

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 381

Revelation 11

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Episode Summary

Revelation 11 is well known for two major items: the two witnesses and the reference to the temple court. Both are controversial. Who are the two witnesses? Are they individual people? Old Testament prophets who did not die (Enoch, Elijah)? Are they symbolic? Does the temple reference in Rev 11:1 mean the temple was still standing when Revelation was written, thereby suggesting the book's events were fulfilled in or by 70 A.D.? What are the meaning of the numbers John uses (1,260 days, 42 months), and how do those numbers relate to similar or identical language in the book of Daniel? How did Jews of Jesus's day understand all these items? In this episode of the podcast, we work through Revelation 11 to contextualize the content in light of the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 381: Revelation 11. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

MH: Pretty good, pretty good. We are at Revelation 11, which I know a lot of people have been waiting for. So I actually feel good about today's episode. [laughs] I don't know why. Maybe it'll fade when I get halfway through it. But yeah, you know, it was a good week. Enjoyed prepping for this.

TS: Yeah, I know when Revelation won the voting, somebody said, "Alright! I can't wait for the next year!" And that was about right. That's so true. [MH laughs] These things take about a year to go through them. But that's okay. It's good. I know everybody's enjoying going through Revelation.

MH: Yeah, I actually had a scholar friend that I ran into this week and had lunch with and who follows the podcast. And he basically said the same thing, like, "Yeah, I enjoy listening to the podcast. I get something out of it. It's great that people love it—the layperson loves it." So yeah, that was a nice thing to hear from the outside.

TS: Yeah, and Revelation 11 is kind of a... Well, I guess they're all important chapters. But this one seems to have some good stuff in it.

MH: Oh, yeah, it does. We should jump in. Because this is going to... We're going to get into the weeds here. We're not going to do two parts. I'm going to try to cram this into one part. But a lot of this episode is going to be more like "Revelation in Second Temple Jewish context" than specifically "Old Testament context." But having said that, those two contexts are intertwined anyway.

So we're just going to have to get into the weeds here, because this chapter is sort of famous (or infamous or notorious) for a couple of things. Obviously, it's known for the two witnesses. And also, it's known for being a passage that is much fought over for the purposes of dating the book. In both of those regards (the nature of the witnesses and the whole thing about the dating of the book, which really revolves around the first verse where it mentions the temple of God—is this the literal temple or some other temple?)... I'm going to say some things about both of these issues (the witnesses and the temple) that are going to likely be unfamiliar to hearers in the audience. Again, I'm not a systems guy. I'm not going to land on any one system, and you'll pick up why as we go through. But again, this is getting into the weeds a little bit.

So let's just jump in here. And I could've done an episode on the first three verses, but like I said, we're going to try to cram everything in here and have it sort of make sense and be coherent. So Revelation 11:1-3 says this. I'm reading from ESV.

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. ³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

Now most people familiar with this particular passage are going to know what follows. You get into verse 4, the two witnesses are the two olive trees, the two lampstands, so on and so forth. And then they do miraculous things. And then the beast that arises from the bottomless pit makes war on them in verse 7 and conquers and kills them. And then their bodies lie in the street for a while. Really, it's Jerusalem and symbolically called Sodom and Egypt where the Lord was crucified. Very obviously Jerusalem. So they lay there for three and a half days, and then they come back to life and so on and so forth. And naturally, the obsession has been identifying these two witnesses. And we sort of skip what follows, which is the seventh trumpet and very clear Day of the Lord language. And in a system like standard premillennialism, the Day of the Lord is at the end

5:00

of the tribulation. But again, that part of Revelation 11 sort of gets skipped and we have the first part happening before the end and chopping it up into chronological bits because John uses this number (1260 days). And you have all these charts and systems and whatnot. So there's a lot in this passage that has fueled a lot of speculation. And I'm going to try to maybe not unravel it, but I'm going to get into the weeds in terms of context for these things and hopefully help stimulate some (I think) better thinking, or at least better contextual thinking about what's going on.

1. So let's start here with the first thing—the “measuring rod,” this measuring reed. Now this image is drawn from Ezekiel 40, specifically verse 3. But this is the part of Ezekiel... You know, we did the series on Ezekiel, about the temple there in Ezekiel 40-48. But Ezekiel 40:3 says the following (Ezekiel is talking). “When he brought me there...” This person is sort of showing... It's a vision, okay? So he's escorted in this vision.

When he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand.

And so this “man” is going to proceed to measure Ezekiel's temple. So this is where the imagery is drawn from in Ezekiel. And Aune in his commentary notes:

‘Measuring’ can be a metaphor for destruction [MH: like you measure it, but what you're actually doing is planning to destroy the thing you're measuring] (2 Sam 8:2a; 2 Kgs 21:13; Amos 7:7-9; Isa 34:11; Lam 2:8) [MH: but it can also be a metaphor for preservation] as well as for preservation (2 Sam 8:2b; Ezek 40:1-6; 42:20; Zech 2:5)...

