

Revelation 10

Revelation 10:1-11:14 is a parenthetical vision. Just as God paused after the sixth seal (Chapter 7), now we pause after the sixth trumpet. God temporarily interrupted the sequence of trumpet judgments and moved from the outpouring of God's wrath on unbelievers, to the consolation and encouragement of believers. This interruption between judgments displays God's mercy in allowing more opportunity for repentance. It's like God brought things to the brink, then pulled back a little to grant mankind more time to repent.

How did John describe the angel he saw next (v. 1)? He was a mighty angel who had come down from heaven, robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.

What did he have in his hand (v. 2)? A little scroll.....laying open.

What was the significance of the fact that it was open? The tense of the Greek verb translated "was open" (perfect passive) indicates that someone had already opened it, and it was already unrolled in his hand.

Where did the angel stand (v. 2)? He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

What did that position convey? Spanning the earth and the sea symbolized this angel's sovereignty and authority over the whole world. It conveys the image of taking possession. This angel is claiming the world for Christ. God is going to take back what is rightfully His (Psalms 2:6-8).¹ It was a picture of worldwide dominion.

What happened when he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion (v. 3)? The voices of the seven thunders spoke. In the physical world, thunder warns of coming storms. In the spiritual world, thunder warns of impending storms of judgment. In this verse, these thunders spoke to prepare John for tribulation to come.

What was John told to do with the message the thunders gave (v. 4)? Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.

What did that indicate? While God has revealed much, there are secrets which God has not seen fit to reveal to man at this time. Most likely all the remaining judgments that will take place on the earth during the great tribulation. Evidently, the message was so awesome that man could not handle it. It is sealed and is never revealed in this book. The Lord will likely explain and reveal this Himself when we are with Him.²

By Whom did the angel swear (v. 6)? *He swore by Him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it,* i.e. God himself. The basis of the oath is the person and work of God (Revelation 4:9-11). The phrase "*who lives forever and ever*" sums up all the attributes of God—who He is. The three-fold division of creation sums up all the deeds of God—what He has done.³

What was the oath he swore (v. 6)? There will be no more delay in the outpouring of God's wrath! Once the seventh trumpet is sounded, God will act swiftly to establish His righteous rule on earth. The time for repentance has also come to a close. The period of God's patience is over. The bowl judgments will now come very quickly. There was absolutely no turning back.

What would happen when the seventh angel was about to sound (v. 7)? In the days when the seventh angel was about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

What was the mystery of God? In the Bible, a "mystery" is a divine truth previously undisclosed but now made known through Christ or His apostles. It's hard to say exactly what this precise mystery of God is, because the phrase – or its equivalent – is used for many different aspects of God's plan. Some examples would include:

- The ultimate conversion of the Jewish people is called a mystery (Romans 11:25)
- God's purpose for the church is called a mystery (Ephesians 3:3-11)
- The bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles is called a mystery (Romans 11:25)
- The living presence of Jesus in the believer is called the mystery of God (Colossians 1:27-2:3)
- The gospel itself is called the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:3)

However, in this context, the mystery of God probably refers to the unfolding of His resolution of all things, the finishing of His plan for all humanity. In this context, the “mystery of God” refers to the fulfillment of God’s defeat of evil (Daniel 12:7a). The mystery of God describes the good news of the redemption of creation and the bad news of the judgment of the wicked.⁴ We see this picture described in 11:15, when it was announced that God has won the final victory over evil, the entire world has become His and His alone and He will reign forever.

What was John next told to do (v. 8)? Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.

What was he to do with it (v. 9)? Take it and eat it.

What did the scroll contain? The contents of the scroll are not revealed, but it probably contains all the information regarding the rest of the tribulation.

Eating is a universal idiom for receiving knowledge. John is being challenged to know and understand God’s prophetic Word. But biblical knowledge is not merely knowledge for the sake of knowledge. It refers to assimilating knowledge into one’s life. God wanted John to digest the contents of the book so that it would change him personally. He needed personal transformation. This is also true for each of us. It is not enough to read the Bible; we must apply the Bible to our lives. Reading the Bible without applying is like eating without chewing.⁵

What effects did it have on him (v. 10)? *It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.* This is a sweet and sour scroll. God’s Word can be bittersweet and hard to digest. Sometimes God’s Word can give us heartburn. Other times it is sweet to the taste.

We must understand that prophecy and Scripture, as a whole, are bittersweet. There are sweet promises in the Bible, but there are also bitter warnings. God’s Word can bring joy to our heart, but at times it brings sorrow. It both blesses us and burdens us. People get excited about studying prophecy. Preaching from Revelation thrills people. Unquestionably, there are some exciting things about this book. It has a sweet taste. But it also burdens the believer about his unsaved family and friends, and is a stern warning of judgment-to-come to the unbeliever.⁶

Note that John tasted God’s revealed Word. It is not enough to know what it contains. We must appropriate it into our lives. We must assimilate it and digest it. Too many Christians do not make the Word part of their inner being. God won’t force-feed us with His Word; rather, He exhorts us to take it from His hand, eat it and assimilate it into our lives. The Word of God is the food of the Christian. It is compared to bread (Matthew 4:4), milk (1 Peter 2:2), meat (1 Corinthians 3:1-2), and honey (Psalms 119:103).⁷

What was John to do then (v. 11)? *You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.* The remaining chapters of Revelation would fulfill that mandate. This renewed commission stresses that what follows would be more burdensome than what John had prophesied so far.⁸

Whatever the content of the scroll, it is connected to John’s command to prophesy to *all* men. John’s prophecy spoke of the fate of the *entire world*, not just one nation, empire or emperor, such as the Roman Empire.

¹ Keith Krell, Live Like You’re Leaving: Revelation, Copyright ©2003, Bible.org

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Revelation, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 120