

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 404

Revelation Q&A, Part 5

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### Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions about Revelation:

- When does the event with the 144,000 take place in prophecy, and is the number to be taken literally? [Time stamp 1:15]
- Were the people in Matthew 27 taken captive with Jesus when he “led captivity captive” in Ephesians 4:8, and where did they go after they were raised from the dead? [12:50]
- Could the allusion to bitter food and poisonous water in Jeremiah 9:15 go back even further to Exodus 32 when Moses makes the Israelites drink the powder from the golden calf? [19:20]
- Why does the loss of virginity of the 144,000 equal defilement? Does it just mean that they were not idolatrous? [22:55]
- Are the plagues of Revelation a direct attack on any particular gods like the plagues of Egypt were? [28:15]
- Was the apocalyptic nature of Revelation confusing to the original listeners or did they understand the symbology? [30:30]
- Is there a significance to the order of tribes as listed in Revelation 7? [32:50]
- Is it possible that the seals have been opened ever since Jesus ascended to the throne? [36:55]
- Could the Lord’s Day in Revelation 1:10 refer to the Day of the Lord instead of the day Jesus’ rose from the dead? [38:50]
- If Satan is in the abyss, does that mean he’s dead? And when Psalm 82 says the gods will die like mortals, could that refer to the Revelation 12 ouster of Satan and his angels from heaven to earth? [40:50]
- Where does Isaiah 25:20, with its description of long life spans but people still dying, fit into the eschatological timeline? [47:50]

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 404: Revelation Q&A, Part 5. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! Still got some questions on Revelation for you. You’re not quite done yet.

**MH:** Yeah, well, we’ll try to put another dent into it.

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**TS:** We've got two more episodes. And we've got a jam-packed episode today. So, Mike, unless you've got anything you want to talk about, we might want to just jump in for the sake of time.

**MH:** Yeah, we should just... I don't really have any other update as far as chemo. Status quo.

**TS:** I got you. Alright, well, let's do this, for the sake of time, to get into it. Mike, our first question is going to be from Tim. And he has two or three questions here, kind of back-to-back. And some of his questions are:

1:15

- 1. What is the relationship of the martyred souls under the altar to the 144,000?**
- 2. When in prophecy is this event taking place?**
- 3. Is the number 144,000 to be understood literally?**

Well, you know, on the identification of the 144,000, I'm more or less just going to refer to not the transcripts, but the book. Those of you who might recall, the notes from this podcast I have put into book form and we are selling that as sort of a commentary. So I'm going to read from that to answer this question. Because we've actually been over this before in the series. Now I also have to add here, I don't really see a reason to care who the 144,000 are, but I know people for some reason get into that part of the discussion. So I'm just going to read where we were before.

Earlier in the podcast, I said something to this effect: given the secure Old Testament context for Revelation 7, this writer (that is, me) believes it makes more sense to have the 144,000 as Jews who are loyal to the Lamb. In other words, they're Jewish followers of Jesus. And so they're Christians. Okay? So we can't confuse Jew and Christian here. It's the same thing, if we're talking about those who are the true seed of Abraham, i.e., believers in Jesus. They'd be Christians, too. So they're Jewish followers of Jesus and so they are Christians, but they should not be thought of as Gentile Christians who are to be regarded only as spiritual Israelites. They are Jewish follows of Jesus.

Okay, that's the view I take. Everything about Revelation 7:1-8, where we first encountered the 144,000, is Jewish and Old Testament in context. You have a census. You have tribes. You have the attachment to Ezekiel's sealing in Ezekiel 9. The subsequent mention of the 144,000 in Revelation 14 is consistent with that, and I doubt that there is an intended contrast between the 144,000 in Revelation 7 versus the 144,000 in Revelation 14. I think they're the same. Some argue the two groups are different, asserting that the 144,000 in Revelation 14 cannot be Jews, but I think that makes little sense. The only possible basis for such a conclusion is that the 144,000 in Revelation 14 aren't listed in their tribes. But my question is, why would John need to provide the list twice, particularly

when the critical number (144,000) easily links the two passages? So many ethnic Jews follow the Lamb—they follow Christ in the New Testament. I think that's what's going on here. Their status as Jesus-followers did not mean they were no longer regarded as ethnic Jews (that's what they were, ethnically). Such an objection seems to confuse a spiritual label (Christian) with an ethnic one (Jew). You can be a Jew and a Christian at the same time—just a Jewish follower of Jesus. And I think that's where the 144,000 are.

