

## The Mighty Angel And The Little Scroll

(Revelation 10:1-11)

**Scripture: 10:1** And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land; 3 and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them."

5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there shall be delay no longer, 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." 9 And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. 11 And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

**Intro:** Last Sunday we concluded with the sixth trumpet judgment in chapter 9, verses 13-21. The three plagues released by the sixth trumpet judgment resulted in the deaths of a third of mankind. Twice we were told that in spite of such horrific judgment, those not killed by these plagues refused to repent of their wickedness (9:20-21). Against this dark backdrop of man's iniquity, beginning with chapter 10 and extending through chapter 11, verse 14 God provides John's readers with a second interlude or parenthetical section.

Each of these Divine parenthesis (four in total) suspend the chronological advancement of judgment between the sixth and seventh judgments in order to provide the reader with additional revelation concerning other events taking place at approximately the same time. The emphasis shifts temporarily from the outpouring of God's wrath on wicked unbelievers to the consolation and encouragement of believers. This second parenthesis, which by the way is the longest of the four parenthesis or interludes, introduces the vision of the mighty angel and the little scroll (chapter 10:1-11), and the two witnesses (chapter 11:1-14).

## I. Appearance Of The Mighty Angel (10:1-4)

### A. Identity of the mighty angel (v. 1)

The first thing John sees, v. 1 is another strong angel coming down out of heaven. It appears from John's vantage point that he has been transported from heaven back down to earth. He states that he saw this strong or mighty angel, described as being clothed with a cloud, coming down out of heaven. The appearance of this angel was spectacular. He is clothed in a cloud, and wore a rainbow for a crown upon his head. His face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. The rainbow speaks of God's mercy, and His covenant promise to never again destroy every living creature on the earth with a universal flood (Gen. 9:12-17).

The angel's face, described as shining as the sun, and his feet described as pillars of fire, has led some to identify this angel as Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus exhibited these same characteristics, *feet like pillars of fire* and *face like the sun shining in full strength*, when He appeared to John in chapter 1, verses 15 and 16 (cf. Harry Ironside and David Jeremiah).

While this mighty angel displays characteristics similar to those of the glorified Lord Jesus, most commentators take this to be ***another angel***. This view is supported by the **Greek text**, which describes this angel as "***another*** strong angel." Interestingly, in Greek there are two words for ***another***. We only have one in English. Our word ***another*** can mean "another of the same kind," or "another of a different kind." While we have only one word for ***another*** with two meanings, the Greeks had two words for ***another*** with very specific meanings. The first, "*another of a different kind*" is the Greek word "***heteros***." It means "different from the others." For example, we have the word *heterosexual*, "a different sex." The second Greek word that means ***another of the same kind***, is

the word *allos*. Permit me to illustrate this word for you. On this stage are several microphones. The microphones Lisa and Cherye use are *allos* microphones—*another of the same kind*. Then we have the microphone that I am wearing. It is a *heteros* microphone, *another of a different kind*. My microphone is different from those other microphones. Those microphones are hard wired, my microphone is wireless.

The word *another* used here in Revelation 10:1 to describe this mighty angel is *allos*, *another angel of the same kind*. This same Greek word, *allos* was used to describe the priest-angel that appeared back in chapter 8, verse 3. He was *another angel* who came forth to serve at God's altar in heaven. I have labored this point to show you why our interpretations must always be derived from and coincide with sound textual support.

#### B. Identity of the little scroll (v. 2)

In v. 2 John adds that “the angel had in his hand a little book which was open.” The *perfect passive* tense of the Greek verb translated *was open* indicates that someone had already opened this little book/scroll in the angel's hand. While the contents of this little scroll are uncertain, it may be that it contains a revelation of the mystery of God, to be explained in verse 7. We will come back to this in a little bit.

John watched as the mighty angel placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land. This action of standing astride the earth and the sea is mentioned three times in this chapter (vv. 2, 5, and 8). This presents a picture of total conquest of land and sea. As God's agent, this mighty angel is delegated with Christ's power and authority to take possession of the entire world.

Look next with me at the angel's cry and response by the seven thunders in verse 3

#### C. The angel's cry and response by the seven thunders (v. 3)

And he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.

The mighty angel cried out with a loud voice, like the roaring of a lion; and in response the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. While I

have never personally experienced the roar of a lion, those who have tell me that a lion's roar can be heard from many miles away. The metaphor of the roaring lion emphasizes the angel's strong voice and authority.

In response to the angel's roaring proclamation, seven peals of thunder uttered their voices from heaven. The seven peals of thunder are not identified, but often in the Bible the voice of God's proclamations of judgment are portrayed as thunder. Just as thunder announces an approaching storm, so too here, the seven peals of thunder uttering their voices may have been announcing the rapid completion of God's Tribulation judgments.

