

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 405

Revelation Q&A, Part 6

December 25, 2021

Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

Dr. Heiser answers your questions about Revelation:

- Is it possible for a Christian to go through the great tribulation? [4:00]
- Has textual criticism helped make a conclusion about the correct phrasing of “redeemed us” in Revelation 5:9? [10:40]
- Who will believers rule over when we are given joint rule over the nations with Christ? [17:50]
- Why do you avoid commenting on the possibility of a rapture? [20:25]
- Are we allowed to ask God for covenant judgment on the wicked? [25:55]
- Is Revelation 1:10 referring to Sunday or the Day of the Lord? [34:00]
- What are the seven spirits of God? [39:05]
- Who are the sheep and the goats at the white throne judgment? [38:40]
- Will there be a need for medicine in the New Earth, as it seems to indicate in Revelation 22:2? [43:45]
- What has Dr. Heiser personally learned from this study of Revelation? [45:20]

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 405: Revelation Q&A, Part 6. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Merry Christmas, Mike!

MH: Yep, Merry Christmas, Trey. What'd you get? What'd you get under the tree?

TS: Well, we haven't quite opened presents yet. I normally don't get anything. It's all about the kids.

MH: You don't, like, already know what you're going to get because you've talked about it with the wife?

TS: No, no. If anything, I get surprises. I like surprises. So I normally don't ask for anything, and if I get something it'll be a surprise. But what about yourself? Do you know what you're getting?

MH: I'm the same way. I just say nothing. And then my wife will get me something and the kids will, and it's usually a good surprise. But I've had to ask the last several years for no more socks.

TS: Socks.

MH: Because I have, like, a sock collection now. You know, I could open up my own store.

TS: Wow.

MH: So hopefully there will be no more socks. Even though I like socks. But I just have too many of them.

TS: Well, do we have fun socks? Is there stuff on the socks, like pugs?

MH: Yeah, yeah. I got some with pugs on. Some with pizza. I've got some with UFOs. You know, cattle floating up into UFOs. Bigfoot. Loch Ness Monster. I mean, they know what to get me. But... [laughs]

TS: Yeah, I love socks.

MH: A few baseball ones in there, too. But yeah.

TS: That's good stuff. Anything Packer-related? You know they're selling more stock in the Packers right now. Did you know that?

MH: No, I did not know that.

TS: Yeah, they're actually...

MH: Come on. Are you just pulling my chain now here?

TS: I'm telling you, right now, google it. They're selling more stock until it runs out. I think January sometime is when they're going to cut it off. But it's been going on for the last couple of months.

MH: Oh, I didn't know that. Alright.

TS: I think it's the third time they've ever issued stock? I mean, it's just...

MH: Yeah. It would be the third time.

TS: You already have some, though, don't you?

MH: No, I don't. I was a poor graduate student then. We were lucky to... "Sorry, honey, but we're going to have to skip lunch [laughs] for the next three weeks so Daddy can buy a piece of stock in the Packers." [laughs]

TS: Well, do we need to take time for you to run real quick and grab you some stock?

MH: No, no. We'll finish the Q&A. Then I'll go look at it.

TS: Alright. Sounds good. Well, alright, there you go. Merry Christmas, Mike.

MH: Talk me in off the ledge. [laughter]

TS: Perfect. Alright, what a good Christmas gift. Packer stock.

MH: What I should do is I should get my brother some stock. He's a Vikings fan. Oh, he'd love and hate that at the same time.

TS: Yeah, that's perfect.

MH: That would be awesome, yeah. Okay. Let's transition back here. [laughs]

TS: Alright. Well, Mike, this is—tear drop—our last Q&A for Revelation. And I don't know how I feel about that. I guess I want a gift for everybody. It's on Christmas. It's our last Q&A on Revelation. It's *the* final episode on Revelation, Mike. So what a good gift.

MH: Oh, well, see, now I'm in a quandary. Do I say, "Yep, that's the way it is," or do I lie and say, "Oh, man; that's terrible?"

TS: [laughs] I think we all know how you feel.

MH: I'm going to say, "Yep."

TS: Yeah, we already know how you feel so you can't hide that. So it doesn't matter. [MH laughs]

MH: Alright.

TS: But it's been a fun ride. We've enjoyed it. And we've got some questions here, Mike. So we might as well get into it, if you don't mind.

MH: Sure.

