

EP79 Revelation 11 verse 1 P1

Overview: The Sanctuary of God; The Final Division; The 2 Witnesses (Their Persecution, Death, and Resurrection); the Second Woe; the Seventh Trumpet; the Rapture; and the Preparation for the Time of Wrath.

This chapter breaks down in two major sections. The first section in verses **1-14** deals with the story of the two witnesses, all of which is part of the **second woe**. If you remember, at the end of **Revelation 8**, there was an eagle flying in mid-heaven, now saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who are now dwelling on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are now being about to sound."

The **first woe** was associated with the sounding of the 5th Trumpet which results in the release from the Abyss of the Beast and the locust-like demons with scorpion tails. Upon their release, these locust-like demons' sting those who do not have the mark or the seal/signet of God on their forehead, and for five months those stung will writhe in terrible agony. The agony will be so bad that they will seek death, but will not find it, for death will flee from them. All of this is part of the **first woe**.

The **second woe** extends from the blowing of the 6th Trumpet through the blowing of the 7th Trumpet. With the blowing of the 6th Trumpet, that huge, incalculable, demonic army was released from the area of the Euphrates River, and they burst forth upon the earth killing one-third of mankind by the means of fire and smoke and brimstone.

And then to complete the **second woe**, there is the story of the two witnesses, which includes their ministry, persecution, death, resurrection, and rapture. All of this is associated with the blowing of the 7th Trumpet and God, "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel," wrapping up, or bringing to completion, the *mystery* that was revealed to His servants the prophets.

The second section in verses **15-19**, addresses the impact of the blowing of the 7th Trumpet. This great event makes room for the **third woe** as God takes back His great power and authority away from those to whom He had granted agency authority to rule the earth, and He now begins to personally reign and destroy those who are now destroying the earth.

So, let us start in the first section (verses **1-14**) and complete what is known as the **second woe**.

Revelation 11:1-14

Then there was given me a reed, similar to a rod; **now** saying, "You are commanded to **now** get up and commanded to measure the Sanctuary of God and the altar, and those who are **now** worshipping in it. You are commanded to leave out the court which is outside the Sanctuary and do not measure it, for it has been caused to be given to the collective of peoples; and they will tread the holy city for forty-two months.

And I will grant this to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, having chosen to being clothed in sackcloth. These **now** are the two olive trees and the two lampstands

that before the Lord of the earth have been standing.

And if anyone **now** wants to harm them, fire **now** chooses to flow [discharge, project] out of their mouth and **now** devours their enemies; so, if anyone wants to harm them, he must be caused to **now** be killed in this way. These **now** have the authority to shut up the sky, so that rain will **now** not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they **now** have authority over the waters to **now** turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every wound [or calamity], as often as they may desire.

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that is now ascending up out of the abyss will make war with them and overcome them and kill them. And their dead body in the street of the great city which spiritually is **now** caused to be called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was caused to be crucified.

Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will **now** look at their dead bodies for three and a half days and will not **now** permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who are **now** dwelling on the earth will **now** rejoice over them and **now** be caused to celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who are **now** dwelling on the earth.

But after the three and a half days, the breath [or Spirit] of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who are **now** watching them. And they heard a great voice from heaven **now** saying to them, "*You are commanded to come up here.*" Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

And in that hour, there was chosen to be a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; names of seven thousand men were caused to be killed in the earthquake, and the rest chose to become terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The second woe is past; behold, the third woe now chooses to come quickly.

Layers of Time

This is one of the most time layered passages in **Revelation** and therefore one of the most misunderstood. The **Code** seems to go crazy utilizing the *aorist*, *future*, and the *present* tense in a way that layer's time like the layers of a cake. In one slice of the cake, there are layers that deal with the time near and surrounding the blowing of the 7th Trumpet. In another layer, it seems to address the entire first 3.5-year period. And still in another layer, the time before the tribulation where the witness of God is active.

Synonymic Explosion

In addition, the Spirit uses many synonymous metaphors (**Code**) to describe the same thing or event, in the same sentence even, all of which indicates a very important point or shift that He wants us to understand. It can, however, be overwhelming to keep track of it all, but if we are careful to pay attention to these shifts, we discover amazing truths in each of these synonymic shifts.

