

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Revelation Chapter 10

Bible Study Notes on The Mighty Angel with the Little Book

Revelation Chapter 10

What is the nature of Chapter 10?

- Chapter 10 - The Mighty Angel with the Little Book is an overview passage
 - It takes a step back from the narrative account of the Seven Trumpets
 - It serves as an interlude between the sixth trumpet and the seventh trumpet
 - It gives information related to the whole story of the Book of Revelation
 - It is very personal to John – especially verses 8-11
 - Chapter 11 verses 1-13 are about the Two Witnesses – and again is mainly an overview passage
- Parenthesis
 - The Sixth Trumpet Judgement is recorded in Chapter 9
 - Chapters 10 and 11: 1-13 form a parenthesis between the Sixth and Seventh Trumpets
 - These parenthetical chapters give, like chapter 7 (the parenthetical chapter between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals), an overview of events during the tribulation (the seven years)
 - The parentheses between the sixth and the seventh (Seals, Trumpets and Bowls) give an indication as to the chronology of the tribulation period
 - Although this chapter is parenthetical and gives something of an overview of John's experience of this revelation - it does seem to follow chronologically after the sixth trumpet and before the seventh (see *verse 7*)
 - What follows (the seventh trumpet and the seven bowls) are the culmination of God's wrath and judgement
 - No wonder it was bitter in John's stomach!

Ch 10 Vs 1-4 The Mighty Angel with a Little Book

How does John describe the angel he sees?

Verses 1-2

- Another 'mighty' (strong) angel
 - In chapter 5 a 'strong' angel proclaims 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?' (*Revelation 5: 2*) – the same Greek word (*ischuros*) is here translated as 'mighty'
 - The angel is coming down from heaven
 - The angel is described
 - He is clothed with a cloud (a common artistic depiction)
 - He has a rainbow on his head (a sign of the covenant)
 - His face shone like the sun (unveiled glory)
 - His feet were as pillars of fire (pillars speak of strength and fire speaks of judgement)
 - Some scholars suggest this 'mighty angel' to be Yeshua - because the description of the angel is similar to that of the Lord in chapter 1 and elsewhere
 - Clouds *Matthew 17: 5; Luke 21: 27; Acts 1: 9; Revelation 1: 7*

- Rainbow *Psalm 89: 1, 8, 33-37; Revelation 4: 3*
- Sun *Matthew 17: 2; Revelation 1:16*
- Feet *Revelation 1: 15*
- Lion (v.3) *Job 4: 9-10; Isaiah 31: 4-5; Hosea 5: 14, 11:10; Amos 3: 8; Revelation 5: 5*
- However, Yeshua appears in the O.T. as ‘the angel of the Lord’ (*Exodus 3: 2; Judges 2: 4, 6: 11-12, 21-22; 2 Samuel 24: 16*)...but not in the N.T.
- The word for ‘another’ (Greek: *allos*) is the word for another of the same kind – i.e. another mighty angel...hence this could be a high ranking angel such as Gabriel or Michael
- He is a distinctive messenger – the third in Revelation
 - An angel holding back judgements for a special work of grace - the 144,000 sealed servants (*Revelation 7: 2*)
 - An angel with a golden censer pouring out the fire of judgement (*Revelation 8: 3-5*)
 - Now – the mighty angel with the little book (*Revelation 10: 1-4*)
 - John will see another such angel later (*Revelation 18: 1*)
 - This is not one of the seven angels responsible for sounding the trumpets, but one of the highest ranking in heaven, filled with splendour, greatness, and strength
- He has a ‘little book’ in his open hand
 - Some scholars suggest that this ‘little book’ is the seven sealed scroll from chapter 5 (Greek: *biblion*)...which is now fully opened
 - Here the little ‘book’ is a little ‘scroll’ (Greek: *biblaridion*) which seems to distinguish it from the seven sealed scroll
 - John will, later in the chapter, have to eat this little book

What is the significance of the Angel’s stance? Verse 2

- The angel takes a very specific stance - his feet set
 - Right foot on the sea – the sea is an idiom in scripture for the gentile nations
 - Left foot on the land – the land is an idiom in scripture for Israel
 - It seems the angel’s stance is expressing worldwide dominion
 - Note that there will be Two Beasts in the Tribulation period – one arising from the Sea and one from the Earth – but their dominance will not last
 - The angel's stance indicates the firm resolve with which God will execute His wrath on the Day of the Lord (the Great Tribulation)
 - Although Satan has temporarily usurped the sea and the earth, this symbolic act by the angel demonstrates that all creation belongs to the Lord and He rules it with sovereign authority