So we have kind of both things going on here, and Aune believes that in this passage (Revelation 11), it's a metaphor for preservation. That's just where he lands. Now the speaker who issues the command is unidentified. The act of measuring is never actually carried out in the passage. So right away you kind of have a “huh.” Like “what's going on here?” And Aune in his commentary gets into some of these details. So we'll go back to him. And here's what he says as he starts to get into the material. He says:

The OT text on which this section has been modeled, Ezek 40-48 [MH: broadly], is introduced with an explanation of how the visionary was transported to a high mountain in the land of Israel, where he saw a structure like a city opposite him (Ezek 40:1-4). Similarly, in Rev 21:9-10, John describes how an angel transported him to a high mountain where, after seeing the New Jerusalem, the angel proceeds to measure parts of it (21:15-17)... This passage (along with Rev 21:10-27) alludes to Ezek 40:3-42:20 and Zech 2:1-5, though the latter passage is much closer to Rev 11:1 because of the absence of the actual act of measuring and the

focus on the theme of divine protection... In Ezek 40:3, a man (probably an angel) uses the measuring rod (as in Rev 20:15), and it is also a man, but again presumably an angel, who does the measuring in the Qumran [MH: Dead Sea Scrolls] fragments of an apocalypse on the heavenly Jerusalem [MH: so you actually get the same kind of thing in some of those texts]... In Zech 2:1–2 it is a man (probably an angel) who is on his way to measure Jerusalem. Measurements of the Jerusalem temple are also found in 11QTemple 3–48 [MH: that’s a Dead Sea Scroll—temple scroll] and in *m. Middot*. Here in Rev 11:1–2 it is John who is commanded to do the measuring. In a very difficult passage in *1 Enoch* 61:1–5, angels are given long cords either for measuring the righteous themselves for their preservation or for measuring the future heritage of the righteous on analogy to the tribal land allotments (Josh 13–19)...

10:00

So this measuring of the city, with the angle of preservation is common. I mean, I think it’s fair to say it’s common. You get it in Dead Sea Scrolls, you get it in Enoch, you get it in the Old Testament. And so Aune is saying, “This is where this imagery comes from. It’s not a planned destruction in this case, because ultimately we’re going to have the deliverance of the city.” We read this later in Revelation 20, where the Lord wipes out his enemies before they (encircling Jerusalem) destroy Jerusalem. So that’s sort of what a Revelation 11 is angling toward—that scene specifically. So that’s the Old Testament context for that.

2. Secondly, we read (in Revelation 11:1), “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there.” Like, how do you measure people? Maybe you count them? Something like that. The language is a little odd. This phrase is thought... The whole thing (“Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there”) is thought by many (maybe most) to indicate that what is being measured by John is the actual earthly temple in Jerusalem of his day, precisely because the worshippers are counted, and because (now this is Aune’s thought):

The [MH: Greek] phrase *to naon tou theou*, ‘temple of God,’ is used elsewhere in Revelation only in 11:19 [MH: so same chapter, a little bit later], where it is qualified with the phrase *ho en te ouranē*, [MH: which means] “which is in heaven...”.”

Now let me just stop there. Aune is saying, “Look, we get this phrase about the temple of God two times in Revelation 11. The first one is the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there. And the second time it’s the temple of God which is in heaven.” And Aune thinks that the second occurrence is important (the one that’s “in heaven”) because he believes it distinguishes the first one as being the earthly temple of God in Jerusalem, because that one isn’t described as “which is in heaven.” So again, Aune is with probably a majority of scholars that think Revelation 11:1 is actually referencing John measuring *the*

temple of his day. Now if that's the case, the implication, of course, is that Revelation has to be written before 70 A.D., because after 70 A.D., it's destroyed. Okay? And that's going to be something that an amillennialist will favor; partial preterists obviously, because they want the book written before 70 A.D. So Aune is saying, "This is where most scholars are at in terms of what temple we're talking about here."

Now other people obviously argue the reverse. They would say, "No, no, no. Revelation 11:19 doesn't *distinguish* the temple of 11:1 from the one of 11:19. Rather, Revelation 11:19 *qualifies* or *defines* the temple in Revelation 11:1. So they're *both* a heavenly temple—a spiritual temple." And the implication of *that* view is that Revelation could be written after 70 A.D. (and really *would* be written after 70 A.D.) because the literal temple would've been destroyed then—the earthly one is just gone. And so now we're dealing with a spiritual temple.

Just a note of irony here. It's kind of interesting to note that the people who want to interpret Revelation elsewhere the most literally have to opt for the spiritual view here. [laughs] And the reverse, too: the people who want to interpret Revelation allegorically or symbolically are going with literalism right here. It's actually an inversion of the approaches of both systems, which is kind of funny. But anyway... I love that irony, that our hermeneutic changes here in Revelation 11 because our systems require it. Anyway, Aune, who takes the literal Jerusalem temple view, continues and says:

The temple described here [11:1] is certainly the earthly temple in Jerusalem [MH: that's his view], for the distinction between the temple proper (*naos*) and the forecourt holds for both the temple of Solomon and the Herodian temple, though the real or imagined architecture is somewhat more complex.

It sounds like he's contradicting himself here, like, "Oh, it's the literal temple, but wait, they don't really match. It's more complex than you'd think." He has a way of dealing with that. I'm not going to read you the whole thing. But just go on a little bit. He says:

In addition to the holy of holies and the holy place, the temple of Solomon had two courts: the inner court surrounded by a wall (1 Kgs 6:36; 7:12) and the outer court, which surrounded the royal palace and the temple precincts (1 Kgs 7:9, 12). The temple described in Ezek 40–42, modeled after the temple of Solomon [MH: at least in some respects – I don't know how you could just categorically say that], also had two courts, an oblong inner court (Ezek 40:23) and a square outer court (Ezek 40:17–20). The Herodian temple, described both in Josephus and in [rabbinic texts] consisted of four courts. The inner court of priests was separated from the court of Israelites by a barrier one cubit high. The court of Israelites was adjacent to the court of women. This whole inner precinct (the holy of holies, the holy place, and the three courts) was enclosed by a high wall with gates. The very

large court of Gentiles, essentially a huge marketplace, lay without. The term *to hieron* [MH: Greek for “the temple” or “the sanctuary”] tended to be used of the entire temple complex, including the three areas into which the inner court of Herod’s temple was divided, the court of priests, the court of Israelites and the court of women [MH: and he cites a bunch of passages from Josephus]. (*m. Kelim* 1:8; *m. Mid.* 2:5; *Jos. J. W.* 5.198–99; *Ag. Ap.* 2.103–4; see Schürer, *History* 2:296–99); these three areas together with the temple itself constituted the *hieron*. The *naos* [MH: which is another word for sacred space here], with the temple and its three courts, was separated from the outer court . . . “first court” (*Ant.* 15.417) [MH: he quotes something by Josephus – it’s separated...] , by a low stone barrier that enclosed an area known as the rampart (*hêl*) [MH: he’s using Hebrew here, but it’s also an Aramaic word] and upon which were posted warnings that Gentiles were forbidden to pass through on pain of death [MH: and there’s a bunch of references in Josephus to that] (*Ant.* 15.410–17; *J. W.* 5.193–94; 6.124–26; *Philo Leg.* 212).”