5:00

As part of the question, we also get into this “great tribulation” language. I think it's worth reminding people that there's only one secure place in the Old Testament from which the “great tribulation” language derives. And that is going to be in Daniel. So earlier in the podcast, (I'm going to read again from the book that we've produced for this)... When we were in Revelation 7:13, we read the text. The text says:

**<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” <sup>14</sup> I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

So the phrase “great tribulation” does have an Old Testament context. And importantly, this context is one of the few items in the book in which virtually all biblical scholars agree. There aren't many of these, but this is one of them. However, that consensus does not align with the considerable body of popular prophecy teaching.

So basically, you have a situation here (“what's the great tribulation?”), where scholars are going to answer with a very unified voice. “Oh, that's that thing that comes from Daniel” (which I'll talk about in a moment), whereas popular prophecy wants to connect this with the 70<sup>th</sup> week and they want to put it in timelines and eschatological systems, and in some cases even chop it up into two periods. You know, we don't get any of that from the Old Testament. And what we do get from the Old Testament places the great tribulation at a different place in the “prophetic timeline” than a lot of Christians want it. They don't like where it winds up if you just go with the Old Testament.

But anyway, popular Christianity assumes that “great tribulation” is another name for the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27, specifically). The problem is that the text doesn't actually say that. So the popular conception has significant obstacles to overcome when it comes to just going with the biblical data. First, for example, the concept of a seven-year tribulation never appears in Daniel 9:24-27. The closest you even come to that is the vocabulary of tribulation in Daniel 9:25, where we have this “trouble.” But that trouble is a sign to the first 69 weeks of

Daniel's prophecy. It is not the 70<sup>th</sup> week. So you don't have any proof that this "trouble" time is a seven-year period in Daniel 9. Secondly, the vocabulary for tribulation never occurs anywhere in the Bible (anywhere, Old or New Testament) with a term for "week" or "seven" juxtaposed with the term "tribulation." Okay? I'm not saying there's no such thing as a seven-year tribulation. That might be the way things work out. But I can say there's no Bible verse that says it, because there isn't. So we need to remember that, too. No, what we do have is we have Daniel 12:1. If we look at Revelation 7:13-14, just listen to it:

**<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" <sup>14</sup> I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

The description here contains several elements. The great tribulation is associated with the end of days. And you're going to find it there in Matthew 24:41 as well, because the period is ending. This great tribulation period is ending, and its result is the glorification of believers. That is, believers are martyrs on behalf of the Lamb who have gone through whatever this great tribulation is. They've received white robes. Their faith in the Lamb has saved them. Lastly, if the great tribulation is at a close, then the Great White Throne judgment and verdict of the Book of Life should logically ensue from that point on, which is indeed the case (Revelation 13:8, Revelation 17:8, Revelation 20:12, and Revelation 20:15). And now, if you look at Daniel 12:1, it kind of clicks.

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

Now the Book of Life... We know when that judgment scene happens in the book of Revelation, and preceding that is when you get the talk of the martyrs who've emerged from the great tribulation. So these are the same elements. Daniel 12:1 describes an end-of-days tribulation. There's no number assigned to it in Daniel 12:1. There's no number of years. It is rightly considered a correlate to the great tribulation of Revelation because of the way Daniel describes it (in Daniel).  
Again:

**And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.**

10:00

This description is in fact what leads scholars to link Daniel 12:1 to another Old Testament passage, Jeremiah 30:7, which is called the “time of Jacob’s trouble.” Further, the righteous, the people of God, are delivered—those whose names are found written in the book of Life, and so on and so forth. So again, if you want to look at it biblically, you want to get John’s theology, you want to see where it hooks into the Old Testament (which is the purpose of the whole series that we just did), then you’re going to come out with a little bit of a different take on things. At least I would hope you would be hesitant to say things that the text never actually says, such as “there is a coming seven-year great tribulation.” We don’t know that. We know that there is a coming great tribulation, at the end of which it’s going to close out this period of persecution—this horrific tribulation. We’re going to transition from that to the glorification of believers. So logically, it’s at the end of the Day of the Lord. Because then we get the final judgment and the righteous are vindicated, including the martyrs that are described in the book of Revelation.

So we get the same flow—the same chronological flow—that we get from the Old Testament. But the Old Testament doesn’t actually insert these numbers. Those are sort of inserted in a dispensational system that’s very common. It’s less common in other systems. But there’s no verse that actually does that. And so that’s going to affect how you think about the tribulation and everything associated with it.