What does John hear? Verses 3-4

- The Angel cries with a loud voice (*megas phōnē*), like a lions roar (fearsome)
 - Scripture does not record what the angel cried at this point
- Seven Thunders the ‘uttered their voices’
 - It seems that scripture wants us to know that there are seven thunders which make some utterance(s)...but we are not to know what is said!!!
 - Thunder speaks in scripture
 - *Psalm 29* makes seven allusions to the voice of God

- John heard what the seven thunders spoke and was about to write it down
 - It seems that scripture wants us to know that there are seven thunders which make some utterance(s)...but we are not to know what is said!!!
 - When Yeshua knew His hour had come and prayed that the Father would glorify His name (the Father's own name) in that hour – the Father spoke from heaven to His Son – but some said it thundered (*John 12: 27-29*)
- John is told to 'Seal Up' what the seven thunders uttered
 - John, it seems, heard and understood what the seven thunders spoke – but they were not to be written or revealed at this time
 - In *Daniel 9: 24* the seventy weeks are determined 'to seal up vision and prophecy'
 - In *Daniel 12: 4* having received a prophetic word about the end times (verses 1-3) Daniel is told to 'shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end'
 - In *Acts 1: 6-7* the disciples ask Jesus 'will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel' - Jesus answers 'it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put into His own authority'
 - A voice from heaven stops John from writing
 - Seal up those things...write them not
 - The Greek word (*sphragizō*) means literally to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation – it keeps what is so stamped a secret
 - John is to conceal the message of the seven thunders until God's time for revealing comes
 - This has led to much speculation as to what was spoken
 - Thunder to us is a sound which has power and is a sound of foreboding ...a storm is coming!

Ch 10 Vs 5-7 **The Mighty Angel's Proclamation**

What does John see the angel do?

Verses 5-6

- The Angel Raises his Hand and Swears
 - The mighty angel swears an oath – a solemn judicial proclamation
 - The oath is in the name of:
 - 'Him who lives for ever and ever'
 - 'Who created heaven and the things that are in it'
 - 'Who created...the earth and the things that are in it'
 - The angel is swearing an oath by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ himself – solemn declaration made upon the highest authority
 - There are occasions when God swears by himself:
 - His covenant with Abraham *Hebrews 6: 13-20*
 - Declaring His Son to be High Priest *Hebrews 7: 20-22*
 - Promise that the Christ would come from David's family *Acts 2: 29-30*

What is the Oath which is sworn – and what does it mean?

Verses 6b-7

- Proclaims 'there should be delay no longer' – literally...time [Greek: *chronos*] shall no longer be
 - No more delay – an answer to the cries of the martyrs (*Revelation 6: 10*)

- It is time for the completion of God's judgements
 - An implication that the time for repentance will now be past
 - The seventh trumpet will see the culmination of the Day of the Lord (His wrath) and His coming presage as King and Judge
- In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel – the 7th trumpet
 - When the 7th angel sounds:
 - The Mystery of God will be finished (completed) – the purposes and plans of God will be fully revealed and accomplished (see *Daniel 9: 24*)
 - Mystery (Greek: *mustērion*) means literally 'to shut the mouth' – it is something shut up or closed, until it is revealed
 - The 'mystery' as declared to His servants the prophets (*Amos 3: 7*)
 - In the NT, a "mystery" is a truth that God concealed, but has revealed through Christ and His apostles
 - Yeshua Himself is a mystery spoken of in the OT but only fully revealed in the NT
 - The Church is a mystery alluded to in the OT but revealed in the NT
- The Mystery of God
 - Several 'mysteries' will be revealed on the Day of the Lord
 - God's destruction of sinners and the ungodly world system (Babylon)
 - The establishment of His righteous kingdom on earth – the Millennium
 - The Revelation of the Saints, who return with their Lord, as kings and priests
 - The Cleansing and Restoration of Israel as the holy people of God
- The 'Finishing'
 - The completion at the Seventh Trumpet again suggests a chronology of the tribulation where the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet and seventh bowl all happen together or one immediately follows the other
 - The angel declares this 'Finishing' when – in the narrative – the Seven Bowls of Wrath are yet to be poured out
 - Thus it seems that the Seven Bowls are to occur between the sixth and seventh trumpets

See Supplementary Note 1: 'A Suggested Chronology of the Great Tribulation Period'

- The Day of the Lord – Anticipated and Longed For – Will Come
 - The time the disciples anticipated has come (*Matthew 24: 3; Acts 1: 6*)
 - The answer to the cries of the martyrs (*Revelation 6: 10*)
 - The answer to the prayers of the saints – 'Thy Kingdom Come' in the 'Lord's Prayer' (*Matthew 6: 10*)

What Things or Events are described in scripture as 'A Mystery'?

