

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 391

Revelation 19, Part 1

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### Episode Summary

The major focus of Rev 19:1-10 is the marriage supper of the Lamb (vv. 6-10). This meal, a celebration of the victory over the Beast and his followers, is the climax of an ancient Old Testament motif: the “meal with God” or communal meal in God’s house where the Lord is present with his people. Old Testament examples include Genesis 18; Exod 24:9-11, while New Testament instance run from the feeding of the 5,000, the Last Supper, and celebration of the Lord’s Table. The marriage supper of the Lamb is the final eschatological, messianic banquet, an event that includes believers from every tribe and nation.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 391: Revelation 19, Part 1. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

**MH:** Well, for those who follow social media, you know we had really good news this week. For those who don’t... And I of course recommend that you do follow social media channels and not depend on the little updates on the podcast. Because we might forget something. But this last week, I had a PET scan, and the PET scan indicated that there was no spread of the cancer. So what that means is that there is... It’s operable. So we’re probably looking at months of chemotherapy to shrink the mass down—shrink the tumor till it’s a small size and clear of anything that would present a complication, and can be removed. So it was really good news. As far as the PET scan goes, this is about the best news [dog barks] we could’ve had.

**TS:** Yeah. You’ve got somebody in the background cheering for you. So that’s good. [inaudible] Everybody’s barking... [laughs]

**MH:** Yeah, I know. It’s my daughter’s dog. So this tells me that my wife is home and has not [dog barks] [inaudible] the dog.

**TS:** Everybody’s celebrating. [dog barks]

**MH:** And I'm going to have to do something to get rid of the dog. [laughter]

**TS:** No, that's alright.

**MH:** I'll have to... [dog barks] Yeah, I know. The dog likes me. I mean, can you blame her? You know? [laughs]

**TS:** Yeah, absolutely. Helping you celebrate. What about... How did Norm and Mori take the news? Are they pretty pumped up?

**MH:** Oh, yeah. Of course they're pumped up. [laughs]

**TS:** That's great. That's awesome.

**MH:** No, seriously, it was big lift. That was a big deal. Because otherwise, if it's not operable, you know, it's terminal for sure. And then you're doing chemotherapy and other things just to sort of forestall the inevitable. You know? Because, "Is it a year? Is it two years? Is it five years?" You know? And everybody... I've read enough cancer survivor stories to know that it's not predictable. It's just very difficult to sort of not have a path to it being operable. So that's what came out of the procedure Wednesday. So yeah, we were thrilled. It's just... I mean, we needed it. We needed a big lift. So I'm just thankful for everybody out there in the audience and of course family and friends (just from all over the world) really, praying for us. You know, our feeling is we've got a good chance now. I mean, a really good chance. It's very meaningful to have something that's operable. But we've got a long road to go yet. But it was a huge lift. There's light at the end of the tunnel.

**TS:** Yeah, it's great news. Absolutely. And I appreciate everybody emailing me too, Mike. You know, people pouring out left and right. Obviously, I can't get back to everybody. But I read every email you send. And I appreciate the good wishes and prayers for you and everybody around you. Because it affects all of us, Mike, even the listeners, man. You know, we're in this with you. So just know you're not alone. Because the ripple effect goes out far and wide.

**MH:** I know. I know. We appreciate people reaching out and we've had people send us stuff. And of course you get lots of suggestions from people who are survivors or who have somebody in their family. And we read all those. We're going to take things seriously. There's already been some pretty good ideas as far as dealing with the chemo and the nausea, and things to do alongside of chemo, nutritionally. I mean, we're looking at it and we appreciate it. So yeah, that's the update. It was a good day Wednesday. Let's just put it that way.

**TS:** Well, that's awesome. Speaking of good days, this weekend we're going to have another good day. And I think you wanted to mention something about your Fantasy Football draft mock draft experience. What do you got for me?

**MH:** I'm expecting a good day, Trey. I don't know about you.

5:00

**TS:** Uh oh. No, I'm going in cold turkey. So I might be in trouble here.

**MH:** You know, to be honest with you, you might as well. Because I've been doing mock drafts... And you know, I do this every year. I'll do 15, 20 mock drafts. I mean, I know what a good team looks like. I know what position scarcity is. So I come out with good teams, and it's like I keep getting these low draft grades. And they're inexplicable. "What, you didn't like my kicker?" You know. "Oh well." You know? So I would say, "Ignore what Yahoo says. Don't even bother." And this is not reverse psychology. I'm not saying this so that you go in underprepared. I'm just saying, I don't know who's evaluating these things this year, but it's just goofy.

