Revelation 11:1-19 - They Finished Their Testimony

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Introduction - God continues to witness to those who dwell on the earth yet they predictably reject His prophets. Christians should press on to finish their testimonies even when it appears the world will prevail.

v1-3 - Outer Courts Trampled - John is told to measure the temple, seemingly an earthly one (Jhn 4:21-24). "To measure something means to claim it."[1] (21:15-17; Zec 2:1-12; Eze 40-45, 48). The Court of the Gentiles is not to be measured since it will be trampled by the nations (Luk 21:23-24) for three and a half years - 42 months of 30 days each (11:3, 11; 12:6; 13:5; Dan 7:17-28; 9:24-27; 12:7-13; Lu 4:25). The two witnesses will have that time (Acts 1:8; Jhn 8:17; Num 35:30) as they prophesy in sackcloth, imploring repentance (Gen 37:34; 1Ch 21:16; Est 4:1-2; Is 20:1)

v4-14 - God's Two Witnesses - Imagery from Zech 4-5 (Ps 52:8; Jer 11:16) helps describe these witnesses, who may be like Zerubbabel and Joshua who reclaimed and rebuilt the temple.[1] They have power like Elijah to call down fire (2Ki 1:10-12), to shut the sky (1Ki 17:1; 18:1; Luk 4:25; James 5:17), and, like Moses, to strike the earth with plagues (Exo 7:17-25; Ps 78:43-51; 105:26-36). They give testimony about God until their course is complete (Act 13:5; 2Ti 4:7). The Spirit empowers their ministry and ours (1Jo 1:7; Eph 5:8; Gal 5:16; Rom 8:4; Eze 36:27; Zec 4:6). The antichrist, Satan's false messiah, will conquer and kill them (Rev 13; 17; 19:19-20; Dan 7:21-25; 8:24; 2Th 2:8-9). The people of earth rejoice (1Ki 18:17 ; Ps 79). Christians today are likewise despised (Jhn 15:18-20; Act 7:54-57). The location is Jerusalem (Luk 13:33-34; Jhn 8:56), which is like Sodom (Gen 13:13; 19:24; Is 1:10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; 2Pe 2:6, Jde 1:7; Matt 10:15) and Egypt (Ez 23:3, 8, 19, 27). They are ultimately vindicated (Rev 19:17-18; Mat 7:2). God's breath raises them back up (Gen 2:7; Ezek 37:1-14; Rom 8:11; Mat 10:28) and they ascend like Jesus (Acts 1:9; 2Ki 2:11-12; 1Th 4:17).

Who are they? Elijah (Mal 3:1; 4:1-6; Mat 11:14; 27:47-49), Moses (Mat 17:3, 10-12; Jde 9), Enoch (Gen 5:21-24; Jde 14-17; Heb 9:27), or someone else. Walvoord submits they may be prophets raised up from tribulation believers.[2] Many ancient church leaders believed it was Elijah and Enoch.[2]

v15-19 - Seventh Trumpet: Kingdom of God has Come! - In contrast with silence (8:1), praise resounds since the Kingdom has come (12:10; 16:17; 19:6). Kingdom is singular due to the united reign of the antichrist (17:13).[2] This is as the Psalms and prophets declared (Ps 2; 22:28; Is 2:2-3; 49:6-7; Mic 4:1-2; Zec 14:9). His reign will never end (Dan 2:44-45; 7:14-22, 27; Ex 15:18; Ps 110:4; 146:10; Luk 1:33; Heb 1:8). The elders give God thanks (Luk 17:17-18), speaking as if all is accomplished though it's future. The nations will rage (Ps 46:6-11), but God's wrath will answer. The time for judgement comes (Rev 20; Dan 7:9-10, 25-27; 12:1-3; 2Th 1:6-10). God will reward His servants (19:1-8; 22:12; Mat 5:12; 1Co 3:10-15), those who fear His name (Ecc 12:13; Jas 2:18-26; Mat 19:30). The destroyers of the earth will be defeated (Isa 26:19-21; Rev 20:14, 20). The scene of the heavenly temple reassures those suffering that God is in control.

So, what? Now, what? God has empowered us much like His two prophets to be effective witnesses for Jesus in a world that hates Him. Just like the witnesses had nothing to fear when their testimony was unfinished, we can boldly go forth in the Spirit knowing that God's power will sustain us even in the darkest times.

- Our witness can be hampered publicly (external forces) or privately (internal forces). Is there anything internally or externally diminishing my witness for Christ? What is God calling me to do? What can He do?
- We each have a limited time to serve as a witness for Jesus. What would it look like in my life if I witnessed for Jesus like God had total control of my life and time? What would I do differently this week?
- Do I live like this life is not the one I'll live forever?
- How much gratitude do I have in my heart for God's work? How well do I express that to Him and others?
- Consider reading: A missionary biography from the library or the book of Acts.

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[1] Wiersbe, 827-28.

[2] Walvoord, 181-82.