- There are many 'mysteries' in scripture, for example:-
 - The Kingdom of Heaven *Matthew 13:11*
 - The Kingdom *Mark 4: 11*
 - Israel's Blindness *Romans 11: 25*
 - The Rapture *1 Corinthians. 15: 51*
 - His Will *Ephesians 1: 9*
 - Christ and the Church *Ephesians 5: 32*
 - The Gospel *Ephesians 3: 4; Colossians 1: 26-27; 4: 3*

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| ○ Iniquity | <i>2 Thessalonians 2: 7</i> |
| ○ God and Christ | <i>Colossians 2: 2</i> |
| ○ The Faith | <i>1 Timothy 3: 9</i> |
| ○ Godliness | <i>1 Timothy 3: 16</i> |
| ○ The Seven Stars/Lampstands | <i>Revelation 1: 20</i> |
| ○ Babylon the Great | <i>Revelation 17: 5</i> |
| ○ The Harlot | <i>Revelation 17: 7</i> |

Ch 10 Vs 8-11 **John Eats the Little Book**

What is John told to do by the voice from heaven?

Verse 8

- John is commanded by ‘the voice which I heard from heaven’ – it is a voice that had spoken to him before
 - This is possibly the voice, as in *Revelation 6: 1*, of one of the four living creatures...which in chapter 6 invited John to ‘come and see’
 - It is probably the same voice, as in *Revelation 10: 4*, which told John to seal up what the seven thunders had uttered
- The instruction is to take the little book from the hand of the angel (the one standing on the sea and the land) – the little book is ‘open’ so the mystery is revealed
 - The little ‘book’ is a little ‘scroll’ (Greek: *biblaridion*)

What is John told to do by the angel who has the little book?

Verse 9

- John – at the direction of the voice from heaven – gives a clear command to the mighty angel standing with one foot on the sea and one on the land
 - John commands the mighty angel “Give me the little book”
 - This is quite an astonishing thing for John to do...yet he obeyed the command of the voice from heaven
- The Angel tells John to eat the little book
 - The angel tells John to eat the book – God’s word of judgement
 - It will make his stomach bitter
 - But, it will be sweet as honey in his mouth
 - This act graphically illustrates taking in God's Word – John's physical reactions demonstrate what every believer's proper response to God's judgment should be (see *Ezekiel 3*):
 - Sweet anticipation of God's glory and the Christians' victory ...and at the same time...
 - The bitterness of seeing God's wrath poured out on those who reject His Son.
 - John is effectively to digest the record of God’s judgements on the earth
 - To eat the book is a hint to John that before he should publish what he had discovered he must more thoroughly digest the predictions, and be in himself suitably affected with them
 - Making your stomach bitter – as he truly digests what the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments hold in store for the sinner, John becomes nauseated
 - But sweet as honey in your mouth - but still, God's final victory and vindication are sweet realities to the believer

- As disciples we are not only to read the Bible, but also to meditate upon it and to assimilate it into our lives (*Psalm 119*)
 - God's Word is often compared to food
 - Bread *Matthew 4: 4*
 - Milk *1 Peter 2: 2*
 - Meat *1 Corinthians. 3: 2*
 - Honey *Psalm 119: 103*

What is John's experience of eating the little book?

Verse 10

- John does as instructed – and experiences sweetness and bitterness
 - God's intention is to encourage and comfort His people in the midst of the fury and to remind them that He is still sovereign, that He remembers His people, and that they will ultimately be victorious
- Firstly it was sweet as honey in his mouth
 - Sweetness – of the Word as we read it, of understanding the Lord and His purposes, of His triumph over Satan and the restoration of all things
 - The believer will find God's word initially so sweet and comforting, nourishing and encouraging (*Psalm 19: 10*)
- Then as he digested it John's stomach was made bitter
 - Bitterness – of the reality of God's judgements on the earth and of the eternal consequences of rejecting Jesus as Saviour and Lord
 - As the believer inwardly digests God's word – the reality of the impact of His judgements and what it means for those who will not believe hits home – it is like bitterness in the stomach as one realises the consequence of God's judgements on the unrighteous
- John's experience of eating the little book should be our experience of reading and digesting the Book of Revelation