**TS:** Yeah. I never trust those things anyway, so... Maybe that's part of my problem. [laughs]

**MH:** You're going to draft Cowboys anyway, so what does it matter? [laughs]

**TS:** I'm smarter than that. I mean, you know. But you've got to get a *few* Cowboys. Don't get me wrong now. You've got to watch the games and keep it interesting.

**MH:** Yeah, well, hold onto that thought. Hold onto that thought. But yeah, no, it'll be fun. I look forward to it every year. I've got that one and my Logos league this weekend, so it'll be fun to do those.

**TS:** Yeah, I can't believe it's already here. It's crazy how fast the summer has gone. We're here at the end of Revelation. And you know, it seems like the year is almost over. It's just...

**MH:** Right. Well, I'm sitting here shedding a tear at the thought of being finished with Revelation. So...

**TS:** Yeah. I imagine.

**MH:** [laughs] I'll try not to choke up too much. [laughs]

**TS:** And for the audience, too, you know, we have some more stuff planned for after Revelation. So by no means... We've got more interviews coming up. And something else *you* want to do.

**MH:** Oh yeah. I have several things I want to do.

**TS:** There's more to come. Nobody go anywhere.

**MH:** Yeah, there's no shortage.

**TS:** Yeah, there's no shortage of material. That's right.

**MH:** No shortage. Well, we might as well jump in here to 19.

**TS:** Let's do it.

**MH:** Like Trey said, this is going to be Part 1. So I decided after thinking about it, looking through the content, this is probably going to be easiest just to break it up into two parts. Because there's really something discrete in each half of the chapter that I want to spend some time on. So this is the easiest way to go to make sure I don't sort of short shrift something. So the focus today is really going to be the first 10 verses. So Revelation 19:1-10, and even within that, especially verses 6-10. So I'm going to read the first 10 verses. We'll just leave it there. And this is ESV. So beginning in verse 1, we read:

**After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,**

**"Hallelujah!**

**Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,**

**<sup>2</sup> for his judgments are true and just;**

**for he has judged the great prostitute**

**who corrupted the earth with her immorality,**

**and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."**

**<sup>3</sup> Once more they cried out,**

**"Hallelujah!**

**The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."**

**<sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen.**

**Hallelujah!" <sup>5</sup> And from the throne came a voice saying,**

**"Praise our God,**

**all you his servants,**

**you who fear him,**

**small and great."**

**<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,**

**“Hallelujah!  
For the Lord our God  
the Almighty reigns.  
<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,  
and his Bride has made herself ready;  
<sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure”—  
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.**

**<sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” <sup>10</sup> Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**

10:00

Now obviously the major element you get here is the marriage supper of the Lamb. That's verses 6-10. And we're going to spend the bulk of our time in this episode on that. But when you start at the beginning, we get the 24 elders mentioned. We've already dealt at length with that subject matter (the episodes that we did covering Revelation 4-5). You can go back and listen to those if you have not already.

There is one other item before we hit the marriage supper, though, that I think is worth mentioning because this has come up in several Q&As. And it specifically concerns the debate over, “What is hell?” (“What is the final punishment?” is probably a better way to put it.) Is it some sort of everlasting, ongoing torment, or is it annihilation? So I've mentioned this before in Q&As that the traditional view (which is this ongoing punishment idea) and annihilation are both textually defensible. For me the debate turns on how to answer the question of the death of death, and specifically this is Revelation 20:14. So I'm going to just go down there real quickly, so you know what I'm talking about. This is the Great White Throne judgment. And in verse 14 we read:

**<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

And elsewhere, you're going to get language (in 1 Corinthians) about the death of death. And so this raises a question. It raises a logical question, and of course a question of interpretation. Should we take this metaphorically, or is death really destroyed? And if it's the latter, if death is destroyed, then there can be no more death once death is destroyed. So if that's the case, it makes no sense to have ongoing death, ongoing eternal death—eternal punishment. Because if death is destroyed (there is no more death), then how can you have more death if it's ongoing? Again, there's this logical (and it relates to interpretation), this sort of problem or conundrum. And again, it's very easy to argue that you have the death of death (you can take the passage that way) and say, "Well, that means annihilation is the view we should hold." Honestly, they're both permanent. They're both everlasting punishment in that sense. One is just ongoing, and you have people continuing to die even though you have the death of death. And so you have to figure out, "How do we take this language so that that makes sense?"

That's one side. And then the other side would say, "Well, we're just going to take it at face value and say that it's annihilation. Because once you're annihilated, that's permanent too." So this is why I say they're both on the table interpretively. And this is really for me what the whole discussion hinges on: "How do we take this language?" I will add that the annihilation view to me seems to conform more to the original Edenic vision. And what I mean by that is, in Eden, originally, there was only life. There was no death. Death gets introduced. It's an alien. It's a foreigner. And so in the new Eden, you would think... Again, we're just extrapolating here. But in the new Eden, you would think, "There's no more death. There's only life, just like the original Eden." And so, again, that would favor the annihilation perspective.

