

Revelation 10

Another Mighty Angel

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Lesson 8: Revelation 10:1-11

Introduction

In this lesson we will study chapter 10 of Revelation. In this chapter three main things draw our attention: the first is a “mighty angel” (10:1); the second, “the seven thunders” (10:2); and the third, “the little open scroll” (10:3).

Another Mighty Angel

The main character of this chapter is a mighty angel that John saw coming down from heaven. Notice his description:

- ❖ He is wrapped in a cloud
- ❖ He has a rainbow over his head
- ❖ His face shines like the sun
- ❖ His legs are like pillars of fire

When this angel “sets his feet” on the earth, he cries out with a roar like a lion and seven thunders respond. Remember that the number seven in Scripture suggests what is complete or perfect, and by extension, God himself (See Rev. 4:5; Is.11:1-2). We may think of this as seven dimensions of the person of God or seven facets of his glory (imagine a diamond cut to seven sides). As for the thunder, God's voice in the Bible often is described as thunder (Psalms 29:3; Rev. 4:5, 8:5; Jo.12:20-33). These voices of thunder are an endorsement, a volley of gunfire, confirming the mission of the mighty angel.

The scroll held by the angel is open (exposed, accessible; See 10:2). However, the voices of thunder were sealed (set aside for another time; See 10:4)

1) Who is this angel?

His description reminds us of Christ, but John calls him “another” angel using a word that means another of the same kind (*allos* vs. *heteros*). Also, he makes an oath “by him who lives forever and ever” (compare with Heb.6:13-20). Consequently, this is likely an archangel (see Dan. 10:13 and Jude 9, and Luke 1:19).

We know that the closer we are to God, the more we become like him (See Ps.115:8, Gn.30:37-39, 1 Jn 3:2), It may be that several angelic beings in Revelation look like God in some ways because they are so close to him and behold his glory constantly.

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,
are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.
For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

2) What is his mission?

He comes to recapture and repossess the earth for Jesus Christ, its rightful Lord and King! The culmination of God's plan is the reclaiming earth to God the Son, who in turn will subject it to God the Father! (See I Co.15:25,28; Phl.3:21).

This mighty angel also comes to announce "that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets" (10:6-7). The cry of the martyrs and of the saints of all ages is finally being answered in its fullness!

What is "the mystery of God?" We are not sure—it's a mystery (hidden)! But it may be a reference to the problem of evil or what Paul calls "mystery of lawlessness" (See 2 Thessalonians 2:7-17)—that evil is rampant in a world created and sustained by an all-powerful and all-loving God. Yet, in truth, only briefly, before the Fall, did God reign over the earth, and even so only indirectly through his stewards, Adam and Eve. Since then, though the earth is the Lord's (Ps.24:1), it is under the rule of an usurper (See 1 Jn.5:19; Eph.2:2, 6:12; Jn.12:31, 14:30, Ps.8:6, Hb.2:8). But the real owner and ruler is coming to take back what is His!

Throughout the Bible and throughout history, the saints have talked about "end times". The world often mocks this notion (2 Pt.3:3-4) as "pie in the sky by-and-and by." But even the believer, in the midst of struggles, often asks God, "When? How much longer?" (See Rev.6:10).

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter reminds us that the end will come, even if God delays it temporarily to extend the opportunity of salvation to more people (See 2 Pt.3:9-10). But when we get to the seventh trumpet, "there will be no more delay!"

The final mission of the angel was to give the scroll to John and tell him, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey" (See 10:2, 9)

The Prophet and the Scroll

John heard the same voice from heaven that he had spoken to him before, commanding him to take the book from the angel's hand (See 10:8). John does and the angel tells him to eat it. John is not the first prophet to have to eat a book given by God (See Ez.3:1-3; Jr.15:15-16; Ps.119:11).

Digestion is the process of breaking down food into nutrients that can be used by the body. In a very real sense, we are what we eat! Only when the book is assimilated and internalized, the prophet would be ready to serve. The process would be both bitter (in the stomach, inside) and sweet (in the mouth, to the outside), only after eating the scroll was John commissioned to prophesy.

The saints are still called to eat the Word, the written and the Living Word (Ps.119:103; Jn.6:53; Mt.4:4, 26:26). In this assimilation, we become like Jesus and can be used by Him.

Closing Thoughts

- God's clock is never early and never late, and it never stops ticking!
- Only by feeding on the Word can we live it and declare it.