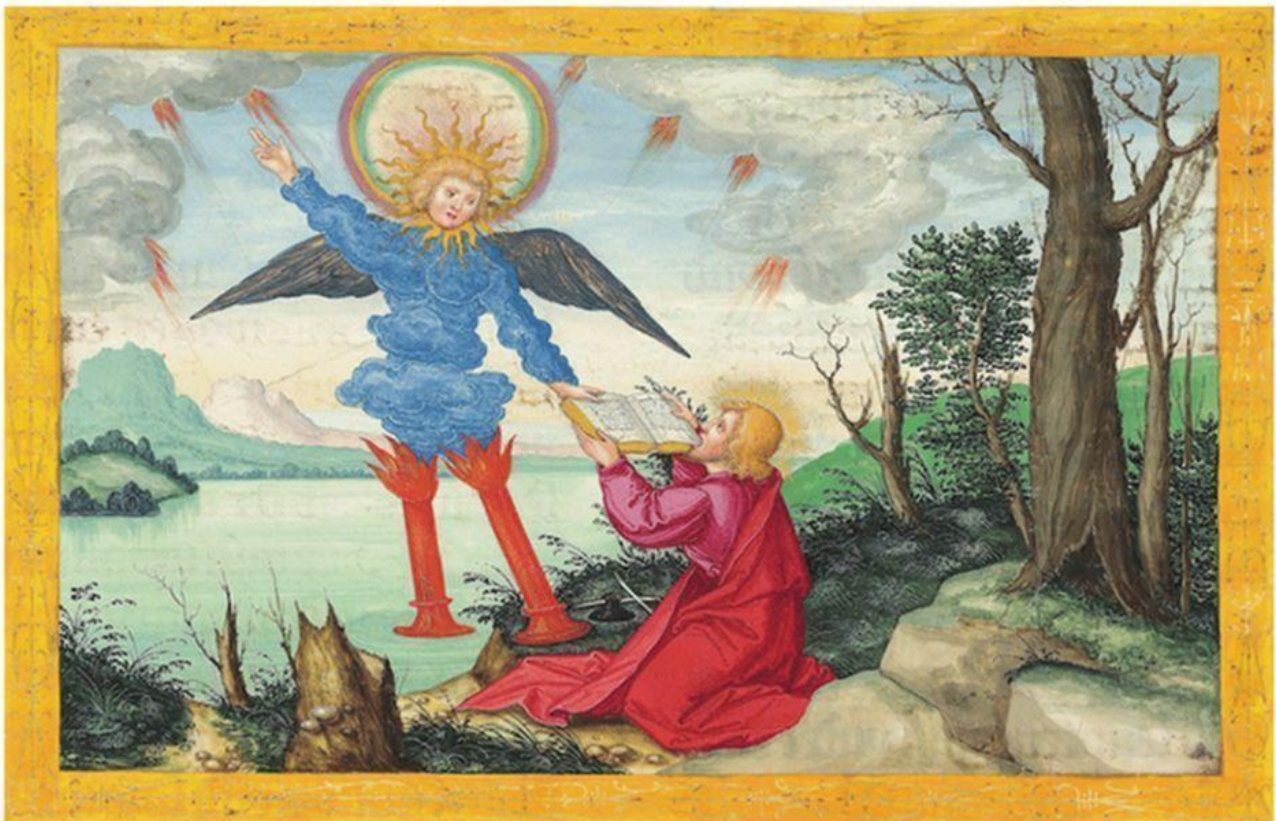
See Supplementary Note 44: 'Sweetness and Bitterness'

What commission is John then given?

Verse 11

- John is told that he must prophesy again
 - John's recording (at Yeshua's instruction *Revelation 1: 19*) has already set out many prophecies of the end times – related to:
 - The coming history of the church
 - The rapture of the church
 - The Lamb's right to open the seven-sealed scroll
 - The seven seal judgements and first six trumpet judgments
 - More prophetic words of end-time events follow in the remaining chapters
- John is to prophesy 'before' (KJV) or 'about' (NKJV and others) many peoples, nations, tongues and kings – the Greek word so translated is *epi* which can mean *on, upon, over, or against*
 - It is a call for John to warn people about the bitter judgment in the seventh trumpet and the seven bowls.
 - Some scholars take this to imply that John is one of the two witnesses of chapter 11 (but these are identified as individuals other than John)
 - To many peoples (Greek: *laos*) – to many different people groups

- To many nations (Greek: *ethnos*) – to many ethnic groups, and different races
- To many tongues (Greek: *glōssa*) – to many language groups (all languages)
- To many kings (Greek: *basileus*) – to many foundations of power, sovereigns and rulers
- John’s prophesying ‘again’ is really fulfilled by John’s recording of the remainder of this prophetic book...that is Revelation chapters 11 to 22
- His prophetic word is indeed to many peoples, nations, tongues and kings
 - The tribulation saints respond to John’s prophetic word and to the Sealed Servants witness (*Revelation 7: 9*)
 - The nations under judgement see the fulfilment of this prophetic word (*Revelation 11: 18*)
 - Babylon will fall at this prophetic word (*Revelation 18*)
 - Kings & mighty men will fall when the Lord returns (*Revelation 19: 18-19*)
 - We are given understanding of end-times and God’s prophetic purposes through the Revelation of Jesus Christ given to John for us (*Revelation 1: 1-2*)



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 John Receives And Eats The Little Book (Rev. 10: 8-10)
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