Now the traditional view, to be honest with you, typically does not focus on this set of questions that I've just put out here. Typically, the defense of the traditional view is verses like Revelation 14:11 and here in Revelation 19:3. There's a phrase about "the smoke of their torment (in Revelation 19 it's "her torment"—Babylon's) goes up (the Greek term is *anabainō*) forever and ever." "See, that's eternal punishment. It's eternal suffering. Because their smoke keeps going up forever and ever." Now that sounds like a clear reference to ongoing, never-ending punishment. But it could be argued that Revelation 19:3 kind of muddies the picture. So if we go back to Revelation 19 (which we just read, just to pick up this one point before we get to the marriage supper), you read this. So it's the judgment of the beast and Babylon and the great prostitute and all this stuff. And specifically it says, "the smoke from her (her punishment) goes up forever and ever."

15:00

So here's the question (and this is a legitimate interpretive question): "Is God's vengeance against Babylon and the beast going to be forever ongoing? Like even in the new Eden, God is still taking revenge against Babylon and the beast?"

Or does the language just mean it was permanent and irreversible?” So again, this whole notion... Again, we’re back to the same question. Does the language favor annihilation (it’s permanent and irreversible) or is it this ongoing vengeance—ongoing dying (and again, the issue being the death of death)?

Now interestingly enough, when you get into verses 6-10 (which we’re going to do for the bulk of the episode today), when you get to the marriage supper of the Lamb, that passage (and the whole concept of the great End Times banquet—the messianic banquet, the eschatological banquet) is going to draw on Isaiah 25. And in Isaiah 25:8, even there you have a reference to the death of death. So the marriage supper is sort of either tied to or maybe post- the death of death. So even the marriage supper in the way it’s presented in the Old Testament, contains this question—this idea. How do we take the language of the death of death? But I just wanted to throw that out there, because you get this phrase, and the assumption is that the phrase itself sort of settles something, but it actually doesn’t. Because you have to ask interpretive questions like this. If we’re 10,000 years into the new global Eden, is God still taking revenge on the beast? Is it ongoing? Well... Or was it, “Oh, that was a long time ago. And it’s permanent. We’re done with that. It has no part in the new Eden.” So that’s your interpretive crossroads.

Now for the rest of our time today, we do want to focus on verses 6-10 and the marriage supper of the Lamb, which we read. And actually, this scene—this whole concept of the marriage supper of the Lamb... It’s a messianic banquet, obviously, because the Lamb is Jesus. This is the climax to a motif found throughout Scripture. And the motif is the meal with God—a divine banquet. And before we get into some of the technical details, just to sort of stimulate your thinking a little bit here, think of all the meals with God or meals that people have in God’s house that there are in the Bible. Now this is broader than sacrifices. And some of the sacrifices do have the priests participating by eating part of the sacrifice. It’s not all of them. It’s a minority. But sometimes the priests do get to eat and partake part of the sacrifice. That’s kind of the point. That’s just the priesthood—just the Levitical priesthood. And it’s not all the sacrifices anyway. So most of them don’t really qualify there.

What I’m talking about here is something a little bit bigger. Now God doesn’t have to be present, eating himself, you know, in anthropomorphic form. Sometimes in the passage you get that feel to it. For instance, in Revelation 19, when Jesus returns, the returned Christ—the returned messiah—is never actually described as sitting down at the table and eating with his people. But nevertheless, it’s the marriage supper of the Lamb. Okay? Now at the Last Supper, Jesus alludes to drinking the fruit of the vine in the kingdom to come. All the Gospels have that. In Matthew 26:26-29, for instance, Jesus says, “I’m not going to drink of the fruit of the vine until the day in the kingdom,” and so on and so forth. But he actually never mentions the food, which is kind of interesting. It’s

just not an element there. So when I talk about the “meal with God” motif, or meals that people have *with* God in God’s house, it’s not as though they all have to be anthropomorphic. I mean, most of them are not going to be in that territory. But nevertheless, there is this sense of family community gathered around a meal in God’s house, and therefore by extension with the Lord. So there are a number of these in the Bible.

20:00

I would actually start off with the Tree of Life. Because the Tree of Life is in Eden, which is God’s house. It’s God’s abode. God is present anthropomorphically (like Genesis 3:8), even though that anthropomorphic language doesn’t relate specifically to eating. It just says the Lord is walking in the cool of the day (as a lot of translations have). So he’s there, presented anthropomorphically. But it’s not at a table-sitting. But nevertheless, the Tree of Life is in Eden, and Eden is God’s house. It’s his temple. So Adam and Eve are obviously going to be eating of the Tree of Life, and this is kind of where the idea begins. It’s a communal thing.

