to be as specific as he is. You could build arguments for Elijah, Moses, *and* Enoch, but we're not going to worry about that right now. Because again, it's all speculative. It's much easier to say that the two witnesses represent the people of God. Back to Beale and McDonough, they say:

The woman's flight into the wilderness also recalls the end-time exodus or restoration when Israel would return in faith to the Lord and again be protected and nourished by him in the wilderness (Isa. 32:15; 35:1; 40:3; 41:18; 43:19–20;

51:3; Jer. 31:2; Ezek. 34:25; Hos. 2:14)... Judaism developed the belief that the Messiah would gather his people in the wilderness at the end time partly on the basis of the aforementioned OT eschatological texts, and especially via a typological interpretation of Israel's exodus wilderness experience... This belief is reflected in the writings of Josephus, where there is explicit identification of first-century messianic movements with the desert and exodus themes (*J.W.* [MH: *Jewish Wars*] 2.259–262; 7.438; *Ant.* [MH: *Antiquities*] 20.168–172; see also *Ant.* 20.97–99; *J.W.* 6.351–352) [MH: there are a bunch of Josephus references here]. The association of the wilderness with the Zealots and similar groups probably is part of this larger messianic expectation [MH: at least that's the trajectory Josephus follows] (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.433, 508; 4.508)... Since here this flight takes place immediately after the ascension of Christ (12:5), the woman's representative function now extends beyond ethnic Israel to all those who call upon the name of the Lord—that is, all Christians, whether Jew or Gentile.

That's Revelation 12:17. Again, so we're tracking on the same thing. Let's go to Revelation 12:13-14. This is the woman's deliverance in exodus language. So here we'll get a few specifics. Beale and McDonough write this:

50:00

The image of the woman flying with “the two wings of a great eagle ... into the wilderness” to a “place of nourishment” alludes to two OT pictures and adopts them analogically [MH: by analogy]. First, 12:14 reflects the picture of God as an eagle protecting Israel in the wilderness, which is an allusion combining Exod. 19:4...

Let me just read that. This is spoken to the people of Israel from the mouth of God:

⁴‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. [Ex 19:4]

He brought them to Sinai, where this is taking place. So Beale and McDonough say, what John is doing is he's alluding to Exodus 19:4, but he's also combining that with Deuteronomy 1:31–33 and 32:10–15. Let's just read Deuteronomy 32. Here we are in Deuteronomy 32 again. [laughs] So it says here:

**¹⁰“He [God] found him [Jacob] in a desert land,
and in the howling waste of the wilderness;
he encircled him, he cared for him,
he kept him as the apple of his eye.**

**¹¹Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
that flutters over its young,**

**spreading out its wings, catching them,
bearing them on its pinions,
¹² the LORD alone guided him,
no foreign god was with him.
¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the land,
and he ate the produce of the field,
and he suckled him with honey out of the rock,
and oil out of the flinty rock.**

So on and so forth. So it's God's protection using this eagle imagery. Beale and McDonough say:

This well-known image is also attested in the psalms, where David repeatedly alludes to the exodus figure by praying that God's wings will shelter him from persecutors and slanderers, the same protection needed by the "woman" in Rev. 12:13–17...

Now if you go to verse 14... Let's go back to Revelation 12 here and pick up with one other thing. So Revelation 12:13 is when the woman is being pursued, verse 14 the woman's given two wings that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness to the place where she's nourished. And verse 15 has this:

¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

So there's this water imagery and this swallowing imagery—the earth swallowing up and so on and so forth. So that comes from the Old Testament too. Beale and McDonough say:

The metaphor of an overflowing flood can have at least three ideas in the OT: (1) an army spreading out to conquer a country (Dan. 11:10, 22, 26, 40), sometimes as an indication of divine judgment [MH: so the army spreads out, sometimes it's in a judgment context] (Ps. 88:7, 17; Isa. 8:7–8; 17:12–13; Jer. 46:8; 47:2; 51:55; Hos. 5:10; cf. Isa. 10:22; 59:19; Mic. 1:4; Nah. 1:8) [MH: this is pretty common, so that's the first idea: the army spreading out to conquer a country or to be a tool of judgment]; (2) a more general reference to divine judgment [MH: just more broadly] (Ps. 32:6; 90:5); (3) persecution of God's people by enemies from which

God delivers them (2 Sam. 22:5; Ps. 18:4, 16; 46:3; 66:12; 69:1–2, 14–15; 124:4–5; 144:7–8, 11; Isa. 43:2).

But again, this notion that flood imagery can point to persecution. And so Beale and McDonough say:

The third idea clearly is in view in 12:15. In Ps. 18:4 David describes Saul’s pursuit of him explicitly as “the torrents of Belial ... assailing me.”

Of course, Belial is going to be later used as serpent/Satan imagery.

...The swallowing of the flood by the earth is a further allusion to the exodus and Israel’s wilderness experience.