TS: Brah from Hawaii has a couple of questions:

4:00

Is it possible for a Christian to go through the great tribulation? I hear a lot of pastors teaching that the church will not go through the great tribulation, yet it seems as if throughout the history of the church starting with the Apostles there has been believers that went through some type of great tribulation. Would this teaching be considered sound doctrine?

5:00

MH: Well, I have to say that Brah has his finger on the pulse of something important here. Because if believers today did not go through some kind of tribulation, then we would be unique. And he already senses that. You know, it's hard to believe that we should be unique to escape the kind of persecution that Revelation describes when Jesus rose and ascended back to the Father, both before and during that whole set of events—after the resurrection) told his followers very clearly, “Don't be surprised if the world hates you. It hated me.” And he talked about them undergoing persecution. But somehow, some eschatological systems have worked it out so that all the other believers in the history of the world suffered except for us. And I don't think that's going to be the case. I have my doubts. But I would never say that it can't... I would never say a pre-trib rapture scenario is unworkable in the Bible, like there's zero chance of it. I can't say that and be honest.

But on the other side of it, I do tend to doubt it, because of... Those who have read my blog series on eschatology (this was years ago—“Why an obsession with eschatology is a waste of time”) will know that I did this piece on “Are you a Splitter or are you a Joiner?” So the real problem I have with the rapture is its method—the methodology. And you can go read that. All you've got to do is google it. So the short answer here to “Is it possible for a Christian to go through the tribulation?” is, “Sure.” Most believers—most believing groups, most denominations... And we're talking about serious people here, people who are actually believers and they study Scripture, and they write theology—the real deal. Most believers would agree. Most believers would have the Church going through some period of tribulation before the Lord returns and we get the Day of the Lord. It's a minority voice (although in today's evangelicalism, it's a very strong voice), but the minority voice still has believers escaping this through a rapture.

So the question presupposes a certain end-times system and the debates therein. So in this case, it presupposes a traditional pre-mil view plus a traditional pre-trib rapture idea. You know, other rapture positions have believers going through the tribulation (or at least part of it), unless you're the pre-wrath position. Okay? This gets awfully confusing. But the pre-trib rapture has believers taken out before the seven-year tribulation that they think is scriptural. Okay? So that's the group that says nobody goes through the tribulation. Mid-trib is you go through the first 3 ½ [years] and then you're gone—then you're raptured. But the really bad times are still the second half of the tribulation, so you still kind of luck

out a little bit. Post-trib, you go through the whole thing, then you're raptured, and you come back with the Lord at his second coming—both of those events back-to-back, almost simultaneously. And then there's the pre-wrath view, which has believers going through the seven-year tribulation past the midpoint, and then there's this chronologically nebulous thing called "the time of Jacob's trouble," where the wrath of God is poured out. And that's when you're raptured. So you still... Again, you go through a lot of the tribulation period, but you don't get the worst of it in the pre-wrath position.

So those systems are fairly common. All of those systems have some kind of rapture. But the one that this question presupposes (the pre-trib, pre-mil) is actually, if you put them all together, a minority view. And a lot of people find that astonishing because it's the only thing they've ever heard of. But that is the case. You know, your Reformed denominations aren't going to be teaching this. And that encompasses quite a bit of territory when it comes to the believing Church. So there's a lot out there that don't. And even if you're not Reformed, there are a lot of those who would reject a pre-trib, pre-mil position in favor of something else that doesn't have a rapture at all, or one of these other views where you go through part of it.

So you would be with most Christians (if you're just counting heads) with the thought that I'm going to go through something (some period of persecution) before the Lord returns—that that's part of my destiny, that's part of what I signed up for. You would be in the majority if you had that thought. And we've already hit in an earlier Q&A where the idea of the great tribulation comes from. There is no passage that says, "The great tribulation is a seven-year period." There's no passage that says it's the 70th week of Daniel. Now these are things that *might* be true. Okay? It *might* be the case. It might be the way things play out, but there's no verse that actually says it—either of those things. The only thing you have for great tribulation is Daniel 12:1, and that's right before the general resurrection and the Day of the Lord judgment. That would align much more closely to something that's not pre-trib, pre-mil.

10:00

So other positions are going to have an easier time of dealing with Daniel 12:1. But that's, in the Old Testament, that and the time of Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah... That's where this language comes from. And so we can't ignore it. We can't ignore *where* it occurs in the prophetic timeline of the Old Testament when we get to the New. We can't just dispense with the Old Testament when we get to the New. So again, it points to this method problem I have with at least the pre-trib rapture position. But I can't say it's impossible. It may well be the way things work out. But I would just want a little bit of a more textually clear argument for that.