So again, that’s how I approached it. That’s how we did it for the sake of the podcast. I would say, what can we know about the great tribulation? It’s connected to Daniel 12:1 and Jeremiah 30. It’s linked to Matthew 24:21. It’s a time that precedes the final judgment, which of course is associated also with the return of Jesus. And it involves persecution. That’s about all you can say. Those points are the secure ones. Going beyond that, you’re in the area of speculation. There’s no timing given for it. So where does it fit on the timeline? There is no timeline. There’s no specific timeline. There’s a general flow of events, but that’s about all.

**TS:** Bea and Ollie in Thornton, CO, have a question on hell/sheol from Episode 363.

12:50

**I was surprised that Dr. Heiser didn’t go to the story of the rich man and Lazarus. According to that story, Sheol, where the wicked go, and the bosom of Abraham, where the righteous went at the time, are two separate compartments. Paradise? When Jesus died and was resurrected, it says “he led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8). Does that mean those people in Matthew 27:52-53 were those taken captive with him—the ones that came up out of the grave and walked around? Then, Matthew 27:52-53, “and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They**

**came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people." What happened to all these people? Do you think they were taken up with him?**

**MH:** Well, there's a lot of conflation going on here in the question. First of all, we're not going to entertain Matthew 27 here. That needs a full episode. In fact, that's such a vast topic it might take us two episodes to get through that. I can say, though, that what happens in Matthew 27 has nothing to do with Ephesians 4:8—"leading captivity captive." And that doesn't have anything to do with emptying hell of believers. So that's why I say there's a lot of conflation of ideas here that don't really work.

15:00

Now for Ephesians 4:8, I would refer Bea and Ollie to *Unseen Realm*, pages 292-295 for that. Taking captivity captive is not a release of the righteous. It's the conquest of the ungodly—specifically supernatural forces. So it's the opposite of what mostly is popularly taught. And I spend a good amount of space in *Unseen Realm* talking about that. So again, it has nothing to do with release of the righteous. The two-compartment thing, we need to stop thinking about the spiritual world as having compartments or apartments or anything like that. It is a spiritual *world*. The spiritual world is the counterpart to the physical world. And the physical world, there are different places. Because the physical world, you can talk about having place and space, latitude and longitude, because it's the world of the embodied. So that world has places. It has neighborhoods. It has places where good people live (the righteous). It has the Church living in it. And it has the ungodly (those who are lost living in it). It's the world.

The spiritual world is the same thing. It's just a counterpart, but on a spiritual scale. In the spiritual world, there are supernatural beings loyal to God. There's God. God lives in the spiritual world. But the spiritual world is also the realm of the disembodied. But the dead are there, too. And some of the dead are destined to be with the Lord. And again, I'm a believer that Paul actually knew what he was talking about when he said, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." So I'm going to take Paul there. I'll side with him. I don't believe in soul sleep or anything like that. So there's that part of the spiritual world, where the righteous get to be with the Lord. Then there are those who do not occupy space. They do not enjoy the Lord's presence. All these things are in the "spiritual world."

You know, I myself... We're all forced to use some kind of language of place when we talk about the spiritual world because we don't know how to talk about a placeless place. We don't know how to talk about a place that doesn't have latitude and longitude, that doesn't have height or depth or width or breadth. That's what the spiritual world is. So we are forced to use the language of physicality—the language of spatial existence. And so were the biblical writers.

They're humans too. They don't know what it's like to be a spiritual being because they're not. They're embodied.

So this language we get in Scripture should be taken with that sort of grain of salt. What I mean by that is, not to say that it isn't true. It is. But realize that the language that's being used doesn't really fit. And it can't fit. But it's the best we've got. So no, if we were to visit the spiritual world today, we wouldn't get road signs that say, "This way to Paradise; this way to Sheol." They don't... We have to think on those terms so that we can even try to understand another place that isn't this place. You know? [laughs] It's just we're trapped by the limitations of our vocabulary. But the reality is the spiritual world is the world of the disembodied. It doesn't have the kind of physicality like we're used to. It has something. We get some sort of body. But it's not one that conforms to the laws of physics as we know it. It's a body like the Lord's, and that's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15. You know, the Lord's body in the resurrection state had unusual capacities. It didn't have blood, for one thing. He could appear in rooms that were locked—no windows and doors open. That's a totally different existence. But to even talk about that, we have to use the language of embodiment because we don't have anything better. I think we need to get away from the literalization of this kind of terminology, but also we need to acknowledge that we're kind of forced to use this language because our language is limited, and just leave it there. Because that's about the best we can do.

