

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Angel and the Little Book

Revelation 10:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

Here in chapter 10, we have another interlude. This time it is between the sixth and seventh **trumpet** judgments (the second and third woes), just as there is a pause between the sixth and seventh **seal** judgments. The message of each recapitulation is found in the interlude. John stops the vision of the judgments and essentially says "**Don't miss the point!**" Each of the three judgments are going to end the world, but each of them is going to have a specific point to tell to the Christians.

In the seal judgments we saw how fallen angels have been allowed to bring war, turmoil, famine, and death upon the earth. God's desire is that men everywhere would see the destruction caused by these judgments and would come to repentance. We saw that everyone on earth was affected by these judgments. As Christians we are not protected physically, however, we are protected spiritually. So in the first interlude, due to all of the physical judgments on earth and after seeing the power and destruction of those judgments, the question was asked, "**Who can stand on the great day of the wrath of God?**"

We discovered that those on earth who have the seal of God on their foreheads can stand and they are spiritually protected from evil. The angels that remain in heaven can stand. And the faithful who have died and their souls are in heaven can stand.

Then we begin the sounding of the seven trumpets. They are a recapitulation of the seals. It tells the of same period of time between Christ's first coming and His second coming, but from a different perspective. In the seals we saw physical judgments happening to everyone on earth. In the trumpets we saw the unbelievers being punished due to their life of sin and unbelief. The believers are spiritually protected from these judgments and do not experience the torment of them.

Now in this interlude, we will experience another recapitulation of the last days by focusing on the relationship between the unrepentant and the faithful witnesses during the time that the seals and trumpets occur. The REASON for the punishments is now the focus. The wicked suffer because they reject the message of the witnesses and persecute them.

All of us have heard the phrase "**I have good news and bad news**". It may be used jokingly or seriously. It points to the fact that things could be worse but it could also be better. It reminds us that the sweet is often mixed with the bitter.

So it is in life.

ILLUSTRATION.

Picture a young bride, shortly before her wedding day, having the ability to envision scenes of her future. She sees a beautiful wedding; she and her husband have beautiful children; and the entire family will all reside, in eternity, in heaven! She is inspired and excited and begins to rejoice at this good news.

But then the bad news scenes scroll by. Her life will also see the terrible prolonged illness of her husband, his untimely death, her resulting poverty, loneliness, and pain. She must go through all of this on the way to meet the Heavenly Father! That's the Bad News, the bitter mixed with the sweet.

Similarly, Revelation paints the picture our future, one in which the good news is tempered by the bad.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 10 (NASB)

The Angel and the Little Book

10 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. 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 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 Then 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 will 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 Then 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 So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he *said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was 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."

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE STRONG ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK.

This chapter is filled with vivid imagery and rich meaning. Let's move slowly through these verses.

Revelation 10:1 (NASB)

10 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;

John sees “another strong angel” coming down from heaven. What a magnificent image of a powerful heavenly being. So magnificent, in fact, that it may actually referring to Christ. I am not sure. There are similarities between this “strong angel” and Jesus as He is depicted in Revelation 1 and Revelation 19.

Notice how John describes the mighty angel:

- **Coming down from heaven.** Regardless if this is an angel or Christ, we know that He is a heavenly creature, familiar with heaven and the throne room of God.
- **Surrounded by a cloud.** Where have we heard that before? Jesus ascended into heaven in a cloud.
- **A rainbow over his head.** We see an emerald rainbow or circle of light surrounding the throne. The halo represents the splendor and glory of the angel.
- **With his face like the sun.** This follows the description of Jesus in Rev. 1:16 and on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matt. 17:2.
- **Legs like fiery pillars.** This is like Jesus is depicted in Rev. 1:15: One with “feet like fine bronze fired in a furnace”. The fire refers to judgment.

Revelation 10:2a (NASB)

² and he had in his hand a little book which was open.

It seems reasonable to view the little book here as the same book we see in Revelation 5, which the Lamb takes from the hand of the One seated on the throne. The Lamb (Who is Christ) opens it and breaks the seven seals.

Since John has witnessed the opening of the scroll’s seven seals (Rev. 6:1-8:5), it makes sense that the scroll is now fully opened. And just as the Lamb takes the scroll in the presence of a mighty angel in Revelation 5, it follows that John is commanded to take the same scroll from another strong angel and “eat it”.

II. THE SEVEN THUNDERS SPOKE.

Revelation 10:2b-4 (NASB)

...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 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 strong angel has a message for Jew and Gentile alike, for believer and unbeliever: he is reclaiming the earth and he claims it while standing on the earth and sea.

When the mighty angel cries out with a loud voice, “the seven thunders” speak with their voices.

Who, or what, are the seven thunders?