The Intentionality of the Spirit

As you might expect, with all these **Code** shifts and synonyms, this is an exceedingly difficult chapter to understand. Therefore, we must keep at the forefront of our minds the truth that the Spirit is always intentional and extremely precise; after all, not one little stroke or letter of the law was in error or misplaced. In fact, *“it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the letter of the law to fail.”*¹

The point being is that these **Code** shifts and synonymic images are not to be passed over or dismissed, for they are intentioned for our understanding. Without them, the narrative becomes subject to the creative storytelling and the fictions of man.

The Spirit’s Interpretation

In addition, as the Spirit said, *“But **now** be knowing this **first of all**, that no prophecy of scripture is of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men **now** caused to be moving by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”*² His point is that these difficult passages are not open for interpretation by the various modalities of religious opinion or frameworks of theological thought, which by-in-large choose to ignore or outright dismiss the **Code**.

The Spirit has spoken exactly as He intentioned, and He has a meaning that He wants us to understand, not many meanings, but a meaning. However, our only chance of understanding His meaning, His interpretation, is if we give not just credence to, but our utmost attention to, how He said things, why He said things, what He didn’t say, and then seek Him to grant us understanding of how it all fits together.

If we ignore even the smallest stroke or letter, or **Code** shift or synonym, for that matter, we increase our likelihood of missing His meaning and twisting His words to fit our own interpretation and not His. Again, the Spirit has a very specific meaning of each word and phrase that He wants us to understand, an interpretation from His point of view and not ours.

Fiction Alert

FICTION ALERT

In the modern fictions about the **End Times**, there is this tendency to suddenly give a literal *interpretation* to segments of **Revelation 11** while interpreting other portions as pictures. For instance, stating that because the church was raptured before the tribulation even began, God in His mercy will bring forth 2 witnesses, 2 individual men, to witness to the world in these final days. And the list of who they might be extends from Moses to Elijah to Enoch, and so on. In substitution of the role of the church, they preach to the world and cause their own sort of chaos amongst humanity until the Beast shuts them

¹ **Luke 16:17**. See also **Matthew 5:1**

² **2 Peter 1:20-21**

down and kills them.

But sticking to the **Code**, it is extremely difficult to take a strictly *literal* approach to the text, for there is nothing in the text to suggest that we are no longer seeing a spiritual view of things from the lens of the heavenlies, or that John's view has switched to the earthly. There was no command uttered for John to "come down to the earth" like there was when God said, "*come up here*," and called John up to the heavenly realms to see things from His perspective.

After all, the Spirit said these two witnesses **now are** the two olive trees and two lampstands that have been standing before the Lord. He did not say they "are like" or "similar to" (and with "**are**" being rendered in the *present active indicative*, we know it is a statement of fact, even now).

Moreover, as impressive as it might be, I do not think we are to understand this passage to mean that there are going to literally be two olive trees and two lampstands running around the nations prophesying to everyone. Way too cartoonish. In addition, fire comes from the mouths of these 2 witnesses devouring all those who oppose them. Did God suddenly make these 2 men dragon-like fire breathers? I do not think so; again, way too cartoonish. It is just an image which conveys a powerful reality of the judgment they speak forth.

Then there is the fact that the Beast wages war against two witnesses. Really? The Beast with all his satanic power, demonic masses, and a mighty army of many nations is going to wage "war" against two little dudes hanging out in Jerusalem? Ok, maybe if it said a no holds barred MMA fight, a 15 round boxing match, or a wrestling match, I could take it more literally, but not a "war" against two individual people. That is way too overkill. You go to war against many, not against two individuals. Clearly, we are not to view this as a literal description of the activities of two individual fire-breathing men; rather, the image of two witnesses captures a bigger picture.

In addition, we are confronted with the **mystical 3.5** number found in the **Code**, which throughout the **Codex** is expressed in various ways: 42 months, 1,260 days, 3.5 months, and time, times, and half a time. With all of them being an expression of 3.5 years, are they speaking of the same or different time periods? And then what about 3.5 days? The Spirit just had to throw that one in there as well.

The **Codex** provides us with the answers, but we will have to carefully unpack these images. With that said, it should be clear that the Spirit still has us dealing with images and pictures and numbers, and there is nothing that leads us to believe that the structure of this book suddenly shifted to a *literal* format. Thus, even the two witnesses are an image to be unpacked and understood.

The Measurement—A Separating/Culling

Revelation 11:1-2

Then there was given me a reed, similar to a rod; **now** saying, "You are commanded to **now** get up and commanded to measure the Sanctuary of God and the altar, and those who are **now** worshipping in it. You are commanded to leave out the court which is outside the Sanctuary and do not measure it, for it has been caused to be given to the collective of peoples; and they will tread the holy city for forty-two months.

