

## THE ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK

### Chapter 10

An interlude (Rev. 10) follows the sounding of the first six trumpets (Rev. 8-9). This is a new vision in chapter ten, as indicated by the opening words, **10:1** And I saw *cf. 6:1; 7:1; 8:2, etc.* This ‘mighty angel’ is yet ‘another’ angel ‘come down from Heaven’, distinguished from the other angels, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. This is *not* the Lord Jesus for a number of reasons including, firstly, the word ‘another’ indicates ‘another of the same kind’, like the aforementioned six trumpet angels. Secondly, always in the Book of Revelation, angels are angels. Thirdly, this angel is not Jesus because each time Jesus does appear, He has a special title, for example, Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (**1:11**) ... the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David ... the Lamb (**5:5,8**). Fourthly, other ‘mighty’ angels appear in Revelation (**5:2; 18:21**). Fifthly, Jesus would *not* lift up His hand to Heaven <sup>6</sup> And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, He would not swear by Himself, - since Jesus is God, He *would* swear by Himself (Heb. 6:13). Sixthly, this ‘mighty angel’ is not God because if it was, this would add *another* coming of Christ to the earth. ... And seventhly, this is *not* the Lord Jesus because Jesus is not simply ‘mighty’, He is the *Almighty!* Therefore, this is an *angel*, another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire (v.1). ... He is powerful, he is mighty, he brings judgment, and he *reflects* God’s Heavenly glory.

Previously in chapter four, John was caught up into Heaven. At the beginning of chapter ten though, he is watching the scene from earth, **10:1** And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven ... <sup>2</sup> ... and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. In the mighty angel’s hand, he had a little book open (v.2). The word for ‘a little book’ (βιβλιαρίδιον) describes a smaller edition of a ‘book’/‘scroll’ (βιβλίον, Rev. 5:1ff.). Since this *mighty* angel has one foot in the sea and the other foot on the earth, the message from this book is for the whole world. Some commentators suggest this ‘little book’ is the Bible, which is continuing to be preached across the globe. He called out with a voice as loud as the roar of a lion, and the great sound reverberated *mightily* from this ‘*mighty* angel’.

It seems John understood the message for he was about to write it down, when he was told not to, I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not (v.4). The voice from Heaven, - whoever it was ... God the Father, Jesus Christ, or an angel, - is not revealed, but the voice tells John not to write about the utterances of the ‘seven thunders’, so he did as he was instructed. Since we are not told specifically what the message was, these ‘utterances’ of the ‘seven thunders’, relating to future judgment, were the only words in the Book of Revelation which remained sealed.

Then the same mighty angel, as he continued to stand with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth (v.5, cf. v.2), raised his right hand to Heaven (his left hand was holding the ‘little book’, (v.2,8) and he made an oath (cf. Dt. 32:40; Dan. 12:7), <sup>6</sup> And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, *who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein*, that there should be time no longer. ... There will be no more delaying of the final judgments preceding the coming of Christ. ... The prayers of the saints will soon be answered to the glory of God and to the relief of His people, <sup>7</sup> But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound *in the days of the trumpet call (the period which includes the pouring out of the seven bowls to the final consummation, ch. 16ff)*, the mystery of God should be finished *ended, accomplished, completed*, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. The time for the final acts of God’s judgment upon the earth has arrived, and the disciple’s question to the Lord Jesus on the mount of Olives is about to be fulfilled, what shall be the sign of thy coming, *and of the end of the world?* (Mt. 24:3).

The mystery of God (v.7) does not mean something secret, mysterious or unfathomable but it is God’s purpose being revealed to His people, - it is for His people to understand and be confident He is carrying out His will. Other examples of this ‘mystery’ include **I Cor. 15:51** Behold, I shew you a *mystery*; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ... **Eph. 3:4** when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery* of Christ ... **I Tim. 3:16** great is the *mystery* of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. ... To the unsaved, God’s ways and His will *are* a mystery, but to the believer many of the mysteries have been made known in the Word of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, they all work towards the consummation of the Divine plan in bringing His Kingdom in Christ to fulfilment, as Paul explains, **Eph. 1:10** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: <sup>11</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: <sup>12</sup> That we should be to the praise of his glory.

The same voice from Heaven which John heard prohibiting him from writing the words of the seven thunders (v.4) now instructs him to go to the mighty angel and receive the ‘little book’ from out of his left hand (v.8). From the commencement of receiving the visions in this Book of Revelation, John has been an active participant (1:17; 4:1; 5:4,5; 7:13,14), and as he did before, he readily obeys the clear instruction from the voice which *he* heard from heaven (8). ... He went to the mighty angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book (v.9). In obedience to ‘the voice from Heaven’, the angel handed the book over to John. On receiving the ‘little

book', the mighty angel instructed him, Take it, and eat [*devour*] it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey (v.9; cf. Ezek. 2:9 - 3:3).

The act of eating the scroll in Hebrew tradition symbolized the absorbing and assimilating of God's Word, e.g. **Ps. 19:10** More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb ... **Jer. 15:16** Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts ... **Ezek. 3:1** Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. <sup>2</sup> So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. <sup>3</sup> And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

The message of the book is *delicious* to the believer because the book explains how God will be glorified across and throughout all His creation, and His people will receive all the benefits and joy of His glory. However, on their way towards the end, God's people will suffer a 'bitterness' which will result in persecution, suffering, and martyrdom. While the message from the angel was one of great hope and encouragement (it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey), it will be followed by great trials (it shall make thy belly bitter) leading up to the second coming of the Messiah. ... Also, as sweet as God's judgment on a rebellious world deserves to be, at the same time the realization of the terrible doom awaiting unbelievers turned the initial sweet taste into a taste of bitterness.

The concluding verse in this chapter is a command to ninety-year-old-plus John the apostle, imprisoned on the island of Patmos for his faithfulness to the Lord Jesus, his life's work for the Master was not finished. As he continued to listen, **11** he [*the mighty angel*] said unto me [*John*], Thou *must* prophesy [*foretell events under Divine inspiration*] *again* before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. ... You are not finished yet, John, for you have to prophesy *again* as you were instructed at the beginning of the visions, **1:19** Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

This reaffirmation of his ministry reminds us how the work is not finished until God says it is over, and we pass into Glory. The end is approaching, but it has not arrived yet, so keep on heralding the message, because you *must* (v.11), - your calling in Christ necessitates Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings [*cf. 5:9*], ... even through the terrible times of the seventh and final trumpet, and the seven vials ... until the consummation at the coming of God's glorious Kingdom. ... **Mt. 6:9** Pray ye [*the Lord Jesus commands*]: Our Father Who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **10** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.