Believe it or not. Listen to Exodus 15:12. Because we don’t really associate this with the exodus, but here it is again. So we’ve got here...

**¹²You stretched out your right hand;
the earth swallowed them.**

55:00

So Exodus 15:12 says the earth swallowed the Egyptians when they pursued Israel through the Red Sea. Now this is in the Song of Moses. This is after the crossing of the Red Sea. And then you get this song in Exodus 15. Verse 11 is the one that we sort of all know.

**¹¹“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?
¹²You stretched out your right hand;
the earth swallowed them.**

And we think of the Exodus as Charlton Heston, okay? The Egyptians all drown and the sea closes. And yeah, it did that. But here it actually says “the earth swallowed them.” This is language... It’s underworld language. “They’re dead now. They’re being taken to the underworld,” and all this sort of stuff. But here we have this reference to the earth swallowing... Naturally it swallows the Egyptians who are in the water. You have to think metaphorically and symbolically. And that’s not to say it’s not a historical event. It is. But the way it’s described... The terminology that’s described shouldn’t just be left to literalism. I mean, yes, it has a literal referent: the event at the Red Sea. We get that. But the way that the water and the earth language are used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible denotes death and destruction and being tanked in the underworld, okay? This is the whole point. And so Revelation 12 uses this imagery. It just sounds odd. But if

you're familiar with the Old Testament context, the dragon unleashes this water—this flood—which, again, is one of the ways that you can understand that—that water is used as an image of persecution. And then what does God do? The earth comes to the help of the woman, okay? “And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.” Basically, just like the exodus, the forces of evil get swallowed up, including the river. The river goes down there, too, but it gets swallowed up by the earth. And it's right out of the book of Exodus.

So again, by way of summary, there are plenty of Old Testament touchpoints here for viewing the woman of chapter 12 as Israel or the people of God. That ought to be quite evident here. The metaphor is transformed, though, by being connected to the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus (birth by the woman), so that Israel ultimately here is the true Israel—those who embrace the messiah regardless of whether they're ethnic Jews or not. We can't take verses like Revelation 12:17 seriously by isolating the language of Revelation 12 to ethnic Jews only. It just doesn't work because of the other things that are talked about (the kingdom of Christ in Revelation 12).

So this is a good way to understand the language taken symbolically and metaphorically that has deep roots in the Old Testament. In a nutshell, that's what we've seen here in this episode. This stuff has deep roots in the Old Testament, not just in terms of cross references, but in terms of the conceptual metaphor of the vocabulary. It's used metaphorically in the Old Testament, so why shouldn't we read it metaphorically in Revelation 11-12 when John's using that language from the Old Testament? And I'm suggesting that we *should*. [laughs] John's not really changing anything. You know, the context is a little bit different because it's post-Jesus. So now Israel gets a little bit more of a different definition. But John's using the language in the ways that you would find it in the Old Testament. So why don't we just follow his lead rather than doing some of the stuff that you see in prophecy books and whatnot?

So again, this is what we're trying to do here. We're trying to just loop what's going on in Revelation... connect it back into the Old Testament. And for those of you who are just in love with a particular system, like I said at the very beginning, “be warmed and filled.” I'm not going to ask you to adopt one or dump one. I don't really care. But what I do care about is that you at least *try*—do due diligence to connect your thinking about interpreting the book of Revelation to the Old Testament passages that John very clearly is referencing and alluding to and repurposing in what he's writing.

TS: Yeah, Mike. That's why we need you to connect those dots. Because I'm not going to be making those connections.

MH: Well, you could... Maybe you could just read *Left Behind* or something. I don't know. [laughs]

TS: Yeah. Can I just watch that movie? [laughs] I don't even want to read *Left Behind*. I just want to watch the movie version.

MH: There you go. Gosh. [laughs] I have not seen the movie version. So I hope it was good.

TS: Have you read the books?

1:00:00

MH: No, no I haven't. That's a long story. The guy who edited them gave me a set for free. And he's actually (without bringing his name into it)... But the guy who edited the *Left Behind* series was not of the same End Times perspective as Lahaye and Jenkins. But yeah, he was something totally different. But he gave me a set. But he didn't assign them to me. He didn't say, "You have to read them." But he thought I'd like a set. So yeah.

TS: Well, that's pretty cool.

MH: Yeah.

TS: Alright, Mike, well we will continue the march. Revelation 13 next week. Still weird stuff. There's still lots of weird stuff to get through.

MH: We'll get 666 and mark of the beast and all that kind of stuff. There we go.

TS: We could do some Peeranormal shows on that one. [MH laughs] I expect you to bring some computer chips and all kinds of stuff into this next episode.

MH: Yeah. Bar codes and computer chips, yeah.

TS: Yeah! Alright, Mike, well, it was a good episode. We're looking forward to chapter 13 next week. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.