You have Genesis 18. Now here’s a very explicit one, where Abraham shares a meal with the Lord—with Yahweh in human form—and two angels. That’s the most explicit one.

Some would say that the manna might qualify here. It’s food from heaven, the food of angels, as the psalm says—Israel as a camp going through the wilderness is where God’s presence is. Because they’re on their way to the land and the Lord is there in the pillar of cloud/the pillar of fire. That’s Exodus 16, so it’s before the angel passage in Exodus 23. So maybe... Manna might count.

Exodus 24:9-11 is pretty clear. This is when Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu and the 70 elders of Israel go up into Mount Sinai and they have a meal with God. It just says point-blank that they saw the God of Israel and they ate and drank with him. So you get that.

I mean, think in the New Testament, about Jesus sharing meals with the disciples. Well, Jesus is God incarnate. It’s not just the disciples, either. You have the feeding of the 4,000 and the feeding of the 5,000. You have the Last Supper. You have the incident on the road to Emmaus, where Jesus breaks bread with the two disciples there, and all of a sudden their eyes are opened and they know who this is. It’s the resurrected Christ. You have the post-resurrection meal in the upper room in Luke 24. You have Jesus by the seashore in John 21, when he eats some fish with them.

Of course in the Epistles, the big one is the Lord’s Table (communion), which we get hints of in Paul, but we know from early Christian writings that the Lord’s Table was usually accompanied by a feast. And in 1 Corinthians 11, that’s pretty clear because one of the issues is that the Corinthians are using the occasion to



get drunk. They're eating too much. They don't distribute the food among the poor. I mean, this is more than a communion wafer, okay? There was actually a meal in association with remembering the Lord through this sort of re-enactment of the Last Supper.

And you get all this. And all this culminates in a celebration. It's celebratory. And this is important. And so it's not the same thing (at least in my thinking) as the "supper of God" later in Revelation 19, which we're going to talk about next time. Because that (Revelation 19:17) is where birds consume the flesh of the followers of the beast—those who are defeated. It's called the supper of God. And again, it's not the same because the marriage supper is very clearly a celebration. In the Old Testament passages we'll look at, it's very clearly something that's a wonderful thing. It's not about eating the dead and all this kind of stuff. It's not about animals picking the remains or anything like that. That's what you get in Revelation 19:17. But the marriage supper is different. The bad one (or at least the consumption of the chaos enemies, Revelation 19:17, the supper of God) is about (I would say metaphorically, and you could see how it would begin literally, too, with) an actual battle. And I think it has deep roots.

25:00

What I mean by this is, let's just look at it this way. In Revelation 19:17, when the Lord returns and the forces of the beast are defeated and destroyed, you have this supper, which is the consumption of chaos forces. And it precedes the marriage supper of the Lamb. Because I personally put the actual marriage supper of the Lamb in the new Eden. Now here we get it mentioned in Revelation 19. But when you get to the new Eden, that's where you get references to the Tree of Life. You get references to the Garden, okay? The good stuff to eat that was originally in Eden... you get those kinds of descriptions later on. We don't have a strict chronological order here. And we can tell that even in Revelation 19 because the beast and his forces are spoken of as being destroyed, but they're not destroyed yet. That's going to come later in the chapter, when the Lord comes back on the white horse and all this sort of stuff, when you have the climax of Armageddon. So we don't have a strict chronology here. I put the marriage supper (the actual event) afterwards in the new global Eden.

But anyway, here (back in Revelation 19) you have the consumption of chaos forces, which is going to precede the marriage supper. The marriage supper and the supper of God—these two meals... One is the meal with God that's a celebration. The other one is the consumption of the chaos enemy. They might both be mentioned as a way to telegraph the two sides of the Day of the Lord. You could think of it this way. So one is a judgment (very obviously) on the forces of evil and chaos. And the other one is a vindication or a celebration with the righteous, with the Lord.

Now, we're going to pick up this a little bit later when we hit Psalm 74. There's going to be a reason that I bring up Psalm 74 in a moment. But Psalm 74 is the

passage in the Psalms that quotes directly from the Canaanite Leviathan material—Leviathan, the great sea beast, the symbol of chaos that’s just ubiquitous in antiquity. And it says that Leviathan... It ties in the defeat of (the death of and the destruction of) Leviathan in conjunction with passing through the Red Sea at the exodus. And it says that Leviathan was given to them as food. Now you can go back and read the Exodus account over and over and over again. You’re never going to get, “Oh, there was a big dragon slain back there, and everybody got a meal. Everybody got a steak.” Okay? It’s metaphorical language but it’s applied to the forces of Egypt. It’s applied to Pharaoh and his army, because that was the major chaos enemy at that time in the Old Testament. Later on, it’s going to become Babel, and of course here in Revelation it’s Babel—Babylon. So you may have something going on there, and I think you do. But we’ll hit that in a moment. Again, the positive side of this is the celebration that I think takes place in the new Jerusalem.