#### D. The command to seal up the words of the seven thunders (v. 4)

John heard and understood the message conveyed by the seven peals of thunder, but for some inexplicable reason he is forbidden to record the message, verse 4

4 And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them."

The voice from heaven forbidding John to record what he had heard was probably that of the Lord Jesus Himself. The fact that we do not know what message the seven thunders revealed has not stopped commentators from speculating into the meaning. Danbuz theorized that the seven thunders represent the seven nations that received the Reformation; others interpret them as referring to the seven Crusades; Elliott believes this is the Papal Bull the Pope issued against Luther; and, Seven-Day Adventists claim, "While they know what the seven thunders uttered, they are not going to tell anyone." **That's convenient, right?**

I am reminded of **Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret things, those things God has chosen not to reveal, belong to the LORD our God; but the things He has revealed in His Word belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of God's Law."

## II. Affirmation By The Mighty Angel (10:5-7)

5 The mighty angel who John described as having one foot planted on the sea and the other on earth, raises his right hand to heaven and solemnly swears by the God of heaven—to Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, *that there shall be delay no longer*, 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

The meaning here seems to be that there will no longer be a delay in God's holding back His wrath against a world polluted and dominated by sin, because (v. 7) when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the mystery of God, which He preached to His servants the prophets will be finished.

“The mystery of God” refers to previously unrevealed details concerning why God has allowed Satan and evil to exist and to continue? The answer to this is found in God's holy Word. It was preached by God to His prophets, they in turn proclaimed it to the people of their day, and God now reveals to John how it is going to be fulfilled.

William Kelly identifies “the mystery of God” as pertaining to “why God has allowed Satan to have his own way, and man too (this is to say, the wonder of evil prospering and of good being trodden underfoot). God checks, no doubt, the evil in a measure, partly through human government and partly through His own providential dealings” (*Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, W. H. Broom, 1874, 200).

The cry of the martyrs back in chapter 6, verse 10 “How long O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” will be fulfilled when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet and the seven bowl judgments are released in rapid succession; followed by the glorious return of the Son of God and the establishment of His kingdom of righteousness and peace on this earth (Rev. 19:11-21).

### **III. Announcement For John To Eat The Little Scroll (10:8-11)**

John is next commanded by a voice from heaven, which he says he had heard previously, to go take the open scroll out of the hand of the angel, 8

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, “Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land.”

This is not the voice of the mighty angel, but a voice from heaven, which John says he had heard previously. Most commentators understand this voice to be that of God, or the Lord Jesus Himself.

We read in v. 9 that John went to the angel, and told him to give him the little scroll. The angel gives John the little scroll and tells him to “Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.”

10 As John took the little scroll out of the angel’s hand and ate it, he describes it “as sweet as honey in his mouth” but after he had eaten it, he says, “my stomach was made bitter.”

### **What we have here isn’t God’s recipe for sweet and sour scroll.**

John’s eating of this little scroll is symbolic of reading and assimilating God’s Word to effect heart change. The prophet Ezekiel was likewise commanded to eat a scroll, which had the same effect on him (Ezek 2:9-10; 3:1-4). In both cases these men of God are informed that the scroll containing God’s Word would be as sweet as honey to their taste, but once digested, it would make their stomach bitter.

King David stated, “The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb” (Ps. 19:9-10).

Dr Ryrrie says, “The point of this interlude during which John was commanded to assimilate these prophecies before he wrote them is simply that it is necessary for the prophet of God to let the word of God affect him first before he ministers it to others” (*Revelation*, 69).

This same truth applies to every pastor and teacher who has been called to preach and teach God’s Word. As a pastor, I must first study and assimilate God’s Word in my own heart, and then I pray and ask God’s Holy Spirit to help me prepare God’s Word so that I can deliver it to you all in a clear and relevant manner so that you can likewise hear and heed it in your own lives.

As we study prophecy and contemplate the multitude of signs that are being fulfilled today, it provides us with sweet and certain hope that Christ's return is drawing nearer with each passing day, and in this we rejoice. However, the realization that loved ones, friends, neighbors, and coworkers who scoff at and reject the grace of God and His offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ will be lost, causes us bitterness, pain, and sorrow.

The eating of the little scroll was also designed to provide John with spiritual nourishment and strength so he could carry on his prophetic ministry of warning concerning the judgments God is going to pour out on unsaved men during the Tribulation period, v. 11

11 And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

Although "they" is indefinite, most take this as a reference to the Trinity. John is commissioned by the Godhead to continue his ministry to the whole world—"to many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." The content of John's message is contained in the Book of the Revelation. It records God's judgment that is to come on the wicked people of the world in the final days of the Tribulation. Those who refuse God's gracious offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ will suffer the 7 Seal, 7 Trumpet, and 7 Bowl Judgments described here in Revelation.

Conclusion:

Dr. David Jeremiah surmises "There is joy in preaching God's truth but sorrow in contemplating the rejection of that truth by those who hear. Preaching prophetic truth is a bittersweet experience" (*Escape The Coming Night, Messages From The Book Of Revelation*, vol. 2, 116).

Invitation to respond to Christ

Closing Song: Heaven Come

Closing Prayer— Invitation to respond to Christ, and to get busy sharing Christ

Reading God's Word daily will help to cope with the pressures of daily life, and prepare you to share your faith in the Jesus Christ when given the opportunity.