TS: Kent asks:

10:40

In Revelation 5:9 the King James version has "redeemed us" and "made us" and "we shall reign"... It seems this has a big impact on the interpretation of who the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders are (people or heavenly beings). Have you seen textual criticism to conclude one way or the other?

MH: This was a good question. I can tell that you've probably looked at this in different versions, because there are some text-critical issues. And so I'm just wondering what the best way to try to communicate these are. So let's use the NET Bible. Because the NET Bible is going to have a few textual notes to it that should be able to get us into this. So the NET Bible version, I'm going to read Revelation 5:9:

⁹They were singing a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals

because you were killed,

and at the cost of your own blood you have purchased for God

persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

¹⁰You have appointed them as a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

So again, we're back to the question, "redeemed us," "made us," "we shall reign." You'll notice that the "we" language and the "us" language is not necessarily in the two verses I read in the NET Bible, specifically... I'll just read them again.

"...you have purchased for God

persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

¹⁰You have appointed them [MH: not "us"] as a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they [MH: not "we"] will reign on the earth."

So if you were going along in your Bible study and you happened to use the NET Bible along with the King James (because this question presupposes the King James version, as Kent said at the outset, where Trey read to us)... The King James reads something here that other versions of the New Testament do not have, and it's because of the version of the Greek New Testament that the King James translators used.

So if we look at the NET Bible, the NET Bible will make a few comments here. Let's see here if we can get one that's kind of interesting. They say here about verse 9:

The Greek text as it stands above [MH: you have purchased *for* God—the Greek is τῷ θεῷ (*tō theō*)]... is found in [MH: certain codexes—they have Alexandrinus marked here]...

But other manuscripts *had* the pronoun “us” (“you have purchased *us* for God”). So some manuscripts add the “us.” And if you add it there, you're going to be tempted to add it in the next verse, where as we just read, the NET Bible doesn't have “us” here, and it doesn't have “us” in verse 10 and “we” in verse 10 like the King James does. And this is because they've made a different manuscript choice. So the NET Bible theorizes that “us” was added by a scribe to try to make sense of it. Just listen in your ear here:

**“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals
because you were killed,
and at the cost of your own blood you have purchased for God
persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.**

Well, if you just stop there, you... Purchased what? And so some scribe would say, “Well, that would be us, so we're going to add ‘us’ to smooth out the verse and try to explain to people what it means.” Because the very next word in the NET Bible after “you have purchased for God” is “persons.” If you look at “persons,” guess what you also have there? An absence. There are manuscripts that don't have that in it either. So you get words that are supplied here by scribes in an effort to make the text more readable and understandable. And one of the cardinal rules of textual criticism is that scribes would tend to do things to the text to help readers understand it. They would not do things to help readers become more confused. And so the harder reading—the reading that creates more confusion—is often viewed as the superior reading, because of the scribal propensity to correct and smooth out, as opposed to remove and create questions. So that's just how it goes. This is a text critical point. When you get down to verse 10:

**¹⁰You have appointed them as a kingdom and priests to
serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”**

You have the same kind of situation going on here. Some manuscripts have, “you have appointed them.” Some of them will read that. In other manuscripts like the Textus Receptus (ultimately that's traceable back to the King James), it'll read “us.” So the King James would have “you have appointed *us*,” whereas

15:00

other manuscripts say “you have appointed *them* as a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and *they* will reign.” And the same thing. Some other manuscripts have the verb changed to “we will reign.” If we were doing this in a classroom you could actually see this. I’m very hesitant to do textual criticism stuff on audio because it just doesn’t translate, but if I put up the two verb forms (“they are reigning” and “they will reign”), they are spelled exactly the same way in Greek except for one letter. It’s a little letter sigma about halfway through the word. So did some scribe miss a letter? Did they add a letter? You know, what did the original say? This one’s a lot harder. You more or less have to try to make a judgment from context. But all these things are related to, as the question surmised—as Kent surmised... This is all text critical stuff. So it’s purely based on your choice of an Alexandrian manuscript—a manuscript in the Alexandrian family, which most of your English translations after 1960... Well, no, you might even push it back further than that. Maybe even 1910. Let’s be nice and just use a round number: 1900. If you have an English Bible that was translated after 1900, you’re not going to be using the same text as the people who did the King James used. They used something called the Byzantine, also known as the Majority text. And again, we can’t get into text criticism here on the Q&A. We actually did an episode on this way, way, way back, a couple of years ago, with Rick Brannan as our guest. Because Rick is the guy who did all the text critical stuff for Logos Bible Software. So if you wanted to go back and listen to that, you could. You’d get more of an introduction to textual criticism. But that’s basically why you have the difference here. It’s different choice of manuscripts.