So you’ve got two meals mentioned in Revelation 19. One is the marriage supper, which is a celebration. The other one is a judgment against the forces of the beast. Now when it comes to the eschatological banquet, some of this might be ringing around in your head because we actually touched on the eschatological banquet in Episode 383. We got into this a little bit. And I read a section from Brant Pitre’s book on the Lord’s Supper. Because he’s done a lot of work on Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism (the discussion of the literature of that period) on the meals with God and the messianic banquet—the eschatological banquet, all of it. He goes into the Second Temple material and even the rabbinic material a lot. And so I read a section from his book, and I’m going to go back and summarize that. I’m not going to read the whole thing again from Episode 383. But I’m going to read a few things and then go out to some places in Isaiah, just to sort of set the Old Testament context for the marriage supper. Because this is what we’re doing in this series. We’re trying to situate what’s happening in the book of Revelation against the backdrop that is the Old Testament. This is what John’s drawing on and what he wants people to think about, how he’s connecting the theological dots between the testaments. So Pitre writes this:

Multiple passages in the Jewish Scriptures use the image of a banquet or feast to describe the joy of the coming age of salvation. However, by far the most explicit description of an eschatological banquet in the Old Testament is in the book of Isaiah. In the midst of a series of descriptions of the coming day of the Lord (Isaiah 24–27) [MH: scholars refer to those chapters, by the way, as the “little apocalypse of the Old Testament,” sort of like the mini book of Revelation in the Old Testament], the prophet speaks of a future banquet for Israel and [MH: this is important] the nations.

30:00

The messianic banquet is an eschatological event. This eschatological dimension is evident from the fact that the banquet culminates in the overthrow of suffering

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and death. This is going to be Isaiah 25:8. That's Isaiah 25:8. And again, it takes you back to the, "Well, is death gone or is it not?" Because that directly factors into one's view of "what is the final judgment—the final punishment?" That sort of thing. Pitre writes:

At the time of the banquet, God will take away "the reproach of his people" and give them salvation.

Now I want to read a few things. I'm going to start with Isaiah 24:21. Again, this is the beginning of the "little apocalypse" in Isaiah. And we read this. I'm going to read Isaiah 24:21-23.

**<sup>21</sup> On that day the LORD will punish  
the host of heaven, in heaven [MH: there's the gods being judged—  
supernatural beings],  
and the kings of the earth, on the earth.**

There's the people. So you get two sides of the same coin. The Day of the Lord, both God's cosmic and his human enemies will be judged.

**<sup>22</sup> They will be gathered together  
as prisoners in a pit;  
they will be shut up in a prison,  
and after many days they will be punished.**

**<sup>23</sup> Then the moon will be confounded  
and the sun ashamed,  
for the LORD of hosts reigns  
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,  
and his glory will be before his elders.**

That reference there (Isaiah 24:23) to Yahweh's elders is something I discuss in *Unseen Realm*. And it is a reference to the Divine Council. You keep going in Isaiah 25 (the very next chapter)... I'm going to read verses 6-8.

**<sup>6</sup> On this mountain [MH: this is a reference to Zion] the LORD of hosts will make  
for all peoples [MH: all peoples, not just Israel, but all peoples]  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,  
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.**

**<sup>7</sup> And he will swallow up on this mountain  
the covering that is cast over all peoples,  
the veil that is spread over all nations.**

**8 He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.**

So basically, this is (as scholars would say) a very universalistic passage. That doesn't mean universalism like, "no one gets destroyed" or "no one goes to hell," or anything like that. "Universalism" in scholar speak, when it refers to the Old Testament, refers to the inclusion of the pagan Gentile nations in the salvation vision or Israel and her messiah. So "all the nations..." Did you catch how many times I said "all"? It's very clear this is an eschatological banquet for *all* peoples. So back to Pitre, he writes:

The eschatological banquet utilizes cultic imagery [MH: you have references elsewhere in these chapters in Isaiah to] ("fatted things" and "wine on the lees"). This is technical terminology for sacrificial offerings of the Temple cult, as when Deuteronomy speaks of "the fat of their sacrifices" and "the wine of their drink offering" (Deut 32:37–38; cf. Lev 3:3; 4:8–9). This cultic dimension is important to stress, since Isaiah explicitly states that the banquet will take place on "the mountain of the LORD," which in context refers to "Mount Zion ... in Jerusalem" (Isa 24:23).