By the way, this barrier or wall is the thing that’s referenced in Ephesians 2:14, which is kind of interesting. Let me just read Ephesians 2:14 to you. This is what it’s talking about when Paul mentions this.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...

This is actually the corresponding literal structure that Paul is using to play off of in his discussion about Jews and Gentiles being one body. So again, where does that leave us? Each side is going to have a way of arguing that it’s literal or not, so on and so forth, and on and on it goes.

3. The third element here... We’re going to talk about the two witnesses. We’ll get to that in a moment. But I want to move (before we hit the two witnesses, or maybe in conjunction with them), I want to get to this phrase, “they will prophesy 1,260 days.” Now Aune says:

The period of forty-two months [MH: 1,260 days] (also mentioned in Rev 13:5, where it is the period during which the beast exercises authority; see *Comment* there) is a symbolic apocalyptic number for a divinely restricted period of time (often a limited period of eschatological tribulation), ultimately derived from Dan 7:25; 12:7 [MH: that’s going to become important]. Forty-two months is equivalent to three and one-half years, a period of time that the author expresses differently elsewhere as 1,260 days [MH: Revelation] (11:3; 12:6) [MH: by the way, this foreshadows something I’m going to say in a moment, that to understand Revelation 11 you need to read some things that it says in tandem with Revelation 12, so just hold onto that thought] and as “a time, times, and half

a time" (12:14). He uses the number three and one-half for the number of days between the death and the ascension of the two witnesses (11:9, 11). Therefore, while John uses three different time designations to express three and one-half years, the reference to "a time, times, and half a time" in 12:14 makes it clear that [MH: there] he is alluding to Daniel (7:25; 12:7)."

Now I read that because we want to reinforce the point that the background to Revelation 11 here with these numbers is ultimately the book of Daniel. So Daniel's numbers have to be sorted out to know what John's doing here. If we want to look at Daniel and these numbers, that's going to take us directly into the Second Temple period and its fixation on calendar and, of course, controversies between different sects of Judaism over which calendar to use.

20:00

Now just by way of refreshing maybe the memory of some listeners... We've traversed on this turf a little bit before, but there were calendar controversies. So some Jews of the Second Temple period preferred using a lunar calendar. Now a month in a lunar calendar could have 29 or 30 days. They're not consistent. Or 31. You go by the phases of the moon. And it's not neatly divisible (always 30). This is why Judaism today uses this calendar. And this is why periodically you have to have an extra month inserted into the calendar to figure out when Passover is going to be, and the slippage of days (if you're using a lunar calendar, in correspondence with a solar year) is going to create the necessity that you have to add time. [laughs] You have to add a month periodically so that the two things (your ritual calendar—your sacred calendar—and your actual astronomical calendar) will align. Okay? So there's the lunar calendar, and you've got to add time to that periodically. The other calendar that was used is a solar calendar. And this is 12 months, each with 30 days. Twelve times 30 is 360. And then there would be... At Qumran what they did was they added a day in between four quadrants of 90 days. I've mentioned this before. This was the Qumran or the Essene mathematically perfect and precise calendar. Because if you use this calendar and ignore the astronomy, then your Passover, your Sabbaths, your feasts and festivals, are going to be occurring on the same day every year. It never varies. First you have to start it on day four of creation. That's when the sun, moon, and stars were created. So that's how they calculate things out. Those who stuck with that system actually did calculations of the messiah and so on and so forth. "When's the window when we think that the messiah—the ultimate jubilee—is going to be accomplished?" And so on and so forth.

Now there was another... We haven't mentioned this before yet. There was another 360-day calendar in use by a different sect of Judaism: the Zadokites. They did the same thing with solar. And the two systems differed on what they did with equinoxes. Do they consider them separate days, or do they sort of get absorbed into the 360 itself? And then we have to add four days for some other reason. So there was a little bit of a difference as to how to get the 364. We'll just leave it there. It's very complex and convoluted and complicated. But essentially,

you've got a lunar and a solar calendar, okay? Solar calendar has two varieties. And that's going to actually become important when we get into the weeds here.

Now why get into them at all? Well, I'll tell you. There's only one reason I'm doing this. I want to demonstrate for the listener who probably has some curiosity here how deeply complex and convoluted this gets. And I'm doing that to teach a prophecy lesson. And I'm going to telegraph the lesson right here: If you have prophecy books on your shelf that tell you they know how everything's going to play out, and they don't get into what we're going to get into here, what you should do is take those books and throw them away. Okay? Because they are not contextualizing the numerical discussion—the calendar discussion—on its own terms. These numbers come from somewhere, okay? Daniel (as we're going to see) is using a particular calendar, and his numbers are meaningful in the context of *that* calendar. So if your prophecy books aren't doing this (if they're just playing with calculators and Starry Night astronomy programs), throw them away. That's the best thing you can do. Otherwise, it's just whistling in the dark.

