

# THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE SCROLL

Revelation 10:1-11

Review is one of the most important practices in learning. Few if any of us recall, much less master, something we hear or read only once. Yet we have this idea that if we've heard or read something once we've got it; we don't need to hear it again.

Review is key to understanding and assimilating information. In a recent conversation, Bob Bush was emphasizing meditation as an essential element in Bible study. What are we doing when we meditate upon a passage of God's Word? We're reviewing it by turning it over and over in our minds.

As simple as it is, review is one of the most powerful and fruitful practices in learning Scripture.

My hope is that one of the lasting effects of this study in Revelation will be that we are able to remember the book's flow from beginning to end. Wouldn't it be great if in a year from now we could open Revelation and remember the major sections and themes?

To that end, turn to Revelation and review with me the first nine chapters.

Jesus gives us the three fold division of Revelation:

## **Revelation 1:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> *Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.*

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to highlight this verse in your Bible and write in the margin something like this, "Outline of Book".

Revelation 1:9-20 is the first section of the book: *the things that you have seen*. John saw a vision of Jesus moving out in judgment – first with His church and then with the world.

Revelation chapters 2-3 form the second section of Revelation: *those (things) that are*. Judgment begins with God's people. The seven letters of chapters 2-3 pertain to the Church Age stretching from Pentecost 33 AD to the Rapture of the Church.

Revelation chapters 4-19 form the third section of the book of Revelation: *those (things) that are to take place after this*. Judgment extends to the world.

Chapters 4-5 reveal the heavenly courtroom from which the Tribulation judgments will be executed.

Chapter 6 contains the first series of judgments, the Seal Judgments, executed during the first quarter of the seven year Tribulation.

Chapter 7 is a parentheses between Seal Judgments 6 & 7. Chapter 7 reveals the sealing and sending of 144,000 Messianic Jewish evangelists on a worldwide evangelistic campaign. As a result of their witness, myriads will be saved during the first half of the Tribulation.

Chapter 8:1-5 picks up where chapter 6 leaves off; it reveals the seventh Seal Judgment.

Chapters 8:6 - 9:21 reveal six of the seven Trumpet Judgments. The Trumpet Judgments take place in the second quarter of the seven year Tribulation.

Chapters 10:1 - 11:14 are a parentheses in the sequence of Trumpet Judgments. Just as there was a parentheses between Seal Judgments 6 & 7, here also is a parentheses between Trumpet Judgments 6 & 7.

The first part of this parentheses deals with John's vision of a mighty angel and a little book. Let's begin with Revelation 10:1-2a.

## THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL (10:1-2a)

### Revelation 10:1–2a (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. <sup>2a</sup> He had a little scroll open in his hand.

Following the sixth Trumpet Judgment (9:13-21) the Apostle John saw *another mighty angel*. This is another angel (Grk., “another of the same kind”) distinct from the sixth angel who sounded the sixth trumpet (9:13). He is *coming down from heaven* emphasizing his origin and his heavenly authority. Clouds are often associated with divine intervention and judgment (Dan. 7:13; 1 Thess. 4:17). His being *clothed with a cloud* symbolizes his role in executing God’s judgment. The rainbow encircling his head reminds us of the rainbow around God’s throne and signals this angel is acting with divine authority (4:3). His face reflects God’s Shekinah glory and his legs like pillars of fire symbolize divine judgment.

The *little scroll* open in his hand is not the seven-sealed scroll of 5:1. A different word is used in the Greek to distinguish this scroll from the former. Based on what happens in this vision, this little scroll contains revelation concerning the final series of judgments, the Bowl Judgments.

## THE ACTIONS OF THE ANGEL (10:2b-7)

### Revelation 10:2b–7 (ESV)

<sup>2b</sup> And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup> and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. <sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.” <sup>5</sup> And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven <sup>6</sup> and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, <sup>7</sup> 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.

Three times it is stated that this angel is standing on the land and sea (10:2, 5, 8).

Why?

His stance is that of a conqueror taking possession.

His roar is that of a conqueror. Lions roar when they’ve made a kill and they roar as they patrol their territory.

His declaration announces there will be no more delay in God’s judgments the completion of which will result in the defeat of His enemies and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

The actions of this mighty angel – his stance, roar and declaration – are for the purpose of asserting the certainty and nearness of the completion of God’s judgments.

According to verse 3 the roar of this angel will elicit a response from *the seven thunders*. What these seven thunders are is not explained in this passage nor elsewhere in Scripture. That they are personal beings is indicated by the fact that John intended to write down what they said, but was prohibited by a voice from heaven. We will have to wait until the Resurrection to understand who the seven thunders are and what they said to John.

John records in verses 5 & 6 that, with his feet planted on the sea and the land, the mighty angel takes the position of oath taking—raising his right hand—in order to affirm the plan and purposes of God to take possession of the earth without further delay.