So back to the Matthew 27, that has nothing to do with Ephesians 4 and Ephesians 4 has nothing to do with Luke 16, as far as releasing the righteous goes. That's something totally different. And Ephesians 4:8 goes in a different direction than that.

**TS:** Heather has our next question:

19:20

**In Episode 376 Dr. Heiser quotes Beale when he talks about the prophets "polluting" Israel with idolatry (and so the punishment of Jeremiah 9:15—bitter food and poisonous water—is suited to the crime). My question is, could this also be a similar idea looking back even farther to Exodus 32:20 when Moses burns the golden calf, grinds it into powder, and mixes it with water and makes the sons of Israel drink it?**

20:00

**MH:** Yeah, there's some terminology used here that you're going to find in other passages too. I think that the idea of idolatry being a pollution to the land is legit because it is spoken of in those terms. And so there's some sort of conceptual link between that idea and the passages that are raised in the question, but I don't see any relationship to the drinking of the powdery mix per se. In Jeremiah, the concoction is either something made from a plant or serpent venom. And they're not the same elements in view in the Exodus judgment. So let me just go

to Jeremiah 9:15 so I can... I'll read this passage just so that you don't have to sort of look it up yourself. Jeremiah 9:15 says:

**<sup>15</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink.**

So you have some terminology here in the passage, like bitter food is *la'ănâ*, and then this poisonous water to drink. That language in Hebrew doesn't appear in the earlier Exodus passage (the Exodus passage that the question alludes to about grinding up the idol and making the people drink from it). The verbiage there is different. So I don't see a direct connection between the two. But I do see a connection between idolatry generally and "polluting the land." And that's the more general point. You know, idolatry is cast as something that pollutes the land of promise itself. And the reason is, idolatry is cast as spiritual adultery, and adultery was one of the sins that profaned the land morally. So that's how you get this connection with spiritual pollution, spiritual idolatry, and profaning the land. That's how you tie all these points together.

And for passages, you could go to a place like 2 Chronicles 36:14 or Jeremiah 3:1. Really Jeremiah 3:1-9. You could go to Deuteronomy 28's curses, which revolve around unfaithfulness and idolatry (again, using the adultery metaphor). The land becomes polluted as a punishment. And the land itself spits out or expels the Israelites. All of that makes sense when you get to the metaphor in the book of Revelation of the horror of Babylon. There's a reason why the beast system is thought of in terms of a whore—a prostitute. And it goes back to this notion of idolatry being spiritual adultery. So all these ideas are connected, but I don't see a specific connection back to the Exodus passage.

**TS:** Our next question comes from Dana.

22:55

**I just finished listening to Rev 7 part 2 and I think maybe Mike missed the most important "weird" thing concerning the 144,000—the idea/implication that loss of virginity equals defilement in Rev14:4. Um... it might make one temporarily unclean but not defiled. I think the OT is pretty strong in promoting the concept that married sex is a good thing. So that makes me question... what related to promiscuity would equal defilement in the OT? Idolatry. Only idolatry imagery is forged together repeatedly with illicit sex metaphors and the concept of defiled before Yahweh. So is John maybe saying that the 144,000 Christians who are of Jewish heritage are ones who are spiritually virtuous, having never defiled themselves in the worship of gods other than Yahweh? And, doesn't the concept of "undefiled" spiritually link nicely into the idea of "first fruits to God and the Lamb" which immediately follows? I did not find the various other virgin explanations to dovetail very well into the first fruits imagery.**



**MH:** Yeah, well, first I would have to say, I did mention... Where commentators typically want to go at the beginning of this whole issue is they want to go to the prohibition of Israelite soldiers from engaging in sex before battle. And then there's also the priests periodically are supposed to do this too, in preparation for battle. And we noted in the episode that it doesn't really quite work, because it's a temporary thing.

25:00

So it's very obvious, as Dana points out, that the Bible has a high view of sex within marriage. So that really has nothing to do with this. But that's where most of the people start, with these temporary prohibitions. And the reason they go there is because of the counting, which is very obvious in Revelation 7, with the 144,000. The only place where you get a comment about sexual abstinence (we'll use some broad wording here) with counting is back in these warfare passages in the book of Numbers. But the problem is, is it's not really... You know, I would agree that the temporary nature of in the Old Testament is not a good fit. And again, when we were quoting Bauckham and others in regard to that, I know I let that slip (not really slip, but I said it because I agree). I don't think it's a good match.