Now my reference here (and I do not have a pdf for this) is from Gabriele Boccaccini's chapter (called "The Solar Calendars of Daniel and Enoch") in a book called *The book of Daniel, Volume 2, Composition and Reception*. It's published by Brill, so it costs an arm and a leg. This is pages 311 through 328. Now I'm going to read you some extensive portions of this. Because I want to numb your mind here. I want you to see how complicated this is, so that when this episode ends you will get up, pull the prophecy books from your shelf, and throw them away. I would consider that a good missional work here. It is *never* as simple as these books tell you, and it's always more complicated than even *they* seem. So let's jump into Boccaccini here. He says:

Daniel 7:25 blames the iniquitous king, Antiochus Epiphanes, for "changing times" in Temple worship. According to A. Jaubert and J. C. VanderKam [MH: who are two experts on this chronology], this marks the occasion on which the Hellenistic lunar calendar definitively replaced the old Zadokite solar calendar, which *Jubilees* and [MH: the people at] Qumran would seek in vain to restore after the Maccabean revolt.

25:00

Now let me just stop there. Do you realize that the calendar used today by Judaism (the lunar calendar) was viewed as an apostate, awful thing by the Jews who wrote the book of *Jubilees* and who lived at Qumran (the Essenes) and the book of Enoch as well. Those are solar calendars. And those are the calendars they believed originated at the time of creation. Everything else was an inferior system. And you say, "Well, what about the Torah calendar and switching of the first day of the year, and so on and so forth?" They would still argue that that needs to be... Yes, you can change what the first day of the year is, but you still need to be using the solar calendar. Okay? This was a spiritual thing. This is what led to the split that created the Qumran community. This was a big deal for

them. Because now you're using a human calendar, one that you have to adjust by arbitrarily adding a month every now and then, as opposed to God's perfect mathematical calendar. This is an abomination. They never won that fight. That's the whole point of that first paragraph. Antiochus Epiphanes "changes the times" in the temple worship. They go back to the lunar calendar. They replace the solar calendar. Now back to Boccaccini:

The obvious implication of this hypothesis is that Daniel also used the solar calendar. Nevertheless, the book of Daniel itself is conspicuously absent in the discussion about the antiquity of the solar calendar that has involved many other Jewish documents. In fact, the chronological references in Daniel are apparently too obscure to infer any calendar [MH: at least that's the way it looks, he says]. While "the half week" of Daniel 9:27 and "a time, (two) times and a half time" of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 are symbolic, yet quite consistent indications of time, [MH: and] the "2,300 evenings and mornings" of Daniel 8:14 fall short of the three and a half years they should refer to, and [MH: to make matters worse] the "1290-1335 days" of Daniel 12:11-12 somehow go further [MH: in other words, they're not too short, they're too long]. While none of these figures explicitly supports the solar or lunar calendar, there are some indications that Daniel may have indeed used a solar calendar.

Now here's where it really gets dense. If you think it's dense now, just hang on, because it's going to get worse.

[I]n Daniel 12:11-12 the difference between 1,335 and 1,290 days is 45 days. This figure makes sense only if we have two consecutive 30-day months, one month plus a half (30+15), which is possible only in the solar calendar. Whoever wrote Daniel 12, therefore, knew a calendar in which the months were not calculated according to the moon, that is, in a sequence of 30-day and 29-day months. However, since Daniel 12:5-13 presents the "half week" (v. 7), the "1,290 days" (v. 11) and the "1,335 days" (v. 12) in a series, we should expect the same proportion between the "half week" and the 1,290 days. According to the 364-day calendar of *Jubilees* and Qumran, three and a half years equal 1,274 days. The addition of 16 days to reach 1,290 days, and a total of 61 days to reach 1,335 days, does not make much sense.

Let me just break in here. Because 16 and 61 are not divisible by 30. They're not half of 30 and it's not 30+30. So it doesn't make much sense. So he asks:

How many days does the "half week" count in Daniel?

The only ancient text that explicitly elaborates on the figure of Daniel [MH: this numerical figure] is the Revelation of John, and it is strikingly straightforward. The time of persecution is a period of "42 months" [MH: Revelation] (11:2; 13:5), or

30:00

[MH: it's described as] "1,260 days" (11:3; 12:6), or "a time, two times and a half time" (12:14). According to the book of Revelation, therefore, Daniel would have known a solar calendar of twelve 30-day months, which makes a year of 360 days. In fact, such a calendar allows us to establish a sensible relationship among the three calendrical references in Daniel 12. A consistent and proportioned series links the "half week" (1,260 days) to the 1,290 days ([MH: by virtue of] the addition of one 30-day month), which in turn becomes 1,335 days with the further addition of one 30-day month and a half [MH: 30-day month].

Accordingly, K. Marti and R. T. Beckwith have argued that Daniel followed the Mesopotamian calendar of 360 days [MH: this is where this originates] with the figures in Daniel 12:11-12 representing the addition of intercalary months [MH: that is inserting these other 30s and 15s in there]. That the ancient Jews were familiar with this calendar would be attested by the Flood narrative in Genesis, where the period from "the 17th day of the second month" to "the 17th day of the seventh month" is said to total "150 days," that is, five consecutive months of 30 days each [MH: it's solar calendar evidence] (Genesis 7:11, 24; 8:3-4).

But all evidence points to the fact that the solar calendar of the early Second Temple literature was a sabbatical one, that is, a calendar in which each day of the year fell on the same day of the week, year after year, which was not the case in the Mesopotamian calendar. The chronological indication of Daniel 10:4 makes sense only if "the 24th day of the first month" is Friday, and this is possible only if Daniel also used a sabbatical calendar [MH: so the question is]. How can Daniel use at the same time a 360-day calendar and a sabbatical one?