Ownership & Possession

Let's set something straight at the onset. One does not go and measure something unless there is a reason to cause a separation or to define something—for example, the boundary of a parcel of property, the size of a room, or something similar. One measures for ownership and for clarity purposes.

In this instance, God wanted John to clearly define a segment or a portion of the “temple” at large—the Sanctuary and the altar, and all those who are now worshiping there. Through this measurement, we are to understand that God wants this specific segment, which is the courtyard of the priests, to be separated from the rest of the temple.

This is the final division in-and-amongst the people of God. This is the final division of all those within His household. This is a culling of the Chosen of the Chosen, the sons of God, from all in the household of God who insist on living as slaves.

AS WE HAVE BEEN WARNED, “THE TIME IS UP” AND “THE TIME IS NOW!”

This measurement should give us an idea that something is soon ready to change, or something is soon going to happen, and this division will be critical. In this image, God is staking ownership of His property, staking claim to His personal possessions.³

Personal Participation

*“You are commanded to **now** get up and commanded to measure the Sanctuary of God and the altar, and those who are **now** worshiping in it.”* This is the second time that John was asked to directly participate in one of the images he was shown. The first being when he was commanded to eat the little scroll. The point of God having John do the measurement is that this is all to be understood and taken extremely personal. Just as God wanted John to internalize the contents of the little scroll such that they became a part of him and infused into his being, He now wants John to have a roll in the division of those within the household of God. This is not an easy task, for this measurement is about division and a final separation.

Internalization

The purpose for John's required participation in this vision becomes clear later on when he wrote **1st**, **2nd**, and **3rd**, **John**, and the Spirit spoke through him all about division from within the household of God (Separating those who love with God's *agape* love from all those who don't).

Clearly, he internalized the message. In each of these letters, the Spirit divides between those who know God and love with His *agape* love, and those who say they know God but don't actually know Him, for they do not now love with His *agape* love. These letters act like a threshing instrument tearing at the vestiges of religion from those who are delusional thinking that they are good with God because they are

³ See **1 Peter 2:9**; **Titus 2:14**

in the service of God, convinced they have the light all the while abiding in darkness.

So, it seems that throughout His life, the Spirit continued to use John to measure the Sanctuary, the altar, and those who are now worshipping in it separate and distinct from those who find their place in the temple at large.

Why a Reed? – the House of God

“Then there was given me a reed, similar to a rod...” A reed (what grows in the wetlands, or perhaps something like a stalk of corn), not a stick or a rod, but specifically a reed was given to John. This reed was similar to a rod, but it was NOT a rod, it was a reed. In the Greek, there are different words for “reed” (*“kalamos”*) and for “rod” (*“rhabdo”*), and the Spirit wants to make sure that we do not confuse the two. This is a reed and NOT a rod, just a reed that is similar to a rod.

A reed sure does seem like an odd choice for a measuring device. A reed can be a bit flaccid. It does not seem like an ideal tool to obtain exacting measurement. Why not a rod, a branch, a stick, or for that matter, why not a line (a rope)? All of those would be a more stable measuring instrument, but for some reason, God wants a reed to be used as the **standard for measurement**.

A reed that is similar to a rod, but not a rod may seem like a trivial little detail, but is it? Or is the Spirit making a point that He does not want us to miss? For instance, a rod is a dense instrument making it extremely hard, whereas a “reed” tends to have a hollow middle and is easily breakable.

For some odd reason, when it comes to measuring the dimensions of the house of God, whether the Sanctuary (in Greek, the *“naos”*) or the temple at large (in Greek, the *“hieron”*), God’s tool of choice for a measuring device is a reed.

For instance, the prophet Ezekiel once saw a vision of an angel who had a measuring reed. This angel was instructed by God to go out and measure the house (by the way, throughout the passage, what he was measuring is translated as “temple,” but in the Hebrew it is very specific in using the term *“house”*).⁴ And it is important to note that at the time when Ezekiel was writing, the temple built by Solomon had already been destroyed by the Babylonians. It no longer existed.

However, given the measurements of that *“house”* and its description (which describes events that occur only in the temple), it is pretty clear that the entire vision of the house is a symbol, a picture of a temple like structure, but which is meant to be understood as a “house” for those in the household of God.