TS: Nathaniel wants to know:

17:50

Who will believers rule over when we are given joint rule over the nations with Christ? I understand the judgment of the fallen Elohim that were given control of the nations. But who/what comes after? Rule over animals? Doesn't make sense, we already have that dominion. Over demons? Jesus gave us that dominion already, did he not? To whom do believers act as co-rulers in the new world?

MH: Well, I would say we shouldn’t dismiss over animals, because what we’re really ruling over is creation. You have to think partnership, not hierarchy. We’re not ruling over each other. We’re ruling together as partners. We’re being Adam and Eve. We get to play Adam and Eve. So we are going to be steward-kings of creation as it was intended from the very beginning, in a different kind of body, since we’re glorified. So we’re not limited in that respect. You know, we have the authority to rule over the animal kingdom. Okay? It’s not like that goes very well on any given day. You know? Because we don’t have a mastery over nature, generally, and the forces of nature. That certainly is not true. Animals of all sizes and varieties are a continuing threat to us. So our rule over them would be different in a new Eden where we don’t have the threat of being injured or harmed or poisoned or whatever. So it is going to be different, because it’s the

new Eden. The new Eden is going to behave a little bit differently than the old one—than the one that’s been fallen for all these years—the old Eden that was lost.

20:00 So I think there is an element of creation certainly in there. I think that’s actually the heart of what we’re doing. We are doing what Adam and Eve were supposed to be doing from the very beginning: enjoying creation, stewarding it in whatever way God wants it stewarded, and exploring it, bringing it into submission (if we can use that language, even though that’s sort of old Eden terminology). But I’m only using it to sort of get the idea that it still needs to be maintained. And yeah, God could do that all by himself, just like God can do every job by himself. But God chooses to not do most jobs by himself because he has committed himself to having a family. And the family participates with him in the things that he wants done. That doesn’t change. It gets better. It gets more comprehensive and it gets better in the new Eden.

TS: Tom asks:

20:25 **Why do you seem to avoid commenting on the possibility of a rapture even though a large percentage of evangelicals do consider that possibility? There are several possible references to a rapture in the Old Testament.**

MH: Well, I don't believe that there's any reference to a rapture in the Old Testament. He's probably talking about Elijah getting taken up with the horses. That is light years away from what a rapture doctrine teaches. So the reason I don't comment on the rapture is because I don't care a whit about it. Zero. I have no interest in it at all. So we don't do theology on the podcast by virtue of a popularity contest. "Oh, this is a popular topic, so let's talk about it." If it bores me, I'm not going to talk about it. And the rapture does bore me. And again, the reason is because it suffers from an inherent problem—an inherent methodological problem—that it can't shake and it can't get away from. And again, you could google "drms.com, splitter, and joiner" and you will find the article where I lay this out. But I'll give it to you in real quick terms.

Everywhere else, the propensity of the preponderance of evangelicals—a large percentage of evangelicals (and it'd be even larger for what I'm going to say here)... When you read through the Gospels and they see the Gospels disagreeing on details (which happens all the time in terms of what the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke)... They don't have all the same things in them. They include certain things that another Gospel writer would exclude. Even when they do have the same things, sometimes the order of events is different. Even when the order of events isn't different, if you go to the Greek level, the words are different. The verb tenses are different. You know, the nouns. The word order is different. It's all... There's difference, difference, difference. And we

look at that and say, “Well, most of these (most if not all of them) are cured by harmonizing. We take what Matthew says and we join it—we harmonize it—with what Mark says or what Luke says. Or we start with Luke and then we go back to Matthew. And we harmonize. We bring these things together. And you say, “Well, what’s wrong with that?” And my answer to that is, “There’s nothing wrong with that.” Okay? That’s a good impulse to have.