That's the end of Boccaccini for now. And that is indeed the question. Now the answer... You want to close your ears now if you're married to an early date of Daniel. [laughs] Okay? Just turn it off. Cover your ears. The answer is that Daniel shows awareness of two Second Temple period calendars: both the Enochian 364-day and the Zadokite (book of *Jubilees*) calendar, also 364 days. These two calendars differed on how they handled the solstices. One counted them as days and the other didn't. Daniel is a blend of the two in terms of its calculations. Now back to Boccaccini:

Every time Daniel refers to the period of Antiochus' persecution, particularly in the key prophecy of chapter 9, it gives the figure of "half a week [of years]" (Daniel 9:27; or "a time, two times and a half" in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7). In both halves of the outer frame around chapter 9, instead, we face slightly different chronological indications, the one approximate by deficiency (the 2,300 "evenings and mornings" of Daniel 8:14) and the other by excess (the "1,290-1,335 days" of Daniel 12:11-12).

Again, both of those numbers don't approximate what you'd expect with a solar calendar. One is a little short; the other is a little long. So Boccaccini says:

Obviously, the author expected some events to occur immediately before and immediately after the foretold death of Antiochus. As John J. Collins also acknowledges, in chapter 8 [MH: of Daniel] "the primary focus of the end is the restoration of the Temple cult," while "chapters 10-12 focus their hopes... on the resurrection of the dead."

The conflicting times of the end fit perfectly the overall theology of the book...

What he's going to start getting at here is, "We need to think about some of the numbers applying prior to the restoration of the temple cult (or in conjunction with the temple cult), and then other numbers looking forward to the resurrection of the dead. They sort of have two different things in view. And this is why we get some of these different numbers. So Boccaccini says:

The conflicting times of the end fit perfectly the overall theology of the book, which, as is now widely recognized by its interpreters, sprang from an apocalyptic circle different from the one that produced the Enochic lit. On one hand, against Enoch, Daniel does not view the Second Temple as impure and therefore argues in chapter 8 that God would restore the daily sacrifices before the end, as an act of justice owed to the Temple's legitimate cult.

35:00

Let me just stop there. So the Essenes (the people at Qumran, and Enoch) didn't like the priesthood that operated in Jerusalem. This is why they separated from it. They would've been cheering from the sidelines, "Yeah! Get rid of those sacrifices! Trash the place! Because they're using a pagan calendar anyway!" Daniel doesn't act like that. Daniel has God restoring the Temple cult—the Temple rituals. So it's a different perspective than you'd find in the book of Enoch and certain Dead Sea Scrolls. So back to Boccaccini. He makes that point and says:

On the other hand, the almost careless, yet ingenious, mechanism through which in chapter 12 the times of the end are progressively lengthened and desynchronized, emphasizes another tenet of Daniel's theology: the distinction between the collective destiny of Israel and the destiny of each individual. Daniel rejects the Enochic claim that angelic sin has substantially deprived human beings of personal freedom, the ability to endure, and responsibility.

Now let me just pause there. Boccaccini's not saying that Daniel rejects the idea that the Watchers contributed to human sin. Rather, Daniel is rejecting the Enochian notion (the Enochians were basically fatalists) that because of this problem—because of this fiddling—your personal... They're to blame. The

Watchers are to blame, which can be used as an excuse for individual accountability and responsibility. The Qumran literature talks about two lots and two spirits and two destinies. It's very predestinarian and very pessimistic in terms of your ability to move from one column to the other. So Daniel is not going there. He's not taking the Watcher idea to such an extent that people are kind of locked in, and their fate is what their fate is, and they're sort of... Daniel's rejecting double predestinarianism here. That's his point. So back to Boccaccini:

For the judgment of individuals, it therefore looks beyond the time in which God would set an end to history and establish the everlasting kingdom of Israel. The judgment of the nations [MH: in Daniel] (chapter 7) and the judgment of the individuals (chapter 12) are not synchronic.

The 360+4-day calendar adds new and surprisingly meaningful nuances to Daniel's discourse about the times of the end. The piece of information provided by Revelation was accurate. For the Zadokite calendar, the year indeed counted "1,260 days."

As we have already noticed, this allows us to establish a sensible and coherent relationship between the three calendrical references in Daniel 12. The extra times of thirty and forty-five days at the end of the seventy weeks of years cannot possibly refer to any kind of [MH: added] months. Even though we do not know how and just how often the 360+4-day calendar was intercalated [MH: added to] on the basis of the observation of equinoxes and solstices, the sabbatical nature of the Zadokite calendar required the addition of weeks, not months, so that the appointed times for festivals were not changed. The meaning of the calendrical indications of Daniel 12:11-12 must be found elsewhere. By skillfully exploiting the richness of the cultic calendar, the text depicts a sort of spiritual itinerary of preparation for the individual. First, one month is given, the month of Passover, so that 1,290 days are completed [MH: 1260+30]. Then, one and a half more months are added [MH: to get] (1,335 days) to reach the third month, which according to the Zadokite calendar was the "month of the oaths" (2 Chronicles 15:10-15; cf. *Jubilees*). And with the 15th of the third month being the feast of Shevu'ot, what date could be more appropriate than the feast of the renewal of the covenant for the celebration of the final judgment?

So let me just stop there. I mean, he deals with the 2300 evenings and mornings and how that actually... That reference in Daniel actually makes sense if Daniel is calculating for... He doesn't use the term. But if he's calculating for Hanukkah, it makes sense. That calculation actually works if it's referring to this period associated with the restoration of the temple. But these other numbers are about something in the future—an eschatological resurrection—the Day of the Lord and the resurrection. So the 2300 evenings and mornings is referencing Second Temple Jewish events associated with the devastation of the temple under

40:00

Antiochus and its restoration, which involves what we know today as Hanukkah. But the other numbers (the 1260, the 1290, the 1335), that's eschatological. Okay? So you have to separate out the numbers. One is associated with one historical period already passed. The other one is eschatological. And the numbers have historical, coherent meaning and theological meaning if you do that.