In fact, we are told that its description was given for the specific purpose of causing contrition in the hearts and minds of the Jews. It was intended to remind them not only of what they had lost in the past through their rejection of **Yahweh**, but what they will not have access to in the future if they do not let God be to them their righteousness. The instruction (translated as “law”) of that house is complete holiness. In fact, the entire area of and around the house, most holy.⁵ This is an instruction (or “law”) that can only be brought to reality through **Yahweh Tsidkenu**, as He is the only one who is righteous.

⁴ **Ezekiel 40-43**

⁵ **Ezekiel 43:10-12**

Similarly, in **Revelation 21:15**, we are given a picture of the New Jerusalem, the holy city, and it also is measured with a reed, but this time with a **golden** measuring reed. How odd! Why would God take a worthless reed and coat it in gold?

So, the question still looms. Why a reed?

The House of God

To start, the tabernacle structure (including its courtyard) or later on the Sanctuary and the temple at large, provides us a picture, a symbol, of those who occupy the household of God (not a physical structure, but His household as He sees it). This is imaged through the collection of people who are permitted to enter into His household. As we know, not everyone was permitted to enter onto His temple grounds, but only those whom God specifically designated. More on that in a bit.

Within God's household, there are the priests of God, those who occupy and worship in the Holy Place, which is also known as the Sanctuary (or the "Tabernacle"). There are also those in His household who occupy and worship in the temple at large. However, they are **NOT** permitted into the Sanctuary, for only the priests can enter the Sanctuary.

By the way, when it came to the physical tabernacle and the temple, any unauthorized entry was a capital offense. And finally, we should also take note that within the household of God, there are angels who are ministering spirits sent to minister to those who are even now being heirs of salvation.⁶

To translate this into the nomenclature we have been using, the **Chosen** of God are His royal priesthood (a Chosen race, a holy people, the people of God, a people for God's own possession—yet we will find that even they will be divided by the measurement).⁷ The **Called** of God are those who have been converted by God and brought into His household. They are those who occupy and worship **Yahweh** in the temple at large and are not permitted into the Sanctuary. Why? They have not dug down deep in their soul and made the choice to become a little child dependent upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time. That is a requirement of His priesthood. But as with Ishmael whose home was once found within Abraham's tent, they too WILL NOT inherit the kingdom of God.⁸

In short, the House or the temple of God represents real people who are all apart of God's household. Thus, it is not a place for the unbelieving people groups in the world. Thus, whether the image is communicated as the tabernacle, the Sanctuary, the temple, the house of God, or the New Jerusalem, the holy city, these images are a picture of **Yahweh** providing to His people a gathering place, a house, where they can gain personal access to Him.

We ultimately see this fulfilled in our **Eternity Then**, for in **Revelation 21:22** we find that in the New Jerusalem, the holy city, there is no Sanctuary in it, for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb are its Sanctuary. This depicts a merger that will take place between **Yahweh** and the people of **Yahweh**, as they will be one.

⁶ See **Hebrews 1:7, 14**

⁷ **1 Peter 2:9**

⁸ See **Matthew 18:3; Galatians 4:21-30**

A Human Measurement (and Angelic)

Now, there is an odd little statement later on in **Revelation 21:17** that gives us some understanding as to why God uses a reed for measuring His household. The measurement with the reed, which is expressed in cubits, is a **human and an angelic measurement**. We will find, however, that this comment is not meant to focus us so much on the idea of “cubits” being a human/angelic measurement, but on the idea that the reed, expressed in cubits, measures, or is a measurement of both, humanity and the angelic.

Ok, so where does that leave us, and what in the world did that mean?

Well, it should not surprise us that in the **Codex** we are given a passage where the Spirit equates humanity to a reed. In **Isaiah 42:1-4**, **Yahweh** gives us a description of the Messiah and how He will deal with humanity. *“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the street. **A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick** He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”*

Thus, the Spirit uses the image of a **“reed,”** a flaccid instrument, a bruised instrument, as well as a **“dimly burning wick”** (the importance of which will soon be revealed), as a picture of humanity.

We should also keep in mind that like humanity, the angelic have also proven that they too can be somewhat flaccid; hence, their need to be judged by this standard of humanity. That may sound odd, but the **Codex** is clear that the angels will be judged (or measured) as mere men are judged/measured. Moreover, their judge surprisingly will not be God, but mere men (“mere men” being those who are the bondservants of Jesus Christ).⁹ Thus, the **“reed”** is both a human and angelic measuring device.

The point is that in judging the household of God (humans and angels), the measurement is not the law (a firm and stiff unbendable rod), but it is a measurement of weak and somewhat broken humanity based upon the light burden that **Yahweh** has asked mankind to bear, which is to now be believing by choosing to be yoked to **Yahweh by grace through faith**.¹⁰

Why Like a Rod?