Here’s the problem: If you believe in a pre-trib rapture (or really any rapture at all, but especially the pre-trib), that is not what you do in the Gospels when it comes to end times. Because there you’re going to be fixated on verses that talk about the Lord’s return or his coming or the Mount of Olives thing, and his foot touches the ground, and the use of Zechariah there. You’re going to be looking at all of what the New Testament says about the Lord’s return and you’re going to be saying, “Well, we don’t want to harmonize. We don’t want to put these all together. Because if we do that, there’s no rapture. They all describe the same event. If we split them up and we say, ‘Aha, look, there’s a difference here between the way Matthew words this and Mark or Paul...’ So now we’re going to keep those things separate. If we keep them separate, we have two events. We have the second coming and a rapture. So we create two piles. We create two categories. We’re Splitters. We arbitrarily decide to not harmonize the end times stuff so that we can have two events instead of one.” That’s the problem.

There’s no instruction... There’s nothing at the back of the Bible, after you hit the maps (and nobody uses the maps)... They flip their Bibles, “Oh, here’s the instruction page on what to do with prophecy,” or “what to do with harmonization.” No, there is no instruction page. My question to anyone who believes in a rapture is, “Why do you harmonize everywhere else and everything else except for this? Why?” If you can answer that, give me some basis for that, well then, I can feel warmer about the result.

25:00 Now I’m not going to say that this is an impossible position or an impossible strategy. What I am going to do is I’m going to point out the obvious. This is what you do. You split instead of join, when everywhere else, you join. Why? So I don’t really care if we have a large percentage of Splitters in the evangelical world, because I don’t judge the text by who’s saying what and what position is popular. And since I don’t have an answer to “should I be a Splitter or a Joiner?”... I don’t have a certain answer. I mean, I land on the joining side because it feels more consistent to me, but I don’t want my doctrine to be determined by my feelings, either, so I don’t take a position on it. I don’t have a certain answer to this question. And questions that I know don’t have certain answers, that I’ve pursued this thing as long as I’m going to pursue it... I’ve used up enough of my life thinking about this question, and I know—I *know*—there’s no answer to this, I let it go. It bores me at that point. And I’m at that point with the rapture.

TS: Thys has our next question:

25:55

Are we as the ecclesia allowed to ask God for covenant judgment and covenant vengeance on the wicked? Dutch Sheets defines *ecclesia* as "a legislative body of people with governing authority as per Matthew 16:18-19." Revelation 5:10 says that we are made kings and priests. The function of a king is to rule from heaven downwards since we are seated with Christ. Also, as kings Jesus shows us his will and we decree His will ("your kingdom come"). All this (except for my question) is Dutch Sheets' view and I resonate with this. The reason why I ask this question is that many believers have a very strong view that in light of the new covenant, "mercy triumphs over judgment" and hence we have no right to pray that. In my view that argument loses sight of Hebrews 13:8 and Revelation 19:11 ("In righteousness He judges and wages war"). I would kindly like to hear your view on this.

MH: Well, in Hebrews 13:8 and Revelation 19, who's judging? "He." It's not us. So I don't think those verses apply to this notion that we are a judgmental body—a legislative body. And I don't know who Dutch Sheets is, so I have to be honest and say I don't really care for the sake of the question whoever this is or was. I hope they're doing a good work for the Lord and whatnot, but I just have no idea who this is. But I would totally disagree that the Church is a legislative body of people, and then use Matthew 16 to justify that. That's the "upon this rock" passage. That has nothing to do with giving the Church the authority to set up Sharia courts in today's culture. Because that's where this ends. That's where this kind of thinking goes—that we have some authority to exempt ourselves from the secular governors that Paul also told us to obey. Okay? We do not have the authority to set up our own court systems, our own legislative body, create a counter government. And it certainly wouldn't be based on Matthew 16. So I think that's just bogus. I think it's bogus reasoning.

But anyway, I just don't know why this is not clear in the minds of people. The Church is not a legislative body, period. The church is not the state. It is not a substitute for the state. The state is not the Church. And the state is no substitute for the Church. The two should not be conflated. And they're only conflated at the risk of ignoring Jesus' very clear teaching on the matter. Let's try this on for size: "My kingdom is not of this world." I don't see much ambiguity there. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." So Caesar has secular authority. Paul tells us to obey it. You could argue that God created secular authority way back in Genesis 9 with the death penalty. I mean, you could make this argument because it's the first time God allows men to have authority over other men.