But here's the point. To do it you have to use the Zadokite calendar. And that is only known from the Second Temple period. So I'm wondering if you're catching the implication already: whoever wrote Daniel had to know that calendar. And that puts at least part of Daniel in the Second Temple period. Now you might argue that part of Daniel was written earlier (the early date of the 6th century), but this stuff *has* to be late date to make sense. That's the point.

Now that's sort of an extraneous issue, but if you're tracking with this and if you want to make sense of the numbers, historically and eschatologically, that's the only way it makes sense within a Jewish/Old Testament/Second Temple Jewish context. You *have* to be using this calendar. Okay?

Now let's go back here and ask, "Well, how does this relate to Revelation 11?" Again, it relates in terms of the use of some of these numbers from Daniel. Whoever's writing Revelation 11 (John) is on eschatological turf. And so the question is, "How does this work out in his eschatological system?" And I'm going to suggest to you that the key element is going to be this: to observe the content of Revelation 11 and 12... Because they're going to use the same language in both chapters. One will use a number and the other one will say "time, times, and half a time." They're talking about the same thing. You have to understand these numbers and their system in tandem (Revelation 11 and Revelation 12). Okay? That's key. And the second key element is, there's a lot of Day of the Lord language here, which in our parlance (our prophecy talk) is at the *end* of the tribulation. Okay? Day of the Lord. Final judgment. So with that in mind... Again, I could go a whole lot deeper into Boccaccini. He does all the math. How all of it works out to the *day*. I mean, he actually [laughs] says this. He says:

In Daniel's calculation, the fall equinox of 167 BCE marks the division of time with the middle of the last week of years and the beginning of Antiochus' persecution. From that time, the text asks us to count 2,300 evenings and mornings (not "days," which we now understand, would not have included the additional times between seasons in the Zadokite calendar).

He actually has a precise... He dates the events using Daniel—aligning them with Daniel—to the day of the events that we know in relation to the abomination committed by Antiochus. Believe it or not, it makes sense, again, if you have this particular calendar in your head. So let's not go drift back into that.

Let's talk a little bit about the two witnesses and get into the language of Daniel 11 and 12 and the Day of the Lord stuff. Because that's ultimately what we want to be thinking about. So you look at the two witnesses. Now I'm going to presume that the two witnesses (for the sake of the episode here) are symbols of God's people. Either we have God's people being delivered by miracles in line with the Exodus plague imagery (again, there's some clear Exodus stuff here) or we have two people who breathe fire. Okay? Let's go back and look at Revelation 11 and read. My point here is, let's be consistent. It's easy to talk about literal two people (Enoch and Elijah or Enoch and Moses, or whoever) but then skip over the stuff that's just crazy town. So here we have the two witnesses.

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes.

45:00

Really? Like, Enoch and Elijah come back and they can breathe fire?

If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying,

Now people say, "Oh, yeah, Elijah did that!"

...and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood...

Moses did that!

...and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

Moses again! Vote for Moses!

"And then when they had finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit" kills them, and then they lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days, and then they're raised. "It's all literal! It's all literal!" Yeah, except the line about fire pouring from their mouths. What about that? "Well, that's figurative." Okay, if that's figurative, why isn't the other stuff figurative? "Well, because we need two prophets to do that stuff." Again, why can't it be a reference... Why can't each of the two witnesses represent the people of God? Prophets did that too. They were divinely appointed to speak on behalf of God to his people and for his people on different occasions. Why don't we interpret all of it one way, as opposed to most of it one way, and then when it doesn't work, we do it the other way? Again, I'm just suggesting to you, we might want to think a little bit differently about it so that we don't have this consistency problem.

But anyway, I'm going to assume that they are symbolic. And I'm really going to do that, not because of this (the inconsistency thing). I'm going to do it because of the Day of the Lord stuff. So again, we don't have two literal humans breathing fire here. I would say it's also symbolic because of the point of reference of the two witnesses. The two witnesses are the two "sons of oil" (and it's olive oil), the *beney-yitshar*, from Zechariah 4:11-12. So let's just read Zechariah 4. This is where the two witnesses stuff comes from.

11 Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"

This is the vision of the lampstand. We've been in Zechariah 4 several times. I'm not going to read the whole thing here. If I need to dip into it before we're done here, I'll do that. But you know, Zechariah asks, "What are these two olive trees on the right and left of the lampstand?"

12 And a second time I answered and said to him, "What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?" 13 He said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 14 Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones [MH: these "sons of oil"] who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

Okay? The language here... This is also the passage about... Let's just go up here to the beginning of Zechariah 4. This we've had already before.

And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. 3 And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." 4 And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 6 Then he said to me [MH: now catch what he says here], "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

Where have we heard that before? It's from Hosea 1:7. And this is the chapter where God forsakes his people, and he calls them *Lo-Ammi* (not my people). And it talks about the restoration of the people of God (Israel, corporate). The point is that when the angel and the prophet have this conversation... This is a

vision, by the way. It's a heavenly vision. And we've seen elsewhere that "the eyes of the Lord..." "These seven are the eyes of the Lord," the chapter goes on, "that range through the whole earth," and the two olive trees on right and the left of the lampstand. It's all part of the same vision. The eyes of the Lord are the members of the Divine Council. Remember we had this about the heavenly books and so on and so forth? This is a heavenly vision with heavenly things (heavenly creatures—supernatural beings). And then we get this reference to the restoration by the Spirit of the people of God. It's language ("Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit") in Zechariah drawn from Hosea chapter 1, which is the restoration of the people of God. Again, it's not two individual guys. It's something bigger than that. The two "sons of oil" represent the redeemed people of God. Let's just put that in our heads here.