The eschatological banquet will be an international banquet, which will include both the restored tribes of Israel and the Gentile nations. The feast will be "for all peoples" and will result in the "veil" that is cast over all the "nations" or "Gentiles" (*goyim*) being lifted.

The eschatological banquet specifically involves the death of death [MH: in other words, the death of death equals] (everlasting life) [MH: this is specifically noted] in Isa 25:8 – something specifically noted in Rev 20:14.

Altogether, the eschatological banquet is a universal [i.e., all the nations] vision of salvation, nestled right in the heart of one of the most widely read prophets of the Old Testament.

35:00

And that's the end of his quote. But Pitre and other scholars go on to point out that this eschatological messianic banquet is described in Second Temple literature passages like *2 Baruch* 29-30 as having the flesh of Leviathan and Behemoth served at the meal. This is what we ran into back in Episode 383. And that imagery, the whole idea that, "Well, what are we going to be eating at the messianic banquet? Oh, it's Leviathan and Behemoth." You know, Leviathan was the great sea beast—the sea symbol of chaos. Behemoth was the land equivalent. These were the two beasts that symbolized the threat of the natural

world and the disorder of the world in which we live and how it's threatening and it's the realm of death and suffering and all this stuff. This imagery is drawn from Psalm 74:13-14. And I'm going to read that passage. So here we are, back at Psalm 74. I'm going to go up to verse 12. This is a reference back to both Exodus and the creation account. If you're familiar with this podcast, I mean, we've been in Psalm 74 before. It's an interesting psalm. It says:

- 12 Yet God my King is from of old,  
working salvation in the midst of the earth.**
- 13 You divided the sea by your might [MH: you split the sea];  
you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters.**
- 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan;  
you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.**
- 15 You split open springs and brooks;  
you dried up ever-flowing streams.**
- 16 Yours is the day, yours also the night;  
you have established the heavenly lights and the sun.**
- 17 You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth;  
you have made summer and winter.**

Now Leviathan is very explicitly mentioned here. But in Psalm 74:14, the idea that Leviathan... When the Israelites go through the waters of the sea as on dry land, the idea that Leviathan was given to them as food is not literal. No one's saying, "Wow! Look at what's at the bottom of the Red Sea! It's this big dragon. It's Leviathan! Let's have a barbeque!" Okay? It's not literal. It's a reference to chaos being consumed—chaos being beaten. This is imagery. It's metaphor. And you'll notice in verse 14 of Psalm 74 that it's the animals. The animals are the ones that eat. The animals are the ones that pick the carcass of Leviathan. Leviathan has been destroyed. Chaos has been conquered on this day, as at the Exodus. That's the whole point.

So it's just like Revelation 19:17, where you have this notion of a great supper of God marking the defeat of the beast. You know, Leviathan had multiple heads. The beast had multiple heads. We've talked about how Leviathan is part of the Daniel 7 imagery. All these things fit together. To us they might sound odd. They might not... "How do we put all this together?" It all goes together if you understand the metaphors and the symbols that are being used here that come right out of the Old Testament and the way the Old Testament uses them. So again, we have a victory over chaos here.

Now I would suggest... This is just a suggestion, but again, this is possible. I'm sort of... This isn't a specifically exegetical point, but this is just sort of a free thought here. The idea... It could have begun with literal Egyptian corpses

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washing up and being exposed in regard to God's destruction of Egypt's army pursuing the Israelites. I mean, that's going to happen. And so, given its use in Psalm 74 alongside creation imagery, the theological notion of creation order emerging from chaos (which is part of Genesis: Genesis 1) is also part of the psalm's meaning. So deliverance from Egypt yields a new creation. Israel has been extracted from Egypt. Tribes have now been made something new. They're a nation. They're on their way to God's Mountain to receive the Law, their constitution. And then they're going to go get the land. They're going to have a temple—all these things. God is doing something new. So the Egyptian bodies that get picked on, it might have been a very convenient thing to take people's minds back to: "Okay, remember the day that Egypt was defeated, and the birds and the animals picked the carcasses and so on and so forth?" It's using that imagery to talk about the defeat of God's enemies—the defeat of all that is opposed to Yahweh and his people, the anti-Eden forces of chaos in the world.