And then if you remember the episode, we launched off into the other possibility that had to do with the priestly garb. So if you look at the priestly garb and then you're talking about being undefiled with a woman, we referenced a specific article there that wonders if the 144,000 shouldn't be linked to the Watchers story. Are they an intentional counterpart? Are the 144,000 good priests (those who occupy sacred space and represent God) who have not defiled themselves with women... Is that comment deliberately aimed at making the 144,000 a group that is distinct from the Watchers (from the sinning supernatural beings of Genesis 6 who are, of course, imprisoned). But they are representative of the chaos system. So is that the whole point—to draw a distinction between those who are following Yahweh and those who are sort of in the same stead (painted with the same brush) as the sinful Watchers of the Genesis 6 story?

So we got into that a little bit. There are some things to commend that. And it doesn't have the specific weakness that Dana points out for this other view. So I'm of the opinion... I'm not sold on it yet, but I think there could very well be something to that because there's a lot of other Enochian stuff going on in the book of Revelation, too. And so this is a possibility for me.

So I would say, back to the part of the question, "Is John maybe saying the 144,000 Christians who are of Jewish heritage are spiritual virtuous?" Is that the point, that they haven't worshiped other gods? Well, that would certainly be part of it. So he could be saying that. I don't know that it really solves or addresses completely the sexual language, although abstinence from spiritual adultery can fit that. I think that's probably a good thing to include in your toolbox when you're looking at Revelation 7 and Revelation 14, when it comes to the 144,000. But I'm

not persuaded that it would be a comprehensive way of looking at it. I think I'm going to leave the door open still to the Watcher idea. There may be something to that.

**TS:** Frank in Chicago asks:

28:15

**We understand that the plagues Moses brought attention to were a direct attack on the gods of Egypt. With that in consideration what can we glean from the plagues that are listed in the book of Revelation? Do these plagues in part or entirety seem to be focused on a particular ancient religion or its gods? Which gods should these individual plagues bring to mind?**

30:00

**MH:** Yeah, I don't think the context of John (i.e., the context of Revelation) is Egypt. So I don't think the Egyptian gods are in view. His context is Rome, which of course he connects back to Babylon, primarily, as the chaos touchpoint. But he also points to Egypt, who before Babylon was the chaos touchpoint. It's that representation (that representative group, if you will) that is opposing the people of God and therefore the plan of God at any particular point. Egypt early on plays that role, and then later on it's going to be Babylon. And John dips into both wells. But his own context is not going to be specifically the gods of Egypt. I think just generally, what you have is you have aligning yourself with any deity (anyone other than Jesus) is in view. But if you had specific deities in view, then either a deity or deities that would be in question would've been one worshiped in Asia Minor because the book of Revelation is written to those churches in Asia Minor. And so you might have a deity like Zeus or Hecate or Artemis in view. But I tend to look at it more generally than that. Even though Zeus gets a few punches in the nose in the book of Revelation (especially early on in chapter 1:4), and Artemis does, as well... I mean, there are those occasions. But I tend to think that the book, more broadly speaking, is not aimed at a specific pantheon but is against worshipping any deity. Aligning yourself with anyone other than the Lord is the point.

**TS:** Brad asks:

30:30

**Was the apocalyptic genre nature of Revelation confusing to the original listeners? Or did they understand the symbology?**

**MH:** Yeah, I would say literate Israelites... Just like today, there are people who are more literate (they read more) than other people. So if you're in the reading class (those who have access to literature and actually read it—the better educated class), they're certainly going to be familiar with the symbology in the book of Revelation, and generally apocalyptic symbology. Because it occurs so frequently elsewhere. You have lots of Second Temple texts that have apocalyptic imagery. The two biggest examples would be 1 Enoch and Jubilees.