So the institution of government, you could say, is ordained by God. It just gets corrupt because people are corrupt, like everything else. God ordained the

30:00

family, too. You know, families everywhere are corrupt. And the ideal of the family is under assault. It's perverted all the time. So when it comes to Church language, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Church is not a new theocracy. The Church is the body of Christ. That's how I would define Church. It's the body of believers. It's his body—the body of Christ, destined to suffer as he did for his sake. Okay? Christ suffered; so should we. He tells us to expect that. He doesn't tell us to plot our own version of the French Underground so that we can have our own spiritual authority—our own alternate government or Sharia zones, or whatever like this. I'm just not buying it. I don't buy it for a second. I think it's to really neglect and ignore the fact that the kingdom of God has no place in this world—in the world's system the way it is. You don't need humans having authority over other humans in Eden. See, this is where we're going back to. Torah culture (Old Testament culture), New Testament culture, is not the culture that dropped from heaven. This is why there are so many laws in the Old Testament that come from other ancient Near Eastern legal systems. Because the people have the same problems and they need the same judgments rendered. People have a common culture. So there are marriage laws. There are inheritance laws. There are adoption laws. Okay? All these things are common to the cultures that are around Israel in the ancient Near East.

Now there are lots of things in the Torah that are unique, that are important. But setting up a sociopolitical government system is not one of them. [laughs] You know, the culture that dropped from heaven is *Eden* culture. And in Eden culture, we don't rule over each other. We are all on the same footing. We are all imagers of God. We are all members of God's family. We rule together as partners over the new earth. Okay? The new earth is not this earth. The new earth is not this state. This state or any state that we could create now is not the new earth. Why? Because we can't create the new earth ourselves. It's an act of God. I repeat, "My kingdom is not of this world." I just don't know how much clearer Jesus could have made this.

So if we take all that to imprecatory prayer... Okay, imprecatory prayer, you don't need legal mumbo-jumbo to understand imprecatory prayer. You don't have to set up the Church as some sort of political institution to talk about imprecatory prayer. Imprecatory prayer is not hard to understand, and it is not specifically attached exclusively to the Torah or a Mosaic legal system. Like you don't have Torah prescription for how to do imprecatory prayer, is what I'm getting at there. Imprecatory prayer (praying against your enemies—that's the very broad definition) is the privilege (I dislike the word "right" and I'm using the word "privilege" deliberately here) of believers, rooted in the Abrahamic covenant, to ask God to remember that he promised to bless those who bless his children and curse those who do not. And then leave the matter right there. Imprecatory prayer is not our biblical chance to get even with somebody. It's precisely the opposite. It's our chance to ask God to fight for us and not presume that we have the right of vengeance. Only he has that right. Remember the Scripture says

“vengeance is mine,’ says the Lord” over and over. Vengeance is not ours. And it doesn’t come through some political institution that we create out of the Church to justify it. Imprecatory prayer should just remind us that God has promised to fight for us, and we leave it right there. We remind God of his promise, and we do not usurp that role for ourselves and take it from him.

TS: Brandon says:

34:00

I’m hoping Mike would have hit on the phrase ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ found in Rev 1:10. Most teachers attribute this to Sunday (although there is no attestation of this elsewhere in scripture), but a few have proposed that this phrase is in reference to יְהוָה יוֹם found in the OT prophets. From my study, the primary linguistic problem with this is that “day” and “YHWH/Lord” are in a different order in Revelation than the other Day of the Lord references in the Hebrew (or even in the LXX, I think). Is this a reference to the Day of the Lord, and if so, what significance would this hold in light of the Old Testament? And if not, then is there a best way to interpret the phrase?

35:00

MH: When he mentions something about the order (the references and their order), I'm not sure what that means. It may be a question of Greek word order, which is far more flexible than Hebrew. So I'm going to sort of assume that as I make some other comments here, but I'm not completely certain I'm parsing that correctly.

So the Day of the Lord is a time of judgment and vindication for the righteous. It isn't a single day. So there's that. I mean, John is relating something that happened to him during a specific day. So the fact that the Day of the Lord isn't a specific day (only limited to 24 hours) would lead me against identifying it as being the Lord's day of Revelation 1:10. And the other thing is that what John is going to prophesy... He's prophesying things that are yet to happen, one of which is the Day of the Lord. So he can't be saying this on the Day of the Lord because he's projecting a lot of things out there in future time, whether it was written a few years before 70 A.D. or whether it was written in the 90s A.D. The details of the book are, in many cases, obviously yet future (like the second coming). The second coming happens in conjunction with the Day of the Lord and the final judgment and all these things. Again, there's no reason to think that they can be isolated to a single 24-hour day period, and then isolate that period to what John is talking about in Revelation 1:10. So I don't think that's the case at all. It's a day sort of as in “time” or an era, a piece of time, that something is going to happen. I would say also there's no textual reason in another regard to limit it to a single day. Aune, in his commentary, where he's quoting Rordorf's study on the Sunday question (the original day of worship question), writes:

Further, *kyriakē hēmera* [MH: that's the Lord's day, the phrase we get in Revelation 1:10] is not synonymous with *hēmera tou kuriou* [MH: Day of the Lord], since the latter phrase traditionally referred to the eschatological Day of the Lord.