50:00

Going back to Daniel 12, the "extra time" added for "future hopes" that we read about... We're not concerned with the stuff that's already past history that is associated with Hanukkah, the 2300 days. We're concerned about the other stuff. Let's just do some imagining here. Let's just do a little bit out-of-the-box thinking. We're going to try to think symbolically here. We today as believers are not looking for the restoration of a literal temple cult—a literal temple again. Why? Because we believe that the book of Hebrews is correct. Sacrifices will not come back if Christ's high priestly work is sufficient for all believers. It either is or it isn't. His atoning death covered all people yet future to that death. Jesus died 30-some A.D. or whatever. His death was sufficient for you and me, listening to and doing this podcast. Okay? His death covered all people yet future. It makes zero sense to say it atoned for us but not people living in the millennium. It makes no sense at all. And it creates a contradiction with the book of Hebrews.

Now it's at this point where I've heard people say, "Well, the sacrifices will explain to Jewish people what Jesus did. And so all this prophecy stuff in Revelation 11 *requires* that the temple be rebuilt, even if the temple was destroyed. We know it was, and we don't really care necessarily how that affects or doesn't affect when the book was written. It doesn't give us an absolute answer." Okay. It doesn't. But, "The temple is gone now, so we need a new temple and the new cult, and then all these things that John and Daniel talked about in the original vision about the abomination of desolation, that requires a temple! Okay? That requires a temple." Why do we need a temple? "Well, it's going to explain to Jewish people what Jesus did, and the sacrifices are going to come back, and temple, temple, temple, temple..." Now of course, the temple might get rebuilt, but my position is that it has nothing to do with a prophecy. There's nothing requiring the temple. Why? Because the book of Hebrews is right. It makes no sense for us as believers. We're talking about the return of *Jesus*. We're not talking about the first arrival of some messiah that *isn't* Jesus. Okay? We're talking about the second coming—the return of Jesus. If the death of Jesus was sufficient (the book of Hebrews says it is) then we do not need (or we shouldn't even look for) the temple system to come back. It makes no sense

to say it'll explain to Jewish people what Jesus did. You know why? Because Jewish people today come to the Lord all the time. They don't need the temple restored. They don't need the sacrificial system restored. You know what they need? They need you to hand them a New Testament. They need you to present the gospel. That's how they come to the Lord. "Well, I'd love to witness to you and lead you to Christ, but first we have to have this temple rebuilt and then when you watch us kill an animal, then you'll understand." It's just absurd. But I hear it a lot. It's absurd. Jewish people come to the Lord every day without any of this.

So let's just try to throw out of our heads this thing that we think is needed for the abomination stuff to happen, for the two witnesses to happen, the measuring of the temple court and all this stuff. What if the two witnesses simply refer to the people of God? Let's just go from that point and kind of see, "Where would that leave us?" And Jews of Jesus' day, of course, would've considered Daniel's 70 weeks and the abomination and all this stuff to have already happened back with Antiochus. He was a jerk. But Jesus alludes to the abomination being yet future. We all know this from Matthew 24. So it might sound to some like Jesus' own prediction of the abomination yet to come was fulfilled in 70 A.D. Well, if that's the case, why didn't Jesus return then? Because the abomination and the return of the son of man are linked in Matthew 24:29. It says, "Immediately after" the abomination, the Lord is going to come. It doesn't say "eons later." It says "immediately after." Go look it up. So 70 A.D. doesn't really seem to be the referent point there. Otherwise, like, how did we miss the second coming?

Let's ask another question. Does abomination really mean the destruction of the temple? See, everybody sort of assumes that the abomination requires a literal temple and the temple is going to get desecrated and maybe destroyed.

55:00

"Because look at what Antiochus did. He's the type of the Antichrist." Well, he is. But you know what? He didn't destroy the temple. So how can 70 A.D. (the destruction of the temple) be a reenactment of the abomination? Why not just defile it instead of destroy it? Hmm. Again, my point is that maybe 70 A.D. doesn't really work for a great reenactment, even though some think it does. Is there any reason to take Revelation 11 as pointing more to the eschaton than 70 A.D., like beyond 70 A.D.?

So let's read Revelation 11. Go back there. We have a few minutes left here. Revelation 11:15-19. Now just listen to the language. This is the rest of Revelation 11, after you get through the two witnesses stuff. That's the part that everybody reads. But the seventh trumpet is 15-19. Now just listen to this.

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ..."

Well, that certainly didn't happen in 70 A.D.

This sounds like end of the world... This is one of the outcomes of the Day of the Lord.

**¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying,
“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who is and who was,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.
¹⁸ The nations raged,
but your wrath came...**

Remember “Why do the nations rage?” from Psalm 2? Some of these early psalms—these messianic psalms.

**¹⁸ The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,**

It's Day of the Lord. It's final judgment stuff.

**...and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”**

There would be your human and your supernatural (the fallen gods) getting what they deserve. Again, it's Day of the Lord language.

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

It's Sinai imagery all over again—God making a covenant with his people, tying together the things that are happening now with the moment when God created his people anew, bringing them out of Egypt. Let's try to think bigger—try to think more abstractly. Again, this is obviously Day of the Lord stuff. It's not 70 A.D. It's something far future. Okay?

So in Revelation 11, let's go back to the numbers. You get these 1260 days, the two witnesses, all this kind of stuff. What if the two witnesses represent the people of God and their opposition to the Gentiles overrunning the outer court by prophesying (speaking for God, of course)... What if that mimics the earlier (in Daniel's day, or at least Daniel's textual day)... What he's describing in Daniel 8-11, is what I'm trying to say. What if that's mimicking the intertestamental national Jewish opposition to the defilement in the Maccabean period? That is, they resisted paganism back then. They resisted persecution of their temple. They're protecting sacred space. Maybe our time or a future time... Maybe this is about resisting the same thing, but in terms of the Church, which is Christ's body, which is the temple of God. This is New Testament theology—Temple of God, body of Christ. Who do the two witnesses represent then? Again, I would say they need to be understood in tandem with Revelation 12. Let's go read Revelation 12:13-17.