But there are a number of Dead Sea Scrolls that are either independent compositions or fragments of other books that would fit into the apocalyptic genre. So if you were a reader, you're going to be familiar with this. You know, if you're not, I think some of what I would want to call "upper tier" symbols, something like Leviathan, is so ubiquitous in the ancient world that I'm sure they would've gotten that one. I don't know if they'd get the nuancing of a lot of other things. But this is also why it's wise for the Lord (and wise for John) to connect what he's saying back to the Old Testament. Because you know, even if you're not well read, if you go to synagogue or if you go to a church, you're going to be being taught out of your Septuagint. You're going to pick up some of these things if that source material is linked to what John is saying in this letter that you're hearing about, way back in the first century church. So that's going to help with having some touchpoints of explanation. But if you were a literate (somebody who's fairly well read in the ancient world), you're going to have run into these things in a lot of places.

**TS:** Mike from Santee, CA, has a question about Revelation 7:4-8, the listing of the twelve tribes that make up the 144,000.

32:50

**Dr. Heiser mentioned that the order in which the tribes are listed is unique, but he did not elaborate; is there significance to the order? *The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* quotes two sources (Bede's *Explanation of the Apocalypse* and Andrew of Caesarea's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*) that ascribed significance to the order drawing on Philo's *On Dreams*, or Genesis 49:1-28. Do these commentaries have a point, or are they reading too much into it?**

**MH:** I think they're reading too much into it, because I personally don't think there's any meaning to be discerned from the order. Because the order is never the same anywhere else. I mean, if you go to the Old Testament, there is no one order there. There are half a dozen different way that the tribes get listed. So I don't know why this one departure would have some specific meaning, as opposed to all the other ones in the Old Testament. It seems this is the way we do it. We wing it every time we get to the tribes, it seems. [laughs] So there's a lot of variation here. If it was the only place that varied. Let's say that in the Old Testament all of the listings were always the same—there was uniformity, and they were all unanimous except for this one. Then there's probably something going on. But this one's like the other ones. It appears somewhat random.

Now there's one scholar I know of... I didn't really bring it up there in the episode, because the article is so dense and, honestly, it really feels very contrived to me. But I have one article. The guy's last name, I believe, this is the Manikam article, that tries to relate the 666 to the order of tribes in Revelation 7. And his argument is something... He's argument's actually quite hard to follow and it's very dense and convoluted. But I feel like a word like "contrived" is not too harsh for it. And

35:00

honestly, it would require visuals as well. You'd have to see the alignments in all the different ones. What he tries to do is he tries to associate certain slots in the order as being favorable or unfavorable, spiritually speaking. Like they're associated with tribal failures. Like if you're in this one specific slot, well, everybody that's in this specific slot, even though there's different tribes that occupy this slot, it's a tribe that had some sort of spiritual or moral failure in the Old Testament. And then he also wants to take that into the lists of the apostles to try to see where the juggling of Judas has something to do with the bad slot of the genealogies. And then he connects both of those thoughts to the 666. Look, when I say it's dense and convoluted, that's an understatement. And there's no way to do this in audio, to even take anybody through it. And to me, it's a system in search of a text. That's just the feel I have for it. But it's the only one I've ever come across that tries to argue something is related to 666 by virtue of the order of presentation here for the 144,000.

So there you have it. There's really nothing to be gained here. Even the omission of Dan, which is interesting—that the antichrist is from Dan. Well, Dan's not the only one omitted, if you want to be really technical about it. You know, you have Joseph. You have Ephraim. You don't have Ephraim and Manasseh. You've got one of them, and Joseph is excluded. So again, I think this sort of speculation is really wishful thinking to try to crack a nut that has resisted cracking. I just don't see much merit to it.

**TS:** Adele from Emmett, ID, asks:

36:55

**Is it possible that the seals have been being opened ever since Jesus ascended to the throne? That the seventh seal will be opened as the wrath of God begins, and that the trumpets and bowls together are describing God's wrath upon the earth?**

**MH:** Well, there are those systems that take that view. So if you're asking is it possible, sure. It goes along with a lot of this stuff happening in the present era—the present Church age. And then we're waiting for this seventh, which would be the Day of the Lord—this final capstone cataclysmic great trouble tribulation thing. So sure, it's possible. Again, some eschatological systems have taken just the angle that you just described there in that one sentence. So I mean, that's about all I can say about it. I'm not really married to systems and don't like any of them enough to adopt any of them. But to be fair to the question, yeah, that's a legitimate angle that you could pursue and find writers and commentators that have taken it before you, and enjoy it. Be warmed and filled by that. [laughs] You know, if the system gives you a lot of comfort or satisfies most of your questions, well, good. I'm just saying that there's no system that's going to answer all the questions. And they all know that. This isn't secret information. It's just that sometimes some of the systems get so married... People get so married to the

system they almost conflate it with believing the Bible in any regard, which goes way too far, and just is uncalled for.