“...a reed similar to a rod...” The Spirit also makes the point that though the measurement of the Sanctuary will be a measurement based on wounded humanity who lives by grace-through-faith, this **“reed”** will function like a rod (it will be similar in appearance or character). Thus, despite the inherently flexible nature of the instrument that is used as a measuring device, there will be no inaccurate measurements, for in this instance, the **“reed”** will have a stiffness, just like a rod. The measurements will be exacting.

This points to the fact that even the bruised reed (the person who has been so wounded throughout their lives) but who chooses to live only **by grace-through-faith**, which is the ultimate measurement of both humanity and the angelic, will be separated off as belonging exclusively to God.

⁹ **Psalm 82:7; Isaiah 14:3-20; 1 Corinthians 6:3**

¹⁰ See **Matthew 11:28-30**

Thus, when it comes to measuring those in the household of God, a reed that is like a rod will provide an accurate and exacting measurement of the division in God's Household between those who are now believing and now worshipping in the **Sanctuary** of God (for they live by grace-through-faith), and those who worship in the temple at large who may say they live by grace-through-faith but they always tend to add a little law (the law, your law, my law, someone's law) or in some cases, a lot of law. Remember, all it takes is just a little leaven to leaven the whole loaf, it is just a matter of time.¹¹

Why a Reed? – The Reed & the Lampstand

We already discovered the connection between humanity and the “reed” of measurement. Let's hold on to that thought because this next piece is going to blow your mind, it sure blew my mind.

One of the key pictures we are given in **Revelation 11:4** is of the two witnesses described as the two Lampstands that have been standing before the Lord of all the earth. And this is our link to the “reed.”

We are going to reach back to the early days of the Biblical narrative, shortly after the Israelites were freed from Egypt and began their journey in the wilderness, when **Yahweh** laid down for the Israelites the means and methods for worship.

In the **Codex**, we find detailed descriptions of the various implements that were to be made and housed within the tabernacle and subsequently in the Sanctuary of the temple of **Yahweh**. One of these implements was a very large candelabra, a Lampstand, a giant candlestick, which is also known as the Menorah.

The Lampstand was located within the Sanctuary, the holy place, where only the priests were permitted to enter. I have included a picture of a relief that has an image of the Menorah, so we all have the same frame of reference. By the way, it is estimated that the Menorah was over 5 feet tall.

¹¹ **1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9**

Illustration: The Menorah



Illustration: The Sanctuary

Here is another image of how the tabernacle (the Holy Place) or the Sanctuary of the temple, was set up and furnished, with the Lampstand to the left of the altar of incense.



One of **Yahweh's** requirements was that the lampstand was always to be lit. It was to be a perpetual fire to bring light to the tent of meeting (the Holy Place), where the altar of incense and the bread of the presence were located. Without the light of the Lampstand, the priests would have been unable to carry

out their assigned tasks, they would have been spiritual ministers operating in the dark.¹²

In the **Codex**, the description of the Lampstand and how it was to be constructed was very precise, and for our purposes, we must look at the actual Hebrew words, as opposed to the way it has been translated in all our Bibles. Our English translations completely miss the precision of the Spirit, and for some reason the translators decided to supplement their own ideas for that of the Spirit. But we must always remember, the Spirit is always precise, intentional, and He says exactly what He means. We just need to learn to accept His word as He intended.

As to the construction of the Lampstand, the stem that rises in the middle of the candlestick, as well as the six branches, are described with the Hebrew word “*qaneh*,” which literally means “*reed*”—it is not a rod, nor a stick, nor a branch, nor a shaft, but a “*reed*.” The stem and the six branches are called “*reeds*” for a total of **7-reeds**.¹³ With **7** being the number of completion, the Lampstand is designed exactly as **Yahweh** desired, and it is complete in all aspects of its design.

By the way, as I have footnoted, there are separate and distinct Hebrew words for “branch,” “stick,” “rod,” and “staff” and none of them are “*qaneh*.”¹⁴

7 reeds. Could that be a coincidence? I think not!

Let’s stop here and we will pick up with this amazing discovery in our next podcast.

¹² **Leviticus 24:1-4**

¹³ See **Exodus 25:31, 32** and throughout the description

¹⁴ branch = “*matteh*”; stick = “*ets*”; rod = “*natah*” and shaft = “*nachal*”