How could one emphasize "a little book that is open" more gloriously than this? These seven thunders are emphasizing the impact that God's Word will have upon the earth. The voice of the "seven thunders" are still sounding today!

At this point, however, there is a voice from heaven, saying **“Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them.”** John has been faithfully recording what he sees and hears, but now he is told that this particular message is to remain hidden.

John does **not** protest. He obeys the prohibition against writing down the words of the seven thunders and moves on. Perhaps we should as well.

III. THERE WILL BE DELAY NO LONGER.

Revelation 10:5-7 (NASB)

⁵Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, ⁶and 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 will be delay no longer, ⁷but 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.

There are two phrases of special interest in the angel's oath. The first is his statement that **"there will be delay no longer"**.

Do you remember the cry of the souls beneath the altar in chapter 6?

Revelation 6:10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

It may appear to us that God is delaying final judgment. But we learn that He is waiting patiently for the last soul to be saved.

Human history is written with the blood of righteous men and women who wait patiently on the Lord's judgment while the wicked prosper – and even mock. Noah preaches for more than a century to the vile people who are bringing a worldwide flood down upon themselves, and yet none repent. Lot is troubled while the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah indulge their fleshly passions.

The early disciples are beaten, imprisoned, threatened, shouted down, stoned, starved, shipwrecked, left for dead, beheaded, and even crucified upside-down while the enemies of the risen Christ insist they are doing His work – or deny His existence altogether.

The apostle Peter addresses the scoffers who insist they will elude judgment, if it ever comes at all.

2 Peter 3:3-4, 9-13 (NASB)

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

... ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

As believers, we will not suffer injustice forever. We will not always be mocked, chastised, legally bound, outlawed, imprisoned, beaten, tortured, and killed. A day of reckoning is coming. The wicked will not always prosper, live in the finest houses, and have most of the political, economic, social, and military power. Their day of destiny approaches as well, and they will watch the resurrected Christ they rejected return on the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. Their bodies will be meat for the vultures, and their souls and spirits will be cast into hell.

The second phrase of special interest is this: "**then the mystery of God is finished**" at the sound of the seventh angel's trumpet.

Note that the angel does **not** say God's hidden plan will be **revealed**, but **completed**. And he adds, "**as He preached to His servants the prophets**". In other words, we are not to look for further revelation when the third woe is declared; we are to watch as the Lord reclaims what is rightfully His – the kingdoms of this world. He already has told us this day will come. Now He's going to fulfill His promise.

God has been revealing His eternal plan ever since we fell into sin. And that plan centers around the Messiah and the Gospel message. Immediately after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, He announced His eternal plan for redemption through the "seed of woman". From that moment forward the Lord has been shedding more light on His plan, and the One through whom it would be accomplished.

IV. TAKE THE SCROLL AND EAT IT.

Revelation 10:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he *said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

¹⁰ I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

John once again hears a voice from heaven, instructing him to approach the mighty angel, take the scroll from his hand and eat it. John ate it and said "**in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter**".

Perhaps the most fitting tie to this passage of scripture is found in the book of Ezekiel where Ezekiel is commanded to eat a scroll before prophesying to the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 3:3-4 (NASB)

³ He said to me, “Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.” Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

⁴ Then He said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

Once the seals have been broken and the divine story told, it is now time to “eat,” or internalize, the Word of God. The scroll is of a size that John can consume. Many times in scripture we are commanded to take God’s Word into our minds so that it directs our thoughts, words, and actions.

So John eats the little scroll and finds it sweet as honey in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. There is much sweetness in the Word of God – stories of grace, mercy, love, sacrifice, forgiveness, redemption, resurrection, reward, restoration, and eternal life.

But there also is the bitter reality that wicked people will deny their Creator, reject their Savior, and resist the Holy Spirit. For them, there is emptiness in life and outer darkness beyond the grave. Even believers will experience persecution, physical illnesses, and catastrophes. This bitter-sweet nature of God’s Word permeates the scriptures.

God will not thrust His Word into our mouths and force us to take it. He hands it to us and we must decide to receive it. Nor can He change the effects the Word will have in our lives: there will be both sorrow and joy, bitterness and sweetness.

V. YOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN.

Revelation 10:11 (NASB)

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

The voice from heaven tells John to eat the little scroll so that he may effectively “prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings”. The prophet, the preacher, the teacher, the disciple – all must do more than read the scriptures; they must allow the words to penetrate into our very lives. It is those who “eat” the scriptures and internalize them who are the most effective witnesses for the Lord.

CONCLUSION:

What is the interlude telling us? Since we are spiritually protected our job is to make our witness known. It may result in suffering and possibly even death. But you are in good company because it happened to your Savior also.

The seals say you are spiritually secure and the trumpets say since you are spiritually secure do the Lord's work and if you die it is OK because, just like Christ, you will be resurrected and YOU will be in the presence of God!

This is the Day!