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

Remember the woman giving birth in Revelation 12? The woman is Israel, because she's giving birth to the messiah. Okay?

...he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

By the way, the two wings reference there, it's a reference back to Exodus 19. "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings." Again, Israel, people of God, borne on eagles' wings. There you go. Israel's the woman here.

1:00:00

¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.

Hmm, he wants to get rid of them with water. I wonder what that sounds like.

¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring...

Who's the rest of Israel's offspring? Is it ethnic Jews only, or is it the children of Abraham who are also Gentiles? In other words, is it the Church? Well, I think the next line kind of qualifies that. Let me read the whole verse.

17 Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Okay, your unbelieving ethnic Jew does not “hold to the testimony of Jesus.” So what I'm suggesting is that if you take the language of Revelation 12, the persecution of Israel, and really even bigger than Israel—the people of God who follow Jesus (and they're linked to this 1260 day stuff and the “time, times, and half a time” stuff in Revelation 12)—maybe we should look in Revelation 11 for the same language and define the two witnesses as the people of God—again, symbolically. And you know what's really cool? If you loop this Zadokite calendar into this...

Here's the last thought for the day. If you loop this Zadokite calendar into this... Remember how the extra days, that you go from 1260 to 1290 to 1335? The last one ends with the Shevu'ot feast? It's the feast of Weeks. What's the feast of Weeks celebrate in the Old Testament? The feast of Weeks celebrated when the harvest had been brought in. Remember the Gospels? “The fields are white unto harvest.” In other words, this calendar ends when all believers are gathered. The gathering of believers, the harvest is accomplished, the fullness of the Gentiles is complete. And the Gentiles are the children of Abraham, according to Galatians 3. What if that's how we're supposed to read Revelation 11? Hmm.

Again, I'm just going to can it there. I realize this is a long episode. It's dense. And that's intentional. *All* of this is speculation. Even informed speculation is speculation. So let's be honest. I'm hoping we learn something, though, more general. Skip the mind-numbing chronological calendar details. I did that deliberately to show you how dense and granular this gets. And I didn't even get into Boccaccini's math for the whole period. What I want you to learn is prophetic material is deeply complex and ultimately ambiguous at points. So again, if you have prophecy books on your shelf that don't get into these weeds—don't get into the Second Temple context and the calendar and all this stuff—throw them away. They are not data-driven, at least they're not as data-driven as they could be. In the end, there's no precise clarity *by design*.

So we're looping all the way back to Mike's view of prophecy, which is, “It was cryptic the first time intentionally, and it's going to work the same way the second time around, by design.” We don't want cosmic enemies being able to just look up in a passage what God intends to do and how he intends to do it, do we? That makes their job too easy. That is not the way it worked the first time around, and it ain't going to be the way it works the second time around. So I just want to give

1:05:00

you a sense for how deep the rabbit hole can go. And if we take that away from this episode, I'll consider that mission accomplished. There are lots of ways you can think about this. Let's try (at least in part) to think about Zechariah 4, which loops back to Hosea 1, people of God. Who are the people of God now? According to Revelation 12, it's the children of the woman who is Israel, who follow the testimony of Jesus. Okay? So again, just trajectories that you can think about. It's all speculation as to how it will all play out. I fully acknowledge that. But maybe it's more meaty—it's more substantial—speculation as far as trying to attach these things to the text. So next time we're going to get into Revelation 12. We're not going to repeat the astronomy stuff because we did that in a separate episode. But I'll remind you of that when we get to the next episode in Revelation 12. And we will get through that. But this is the thought trajectory for both this chapter and the next chapter that I'm going to take.

TS: Yeah, I enjoy the “down the rabbit hole” episodes. And so just to sum up again, you're saying that the two witnesses could be God's people, right?

MH: Yes.

TS: Why not just say “my witnesses” then? Why put a number to it? You know? That's... Just to be more cryptic? Is that what you're saying?

MH: The numbers are to loop back to Daniel. And if you remember... How can we remember, because it's just so dense.

TS: Yeah.

MH: The numbers in Daniel, some of the numbers refer to the Maccabean period, when Antiochus is alive and doing his thing (defiling the temple). The other ones are rooted in the resurrection of the dead at the last day. The three numbers that are rooted in Daniel to the resurrection are the 1260, the 1290, and the 1335. And the 1260 is what John plays off on. And if you do the math that Boccaccini suggests, it takes you into... The first added 30 days takes you to Passover. So isn't that interesting? We've got the 1260 mentioned by John. Passover is about what? It's about Jesus. Jesus is our Passover lamb. And you know, when the Lord comes back at the Day of the Lord, you know what we're going to be doing? We're going to be having a feast. It's the marriage supper of the Lamb. So again, it's a way of aligning something like the marriage supper (the meal with God) by adding those 30 days. Now we have 1290. We have the 1290 in Daniel and we have the marriage supper of the Lamb in the book of Revelation. And then if you add the extra days more, you come out to the feast of Weeks in the Israelite calendar, which again is the time when you commemorate that the harvest has been brought in. It's done. The work is done. Which is where Daniel 11-12 leaves us. It leaves us right at the moment of the resurrection, the punishment of the wicked, those who destroy the earth, are annihilated.

Conceptually, you could see how this works. But again, there isn't a set of verses that say, "Okay, here's how you put this language together with Daniel." The best it can do is suggest it. And so that's where we're left, "Have we guessed correctly? Have we connected dots correctly or not?" And we're never going to come out with the answer to knowing with precision whether we've aligned things with complete accuracy or not. And that's just the nature of the whole enterprise.

TS: The nature of the beast.

MH: [laughs] No pun intended, right? [laughter] I don't want to touch that one.

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