

The Prophecy of God's Witnesses

Revelation 11:1-19

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Introduction: The parenthesis in John's narration continues from 10:1 until 11:14. At that point, the 7th trumpet is sounded. We will consider this chapter from the standpoint of 2 key characters, God's 2 witnesses. Note here the preparation for their ministry, the power of their ministry, & the pronouncements after their ministry.

I. The preparation for their ministry (11:1-2)

A. The "Who" of measuring >

1. John is given a "*reed*" - a rod, approximately 10 feet long.
2. John, for the second time (cf 10:10-11), becomes a participant in the action.

B. The "What" of measuring >

1. Measure the "*temple of God*" - the *naos*, the Holy Place & the Holy of Holies
 - a. The temple has been rebuilt; worship of Jews & sacrifices reinstated.
 - b. During the Great Tribulation (last 3 & 1/2 years) Antichrist desecrates the altar - see II Thessalonians 2:4 & Daniel 9:27.
2. Measure the "*altar*" - probably the brazen altar, possibly the altar of incense (8:3)?
3. Measure the worshippers - believing Jews? or orthodox Jews?

C. The "Why" of measuring >

1. "The act of measuring seems to signify that the area belongs to God in some special way. It is an evaluation of His property" (Walvoord).
2. The worshippers are measured - compared to a 10 feet rod, they are short-- Man falls short of God's divine standard (cf. Romans 3:23).
3. The outer court (of the Gentiles) is not measured - the Gentiles have control of it & the rest the city of Jerusalem (cf. Luke 21:24).

Principle #1 -- We all are measured by God, compared to a standard (see II Cor. 10:12-13).

II. The power of their ministry (:3-12)

A. Their **description** (:3-4) >

1. When? For 1260 days (or 42 months or 3 & 1/2 years; second half of Tribulation).
2. Who? Two prophets.
 - a. Moses & Elijah? cf. Matthew 17:3; Elijah & Elisha?; Elijah & Enoch (translated & did not see death; cf. Hebrews 9:27).
 - b. Two witnesses from among those who receive Christ after the Rapture?
 - c. "Who they may be, can be but conjecture (guess), & is best left in the obscurity in which God has surrounded them" (Easton).
3. What?
 - a. Their appearance (:3) "*clothed in sackcloth*" - as prophets of doom (Isaiah 37:1-2 & Daniel 9:13); their sackcloth speaks of humility, grief & the need of repentance.
 - b. Their authority (:4) "*two olive trees & candelsticks*" - Zechariah 4:2-6, 11-14.
Oil speaks of the power of the Holy Spirit, they give forth His Word (Psalm 119:130).

Principle #2 -- Our witness must be in the power of the Holy Spirit & in the proclamation of the Holy Scriptures.

B. Their **demonstration** (:5-6) >

1. Protection (:5)
 - a. Ability to destroy their enemies with fire (cf. II Kings 1 & Elijah).

b. "God's protection over His ministers is supreme - a source of great courage for the man of God in his battles with the powers of spiritual darkness" (Schnaiter).

2. Power (:6)

- a. They call forth a great drought - 3 & 1/2 years (see 6:5-6 & James 5:17, Elijah).
- b. They cause water to turn into blood (see 8:7-9 & Exodus 7:17-19, Moses).
- c. They continue to smite the earth with plagues (cf. Exodus).

C. Their **death** (:7-12) >

Principle #3 -- Our life & death is in God's control (Phil. 1:6); we are taken home: (1) when our task is complete or (2) when our testimony is lost.

1. A revealing (:7-8).

- a. Satan's short-lived victory (1st of 36 references to the "beast" in Revelation).
Principle #4 -- Satan always has his counterfeit: the 'unholy' Trinity.
- b. City's "spiritual" name: Jerusalem likened to Sodom (sexual perversion) & Egypt.

2. A rejoicing (:9-10).

- a. Seen by the world: satellite to T.V. or cell phones?
- b. Celebrated by the world: believing God's wrath & power is over
Principle #5 -- "A righteous prophet is always a torment to a wicked generation" (Walvoord). cf. II Timothy 3:12 -- Illustrate with 2 quotes

3. A resurrecting (:11-12).

- a. The "Rapture" of the witnesses (contrast with the earlier rapture: gradual).
- b. The reaction of their enemies:
 - (1) "*Great fear*" - 'exceeding terror'; cf. Luke 21:26 (heart failure, panic, etc.)
 - (2) "*Beheld*" - a transfixed stare, continually looking.
- c. Their revenge? 7,000 killed.

III. The pronouncements after their ministry (:13-19)

A. God's enemies give **glory** (:13-14) >

1. Earthquake causes 10% of the buildings to collapse & 7,000 men are killed.
2. Evokes a recognition of God's power; not a repentance from man's sin (6:15-17).
3. Earlier reference to "*woes*" found in 9:12.

B. God's angels give **praise** (:15) >

1. Sounding of the 7th trumpet.
2. Saying of the angels: The Lamb is reclaiming the earth.
3. Signals the pouring out of the vials (see Rev. 15 & 16).

C. God's elders give **worship** (:16-18) (they represent believers of all ages).

1. Rejoicing over the Lord's reign - 'shown Thyself as King.'
2. Rebelling of God's enemies - man's wrath ("*angry*") met by God's wrath (Ps. 2:4).
3. Rewarding of God's servants - Judgment seat for tribulation saints?
Principle #6 -- Believers shall be rewarded or lose rewards, based on their faithfulness & service - Romans 14:10-12; I Cor. 3:12-15 & II Cor. 5:10.

Conclusion: In verse 19, the temple of God is opened in heaven, revealing the heavenly Ark of the Covenant. In contrast to 11:1-2, this heavenly temple has not been desecrated by the Antichrist. The ark on earth originally contained: (1) the tables of the law - God's holiness; (2) Aaron's rod - God's power; & (3) pot of manna - God's Word & Christ as our Bread of Life. This opening is accompanied by "*lightnings, voices...*" all indicating that God's judgment is to be poured out (Rev. 15 & 16).

Are you here today as one of God's enemies that will be forced to give glory to God (Phil. 2:9-11) or are you one represented by God's elders, that will continually give worship to God?