**TS:** Bobby asks:

38:50

**Could the Lord's Day in Revelation 1:10 simply refer to the great and terrible day of the Lord, and not the 24-hour day which Christ rose when the early Church celebrated it?**

40:00

**MH:** Well, I would say no. I don't think that this day is the eschatological Day of the Lord. Because the Day of the Lord is actually a time period of judgment. It's not a single 24-hour day. There's a lot of things going on in the Day of the Lord, that it's never limited to 24 hours. It's a day as in a time (an era, which is bigger than one solar day) that something's going to happen. There's also no textual reason to limit the language back in Revelation 1 to the Lord's Day, to being a single day. You know, Aune, in his commentary, notes... He quoting somebody named Rordorf in a specific study on the Sunday question (Is Sunday the Sabbath?). And early Christian worship on a Sunday. And he points out that the phrase used in Revelation 1:10 (*kyriakē hēmera*), "on the Lord's day," is not synonymous (it's not a synonym) for *hēmera tou kuriou* (that's the Day of the Lord), since the latter phrase traditionally referred to the eschatological Day of the Lord. So what that means in English is that the wording in Revelation 1:10 about John being in the Spirit on the Lord's day, in Greek, that is not the same Greek phrase as used everywhere else when it's clear the eschatological Day of the Lord is being talked about. That's going to be a different Greek phrase. So I would say, on the basis of that, that that's not what we're dealing with in regard to this language early in the book of Revelation.

**TS:** Thomas wondered:

40:50

**If Jesus was dead in the abyss, would that not mean Satan would be dead as well? I just think of the Edenic prophecy, both the woman's seed and the serpent would receive a deadly blow. This is my first question. Does Satan being in the abyss mean he is dead? The second point is about the kind of death that the gods (sons of God) were destined to have. Psalm 82:7 says they should die like mere mortals. Could this possibly refer to Revelation 12 and the ouster of Satan and his angels from heaven to earth?**

**MH:** So this is a good example of why... Let me put it this way. Satan exists. Therefore he is not dead, if we define death as ceasing to exist. So here we are back to, "how do we define death?" And if you want to define death as separation from God, well, okay, Satan is separated from God. He's the lord of the dead, he's down here doing his thing. But it's not like God can't be at those places either. We got into this a little bit when we were talking about how difficult it is to

talk about an omniscient being (God) and an omnipresent being (the God of the Bible) and how these attributes work their way into situations that would seem to limit them or require some sort of redefinition of them. For instance, if God is omnipresent, we can't exclude him from this place called the realm of the dead. But yet God isn't there because he is life. He is the source of life. He is life itself, and so he can't be present simultaneously with death. God as life is incompatible with death. So you get into these bigger conceptual questions of how do we even talk about life and death and God's relationship to it, and how do we define death? Is it the cessation of existence? Well, certainly Satan exists. And he's going to exist for a long time until the Day of the Lord. So he's not dead, but he is nevertheless the primary citizen, if you will, of the realm of the dead. So we need to adjust the way we think about death and the dead and so on and so forth.

45:00

So that's one thing. The other thing we have to consider is that Satan doesn't have a mortal lifespan. In other words, Satan isn't aging. He doesn't have a body that's going to deteriorate and then he's going to die at some point because he gets old. No supernatural being has a mortal determinant lifespan. They are disembodied spiritual beings. And so, of course, is Satan. However, Satan is still a created and, thus, contingent being. A contingent being is a being that owes its existence to something else or someone else—some other being. Satan only exists now because God wills it. Okay? If God wanted to destroy Satan right now, he could very well do that. So we're getting into theodicy again, which we're not going to rabbit-trail here on that. But this is another issue that has to be thought about in relationship to this question. We have a being here that doesn't have a determinate lifespan. He's not going to get old and die. He's not going to be harmed, and he's not going to commit some stupid accident and then he's going to kill himself. No. His lifespan is indefinite, contingent only upon the pleasure of God. When God decides it's time for him to cease to exist, then that's what's going to happen. And that's what does happen at the end of the book of Revelation. So the fact that there is a realm of the dead and that Satan occupies it doesn't mean that he's dead in terms of him obviously ceasing to exist. Those two things are completely incompatible. And so we have to think about the whole question in a different way. I think there was a second part to the question. Is that correct?