Let’s look closely at the angel’s declaration beginning in the latter part of verse 6:

### Revelation 10:6b–7 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> ...that there would be no more delay, <sup>7</sup> 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.

The angel declares that in the days of the seventh Trumpet Judgment the *mystery of God* will be fulfilled. This indicates that the seventh Trumpet Judgment is not a singular event, but a process. This is explained by the fact that the seventh Trumpet Judgment contains the seven Bowl Judgments. The seventh Trumpet Judgment is a process because it is a series of judgments: the seven Bowl Judgments.

The angel declares that with the sounding of the seventh Trumpet Judgment (i.e the seven Bowl Judgments) the *mystery of God would be fulfilled*. What is the *mystery of God*?

In the New Testament a *mystery* refers to something that was totally unrevealed in the Old Testament, and only revealed in the New Testament.

The seventh Trumpet Judgment and the subsequent Bowl Judgments will bring the *mystery of God* to completion. The seventh Trumpet Judgment and the subsequent Bowl Judgments contain the *mystery of God*. What is it that they reveal that was not revealed in the Old Testament? John states that the *mystery of God* is in accordance with what He announced to his servants the prophets. The Old Testament prophets revealed a period of the wrath of God that will lead to the Messianic Kingdom, so this is not the mystery. The mystery that will be revealed is the form God's wrath will take to destroy the counterfeit trinity of Satan and establish the Messianic Kingdom.

The *mystery of God* is that it will be by means of the seven Bowl Judgments (the seventh Trumpet Judgment) that He will conquer the counterfeit trinity and establish the Messianic Kingdom.

This was not revealed in the Old Testament.

The little scroll open in the mighty angel's hand contains the revelation of the seven Bowl Judgments. By means of the Apostle John's ministry, the contents of the little scroll will be revealed. What was not revealed in the Old Testament will be revealed in the New, namely, that by means of the seven Bowl Judgments God's judgment of mankind and the counterfeit trinity will be completed followed by the Messianic Kingdom.

In verses 8-11 John is directed to take the little scroll and eat it.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO JOHN (10:8-11)

#### Revelation 10:8-11 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."<sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."<sup>10</sup> And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter.<sup>11</sup> And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

John was instructed to take the little scroll and eat it. He was told that the little scroll would be sweet in his mouth but sour to his stomach. What does this mean? This figure of eating is a figure of speech conveying the idea of learning and assimilation. We use this same figure of speech in the same way. We hear a new idea that we need to think about and what do we say? "I need to chew on that for awhile" or we say "I need some time to digest what you're saying."

John was told to take and eat the little scroll containing the prophecies of the Bowl Judgments. In other words, he was being told to take the little scroll and ponder it deeply and let its contents affect him before he wrote it down.

John did so and, as the mighty angel predicted, the scroll was sweet as honey in his mouth, but bitter in his stomach. This means John was delighted with the revelation that the defeat of God's enemies and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom was near. But his heart was made heavy as he read of the destruction of unbelievers, the evil of the counterfeit trinity and the persecution of Israel.

Finally, John was told that he must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings. This he will do as he writes out the content of the little scroll revealing the seventh Trumpet Judgment which results in the the seven Bowl Judgments that will be poured out on the earth.

## REFLECTION

The significance of this vision is that it emphasizes the certainty of God's victory and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

But it is also instructive as to how prophecy should affect us.

On the one hand, studying prophecy is "sweet to our mouths". Fulfilled prophecy increases our faith. It's fascinating to see prophecies being fulfilled in our lifetime. It is exciting and comforting to know the future that is ours in Christ Jesus. It is a "sweet" thing to know that myriads of people will be saved even during the Tribulation. And the sweetest thing of all is our Lord's victory and exaltation as *the King of kings and the Lord of lords*. Truly there are many "sweet" things that come out of our study of end times.

On the other hand, studying prophecy should be "bitter in our stomachs". How can we read about the destruction of the earth's dry land, salt water and fresh water and not be deeply grieved? How can we read about the death of ½ of humanity by the middle of the Tribulation and not be horrified? How can we not be shocked by the brutality and cruelty of the counterfeit trinity and the demon hordes unleashed during the Tribulation? It should sober us and move us to action realizing that people we know may enter the Tribulation and suffer God's wrath.

Like John, we need to take and eat the book of Revelation. We need to learn it, assimilate it and let it affect us deeply – and then move out in ministry. God did not reveal the future to satisfy our curiosity. What He revealed about tomorrow should affect how we live today.

The believers at Thessalonica let prophecy affect their lives. Notice what the Apostle Paul said about them in 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

### **1 Thessalonians 1:6–10 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,* <sup>7</sup> *so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.* <sup>8</sup> *For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.* <sup>9</sup> *For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,* <sup>10</sup> *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

May the word of the Lord continue to sound forth from us both individually and corporately. May we all serve the living God as we wait for his Son, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.