So there could've been a literal starting point for the metaphor. But the important angle here *is* the metaphor. So you have the metaphor of the conquest of chaos and the emergence of a new creation. This is exactly what you're going to get in the book of Revelation. The beast, chaos, is conquered. And what's going to emerge out of all of it? The new Eden. So again, we're tracking on familiar territory here. So, again, the point of Revelation 19:17 (which we're going to deal with a little bit more next week) is that the "supper of God" is this judgment. It's a triumph for the righteous as well. It's two sides of this coin. And then we're going to take that, and once chaos is conquered, we're going to have a great celebration in the new Eden with the abundance of Eden, with the Lord present. We're going to have the final, everlasting meal with God—the everlasting marriage supper with the Savior, who is our brother, our king, the messiah. This is where everything is headed.

Now I want to go a little bit further here, just for a few minutes here. And I'm going to go to Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary. There's an interesting entry on the messianic banquet written by Dennis E. Smith. In talking about the eschatological banquet, he writes this:

[The messianic banquet—the eschatological] banquet at which the Messiah is deemed to be present... has its apparent roots in another pattern found in certain ANE creation myths [MH: so it's even wider than the Bible; it's actually something that you can find elsewhere in the ancient Near East in certain respects]. These myths tell of a great battle being waged in the divine sphere. When the battle has been won, the gods assemble and celebrate the victory with a great banquet [MH: that's a very common idea] (*Enūma eliš* VI:69–94 [ANET 69]; Isa 34:5–7; Zech 9:15). Here [MH: what we've got going on in the Old Testament] we have a festive meal as the primary social institution for celebrating victory and deliverance...

So we get this idea in the Old Testament. It's going to spill over into the New Testament. And Smith says:

Because apocalyptic literature takes up the combat and victory motifs, the banquet of celebration becomes a part of its repertoire as well...

And he gives a few examples of David (David being the prototype for messiah) having celebratory meals with his men as the new king, and so on and so forth. And he mentions *1 Enoch*.

... in *1 Enoch*, "in that day" when the Lord shall triumph over the kings and other rulers of the earth...

And there's a sacrifice with the Son of Man, the messiah, in the book of Enoch. That's *1 Enoch* 62. So again, the idea is familiar to the ancient Near East, the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and of course when you get on into the New Testament, that's where it's easiest for *us* to see (because of New Testament language) things like the Last Supper and so on. So Smith writes:

In the NT, the messianic banquet theme is especially prominent in the gospel tradition. Jesus' provisions for the hungry in his food miracles (Matt 14:13–21 = Mark 6:32–44 = Luke 9:10–17 = John 6:1–15; Matt 15:32–39 = Mark 8:1–10; John 2:1–11) are paralleled by the theme of the beatitudes: "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied"...

I mean, think about that. That's easy to read over. But you could actually read that as a promise. If you're going to follow the messiah, you're going to be present at the eschatological meal. "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied."

In one of the favorite images of the parables, the kingdom is compared to a great banquet (Matt 22:1–10 = Luke 14:16–24 = *Gos. Thom.* 64). Indeed, the themes of joyous banquet, judgment, pilgrimage of the nations, and presence of the Messiah are marvelously brought together... The theme of the pilgrimage of the nations to the table becomes the rallying cry for the emerging gentile church and, when combined with the divine reversal theme, is interpreted to mean that they will take the place of Israel at the table [MH: at least ethnic Israel, but not believing Israel]: "I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth."

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That was Matthew 8:11–12. So the point that Smith is referring to here is that just because you're an ethnic Jew doesn't mean you're going to be at the

eschatological banquet. You must embrace Israel's messiah, who is Jesus. Okay? Your ethnicity doesn't get you there. That's not your identity. You need to align your belief in him. You need to be a believer. You need to not just believe the covenants of Abraham and David. You need to believe the New Covenant, which promised the messiah and the coming of the Spirit. And all this is going to play out in the Gospels, and of course the book of Acts. You know, it's foreshadowed. It's telegraphed here, so that... The irony is that you're going to have many people who were part of Israel that reject their messiah, and they're not going to have a seat at the table. You know, that's the irony presented here.

Now we could ask one last question. Why the "marriage" element in all this? Why is it at a wedding banquet? The *marriage* supper of the Lamb. And I would say this. And I'm with the mainstream here. The wedding—the marriage element to all this—illustrates the oneness of the king and his people. Marriage is used as a metaphor for the relationship of God with his people, Israel (Hosea 2:1–23; Isaiah 54:4–8), or in the New Testament as a symbol for the relationship of Christ and the Church. That's pretty self-evident. Conversely, adultery is a common biblical symbol of spiritual infidelity—spiritual disloyalty. So you have believing loyalty versus unbelieving disloyalty, playing off against each other. Now Smith writes this:

More important [MH: just generally, the marriage element] for apocalyptic thought is Isaiah 54:5–55:5, where the theme of a divine marriage (54:5) is combined with a joyful feast which is characterized by abundance of food (55:1–2), vindication for the righteous (54:6–17), and the pilgrimage of the nations [MH: to Zion] (55:5) [MH: there you have all the elements]. This theme is then taken up in the NT [MH: where you have the marriage element with the eschatological banquet element combined in Isaiah 54 and 55], where it becomes a prominent image for the joys of the kingdom in the gospel tradition, especially in the parables."