So in the Septuagint, when the Day of the Lord is being talked about, you'll see *hēmera tou kuriou*. And that is not the wording or the word order that you get in Revelation 1:10. So I'm thinking that might be what Brandon is alluding to when he talks about the Day of the Lord references being in a different order. If it is, that's really the answer to the question. For it to be the specific Day of the Lord, you'd have to be reading *hēmera tou kuriou* in Revelation 1:10, but that's not what you get.

As far as "Lord's day," where I land on it, I think "Lord's day..." Well, you could argue... People argue that it could refer to either the Sabbath or Sunday, depending on which "Lord" is in view. (Is it God or is it Jesus?) The Sabbath, I would say, is highly unlikely because writers would just use the word "Sabbath" (they do it all over the place) instead of a circumlocution or a roundabout way of referencing it like "the Lord's day." So I think if it was the Sabbath, they would just say so. And so I think the point of reference is likely Jesus. This is Jesus' day (the Lord's day), which is quite likely, in regard here... When you put them next to these other views, I think this is the most likely one, and that would be associated with a particular day in what happened to Jesus—the work on the cross—which would be Sunday, which is the day he rose. So that's what I think is going on here. I think this is a Sunday that John is alluding to—some run-of-the-mill Sunday. This is when it happens to him. And he's worshiping or doing whatever he's doing. And then we get the results of that when he produces to writing what he saw and heard in his visions.

TS: Our next question is from Tim in Hutto, TX.

39:05

What are the 7 spirits of God in the book of Revelation? Some say it's the spirits mentioned in Isaiah 11, but is there another meaning we might be missing?

MH: Well, this is going to be a real short one. I would say go back and listen to Episode 354 on Revelation 1:4. Because basically the whole episode is about the seven spirits. And Isaiah 11 is part of that. But there are other passages like from Zechariah involved as well.

TS: Brad asks:

38:40

Who are the sheep and goats at the white throne judgment? I have heard the sheep represent believers. Does not make sense. New

**bodies, changed in the twinkling of the eye. Healing of the nations.
What nations?**

MH: Well, I would suggest that it only doesn't make sense if you're taking it over-literally. Then you're going to have problems. And let's have a little fun with this. Do you realize there are no sheep and goats mentioned in Revelation's great white throne scene? If you read Revelation 20:11-15, you will not find sheep and goats there. This is a good example of something we're told that actually isn't in the text. [laughs]

Now that said, to be fair, the language does come from somewhere. It comes from Matthew 25. And it's in a context immediately preceding the judgment of the Devil and his angels in the lake of fire. And that judgment, of course, *is* found in the book of Revelation in relationship to Revelation 20. So this is language from Matthew that interpreters (like us) will bring into the discussion of Revelation 20, but you ought to... It's a good teaching moment here that we need to observe the text first. There are no sheep and goats in Revelation 20, so you have to find some reasonable basis to connect Matthew 25 and Revelation 20 at the get-go.

I think the simplest interpretation, looking at Revelation 20 (which is after the second coming) is that the sheep and goat language simply means believers and unbelievers. The sheep inherit the kingdom; the goats do not. That's very clear from the text. The goats share the destiny of the Devil and his angels, if you want to marry this to Revelation 20.

So it's very obvious you have believers and unbelievers. The New Testament calls believers "sheep" on a number of occasions. John 10 is the most obvious, where we have the sheep, the Lord is the Good Shepherd and we have the sheep gate... Again that's from John 10—ostensibly the same author as the guy who wrote the book of Revelation. So I don't know why the identification of sheep for believers wouldn't make sense to Brad, because John does it elsewhere. Maybe he's conflating the sheep and goats a little too much to Revelation (I don't know), presuming that if a critter is at the great white throne that they're destined for judgment, because everything else would be made new. I don't know what's creating the confusion here. But to me it's not very confusing. The great white throne scene in Revelation 20 has believers going to eternal life. But there's also the negative side of it as well. You get eternal death. Whether that's annihilation or traditional everlasting punishment is on the table. So I think, again, it's simply believers and unbelievers.