**TS:** Yeah, his second part was about Psalm 82:7, saying they could die like mere mortals. Could this possibly refer to Revelation 12 and Satan and his angels from heaven to earth?

**MH:** Yeah, I would say no. Satan was ousted before Revelation 12. And Revelation 12's context is the birth of the Christ child. I think right around verse 6, that's explicitly clear. So there's a chronological mismatch there that's pretty obvious if you read Revelation 12 and your mind latches onto the connection with the birth of the Christ child. Other than that, we also have to say that we don't even know if those cast down (the stars that are cast down early in Revelation

12) are bad guys. If the passage is dependent on Daniel 8:11 (which I think seems pretty clear), then they're not. They're not bad guys. They are defeated good guys. They're not moral defectors. They haven't fallen with Satan. Okay? They've been defeated in the defense of God. It's spiritual warfare. It's a description of spiritual warfare with wins and losses. So we don't even know if the stars early in Revelation 12 were bad guys. I would say they're not.

We also don't know for sure... I mean, we can kind of guess that there may be some relationship between these stars and later on when we do get the devil and his angels mentioned. But that's actually not really clear. Why would we conclude that the devil's angels are these stars earlier in Revelation 12, when, if you go back to Daniel 11 (which that part of Revelation 12 was based on), they're not bad guys? We don't have a rebellion there. We have a defeat at the hands of the little horn, so to speak.

So there's a lot that people assume is going on in Revelation 12 that either isn't or that has a certain amount of ambiguity to it. And I think we need to pay more attention to that fact—that there are things going on here that mar this neat picture of the devil falling with a third of the angels sometime in the primeval past. You're just really not getting much help from Revelation 12 on that if you read it closely and look and see what parts of the book of Daniel it plays off.

**TS:** Okay, our last question is from Joe.

47:50

**Where does the prophecy in Isaiah 25:20 fit in the grander, eschatological timeline? It talks about extremely long lifespans, but still seems to expect that people will still die. Does this have any implications for what we should expect in the new earth, meaning, will people live for extremely long times in the new earth, but still expect to die at some point? Or is this talking about something completely different than the world as it will be after the events in Revelation?**

**MH:** We actually hit this question in the second Q&A that we did in this series. It was asked by someone named Dean—the very same thing about Isaiah 65. And I made a comment about not over-literalizing the descriptions, that it's just the writers are trying to do the best they can to describe a time and a life that is completely opposite to the one we know. So I would say, go back and listen to the answer in the second Q&A, the question by Dean. It's kind of in the middle of the Q&A episode there.

**TS:** Alright, Mike. And just like that, five down, one to go.

**MH:** One to go, yep.

**TS:** We appreciate everybody that sent in their questions. And Mike, hopefully everybody's getting ready for Christmas. Because next week, it's Christmastime.

**MH:** Yeah. And we have some things people should get for Christmas.

**TS:** Absolutely. Go to...

**MH:** Last minute Christmas shopping.

**TS:** That's right. You want to mention those two books again, Mike?

50:00 **MH:** Yeah, we've got the prayer digest, which is a collection of scriptural prayers in the original language. You get the original language prayer, you get a brief translation, and then a transliteration of pronunciation. Like how would you pray this in Hebrew or Greek or Aramaic? So it's just a short little book. People can use that in their own prayer time—their own devotional time. And the other one is a much bigger book that is specifically the notes that we used for this whole series in the book of Revelation. So it's *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation: Notes from the Naked Bible Podcast*. It is not (nowhere near) the same as the transcripts. The transcripts, if you've ever used one and looked at one (and I hope you have, because they're very useful), but they have timestamps and Trey and I are in there talking about Fantasy Football. [laughs] You know, everything gets transcribed, so all of our rabbit trails and whatnot. It's a little more chaotic than putting it in book form. So I took all the notes and put them into something that looks more like a traditional book with footnotes. So really, you really ought to avail yourself of both of those. And then, of course, the Advent book. If you don't have it, you can still get it and use it next year.

**TS:** Mike, we don't write a Fantasy Football book, do we? I mean, do you think we'd sell more than five copies of that?

**MH:** [laughs] ... that ship has sailed. [laughs]

**TS:** Alright, then, sounds good. We appreciate everybody sending in their questions. We appreciate Mike answering our questions. Next week, last Q&A on Revelation. It'll be the final, final, final chapter of the podcast series on Revelation. And what better day for it to come, on Christmas? Alright, Mike, well, with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.