So that is what I wanted to cover today. I mean, the marriage supper of the Lamb is not just kind of a neat metaphor or a neat teaching point that the Gospel writers come up with, or John comes up with. This has deep Old Testament roots. And again, the elements are very specific. The messiah is there. There's a meal with the messiah in God's house. We have the Edenic restoration because of the abundance of food. We've got the nations included. They're pilgrims to Zion. They have come back to the true God—all these are things that the whole book (Revelation) has been leading up to. Because you get chapters 14-18, and basically all of that is about, "If you align yourselves with the beast, you're going to be destroyed. If you name the name of the beast—if you take the name, you take the number, which is the name—you're going to be destroyed. But if you don't, if you remain faithful, you're going to have a seat at the eschatological banquet. And it's coming. It's coming. The Day of the Lord is coming." And all of



this was foreshadowed and prophesied in the Old Testament. All the elements are there.

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So once again, John isn't coming up with something novel or new or interesting or innovative. [laughs] You know, he's looking forward. He's getting this vision. He's looking forward to how the messiah is going to be the key figure—the lynchpin figure—not only just to come back and beat up on the Gentiles (you know, the Day of the Lord stuff and all that good whoopin'). But it's so much wider than that. Because he's also there to claim as his own (which is the job of the Church to do the Great Commission) people from all the nations. Again, even here... We're in Revelation 19 and we're still doing the reversal of the Deuteronomy 32 thing. And it's almost complete. Again, Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 82, the judgment of the nations, which are the people and their gods who rule over them, the principalities and powers, and the nations being brought back into the fold, the gospel, the doors are wide open. These are the times in which we live. We have the kingdom already. The opportunity is there now. And we are moving forward to the fullness of the Gentiles. And this is the fullness of the Gentiles. It's another element. Again, on God's timetable, he will know when the fullness of the Gentiles has been reached. And then, to quote Paul, "the end will come." [laughs] You know? Just in abbreviated form. We know how things are going to play out. And John is telling us the same thing, but he's using lots of symbolic and metaphorical language, even more than Paul. I mean, Paul does that as well, but he's trying to convey the destruction and death of chaos and the emergence of a new Eden. Because when all the destruction and death are happening, the earth is being purified. It is being prepared for occupation by the rightful owner—by the rightful king. It is being prepared to once again be fit for sacred space. All of it. The whole world. Every nation.

So again, these are just helpful trajectories that I think will make us a better reader of the book of Revelation. Again, it's a dense book. We all know that. We knew that going in. But it has deep roots in the Old Testament, and so the more we can sort of have our memories jarred back into certain passages in the Old Testament—certain concepts—the better off we'll be when we try to tackle the book.

**TS:** Mike, I hope in Part 2 you're going to cover if John took the vaccine or not. I'm just waiting to... [MH laughs] Waiting for you to let us know.

**MH:** [laughs] They're bringing it in on black helicopters, Trey. [laughs]

**TS:** Makes perfect sense! It's starting to come together.

**MH:** It makes perfect sense, yeah.

**TS:** Yeah.

**MH:** Yep. And one of the bad guy's private security firms are going to be in there, too. [laughs] Oh, gosh.

**TS:** We can expect that in Part 2! I like it! And also I'm just curious, for that meal, pizza's probably the best to be served in that last meal for everybody. It's going to be so many people, you know? Jesus don't got time to cook your order.

**MH:** Yeah, I would agree. I would agree. Absolutely.

**TS:** Yeah, but for the gluten free people, that might not be good. But I'm sure they've got gluten free options. [MH laughs] I'm sure it'll be okay.

**MH:** [laughs] Right. The gluten won't affect you then. [laughs]

**TS:** Exactly, you'll be healed. Which my daughter has celiac disease, so that's a pretty big thing in our house. So...

**MH:** That's tough, man. That's tough.

**TS:** Absolutely. Well, alright, Mike. Well, Part 1 was a good episode. Part 2 is coming up next week. And we're getting close. Don't forget, you can send me your Revelation questions to [TreyStricklin@gmail.com](mailto:TreyStricklin@gmail.com). Because at the conclusion of Revelation, we will be answering hopefully everyone's questions that you have. So get those in to me before the series is over. With that, Mike, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.