Now the last thing that Brad asked about is the nations—the healing of the nations. What nations? Well, again, I think this makes perfect sense. Because the healing of the nations is the reversal of the Babel judgment, when the nations are fragmented and separated from the people of God, when Israel is created to be God's people and the other nations are excluded from that status. To heal the

nations, it's just a reference to reversing this whole curse. The curse is reversed. So why wouldn't that make sense? The Lord returns, the wicked (those who reject him) are judged, those who embrace him are given eternal life. And the nations that were once fragmented and separated are now part of the one people of God that inherit the new earth—believers from every nation, not just Israel. That's all it means. So there's no division into nations in the new Eden or new earth because there wasn't any nations to begin with. That fragmentation has been healed. It's only one now. That's all it really means.

TS: Theresa has our next question.

43:45

Revelation 22:2 in the New Living Translation says:

It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, which a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.

So my question is about the medicine part. If by this point we would be in the new Heaven and new Earth, or even just Heaven in general, why would there be a need for medicine?

MH: Yeah, there isn't any need. We have to remember that this is a metaphor. It's not about curing some literal ailment. Rather, the healing here is metaphorical, of the nations. In other words, this Eden imagery—the return of Eden—successfully transforms the fragmentation that arose in the wake of the Babel rebellion. In other words, all these nations who were not the people of God, when Eden comes back—when it returns—all of that fragmentation is going to be healed. There's only one people of God. There's one family of God. Jew or Gentile, there's only one. So the fragmentation of Babel is eliminated. It's done away with. It's healed. So we don't have ongoing ailments here to heal. It's a reference to the fragmentation of Babel being restored and taken care of.

45:00

TS: Our very last question is a personal one, and it's from Paul.

45:20

Dr. Heiser talked about how he learned a lot teaching Revelation this past year. What exactly did he learn?

What did you learn, Mike?

MH: Well, yeah, I would say in broad terms, I have a much better appreciation for the amount of connection that Revelation has to the Old Testament. I mean, I knew it was a lot. But it's hard to go anywhere in the book and not run into it. So that, I think, deepened my appreciation for that. I wasn't... You know, at the beginning I didn't quite know what to expect—how much would I have to include and exclude. And I just had the feeling, "Oh, there's probably one or two things in

every chapter.” But it’s really four or five. [laughs] So that caught me a little bit off guard as far as the depth of it. I think the logic of Kline’s work... Even though I was familiar with that from the *Har Mageddon* material in *Unseen Realm*, having to go through all that and then retrace it back to Revelation 16-20, what he’s arguing about in a larger sense makes more sense to me now than it did five or six years ago when I was focused just specifically on the Armageddon thing. So I’ll put that in the win column.

I’ll give you one more example. I was not expecting, when we get to Revelation 13 and later on, when there’s a lot of talk about the beast, I knew that that connected to Daniel 7, but I didn’t know that you could actually make a decent argument for connecting that to Leviathan and Behemoth. So that was new. There are little things like that, as I just got in a little bit deeper, that I didn’t realize certain passages played as much of a role as they did in certain places.

TS: Alright, Mike. That’s it. An end of an era. Just like that.

MH: Are you tearing up?

TS: A little bit. A little bit. [MH laughs] But you know...

MH: Do you need a hug, Trey? [laughs]

TS: I do. I need a hug. Well, Mike, you know, it’s Christmas. We want to wish everybody Merry Christmas. And we’ve got one more week of the year. And our next episode, Mike, I think you’re going to let us know what’s in store for the upcoming year and future and sort of give us a heads up, what to expect.

MH: Yeah, I’m looking forward to this one. And trust me, if you’re listening to this, do not miss the year-end episode. Just don’t miss that one, because we’re going to be unveiling something that the audience is going to love. They’re going to use it. They’re going to love it. And it’s going to be really helpful to a lot of people. And then we do get to talk about where we’re going with the podcast in 2022.

TS: And don’t forget, you could help us out. Look, wherever you listen to the podcast, or even don’t listen to us, I want you to go to every podcast site in the world and leave us a review (like Spotify). Follow us, even if you don’t listen to the podcast on those. Mike, we need to do a push here for our listeners. So help us out. Go subscribe to us, follow us, leave us a review. Do what you can to support us. We’d appreciate it. And it’s been a great series, Mike, on Revelation. I look forward to the many, many more we have in store.

MH: Oh, yeah.

TS: Absolutely. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.