

The Church of the Servant King

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PROPHECY SERIES

(Proph21K_Revelation_chp10_The Little Book)

In chapter 10, we are still under the effects and consequences of the sounding of the sixth Trumpet. It is not until chapter 11, verse 14 that we read of the announcement that the second “woe” (the sixth trumpet judgment) is past. So, rather than being an interlude or parenthesis, chapter 10 and the first half of chapter 11 are simply a continuation of the narrative that is sequentially related to the sixth trumpet judgment (the second “woe”).

One reason that it is likely that the contents of chapter 10 were inserted is that the mighty angel and the scroll serve as a poignant reminder that God will keep His word. So, the emphasis briefly shifts from the outpouring of God’s wrath on unbelievers to the consolation and encouragement of believers.

The Mighty Angel with the Little Book (10:1-7)

And 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. And 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 And 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 And 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 shall 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.

Verse	Phrase	Notes
1	“...another strong angel...”	<p>Some have identified this angel as Jesus Christ; however, this is not a good explanation for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Greek word translated “another” is <i>allon</i> (Gr. <i>ἄλλον</i>) means another of the same kind, i.e. an angel• This angel is seen as having placed a foot on the earth to make an announcement – something that Christ will not do until the 2nd Advent.• This angel swears “by Him who lives forever and ever” in verse 6 – not an oath that Jesus is likely to make. <p>Some have identified this angel to be the archangel Gabriel or Michael (Dan 8:16; 11:1; 12:7). Michael is the angel that stands for the children of Israel (Dan 12:1) and he is called with reference to Israel “Michael your prince” (Dan 10:13, 21; Jude 9 and Rev 12:7). However, there is nothing in our passage that requires this identification. Furthermore, Michael is referred to by name elsewhere.</p> <p>Some have equated the strong angel of this verse to the</p>

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		<p>strong angel of 5:2. However, the Revelation allows for more than one strong angel to have existed (cf. 18:1).</p> <p>Conclusion: This “strong angel” is in fact one of perhaps many “strong angels” in heaven.</p>
1	“...clothed with a cloud... rainbow was upon his head...face was like the sun...feet like pillars of fire...”	<p>A cloud is often associated with divine movement in Scripture, e.g. Psa 18:11; 104:3; Isa 19:1; Ezek 1:4; Matt 24:30; Rev 1:7).</p> <p>It is interesting to note the close correlation between the description of this “strong angel” and John’s description of the resurrected Jesus in 1:12-16. Evidently, the “strong angel” had observable characteristics that were similar to other things that we have seen associated with heaven, particularly the throne room of heaven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rainbow” – cf. a rainbow is seen around the throne with an emerald appearance in 4:3. • “Face was like the sun” – cf. the countenance of our resurrected Lord is described as being “like the sun shining in its strength” in 1:16. • “Feet like pillars of fire” – cf. the description of our Lord’s feet in 1:15 as “like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace.” <p>The similarities between these descriptions of the throne room of heaven, our resurrected Lord and this “strong angel” is probably due to the fact that, like Moses whose appearance was altered after his encounter with God, the appearance of the strong angel at least partially reflected all the glory of heaven.</p>
2	“...a little book which was open...”	<p>The “sealed” scroll (chp 5) has already been opened and now the little scroll that is not sealed is opened and it contains new instructions or revelation.</p>
2	“...his right foot on the sea and his left on the land...”	<p>The planting of the feet on both the sea and the land represents the formal possession of both sea and land. Elsewhere in Revelation, the “sea” and the “land” is part of a distinction between Gentiles and Israel (Jews). (See 13:1 cf. 13:11 as an example). Regardless, our phrase in 10:2 is representative of total possession. The right to execute judgment was established in chapter 5; here in chapter 10, we see the exercise of that right.</p>
3	“...the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices...”	<p>This is not a cry of distress, but of power and authority and might. The content of the cry is one of judgment. The Hebrew prophets foretold of such a voice. See Joel 3:16 and Jeremiah 25:29-31. John observed similar soundings in 4:5. During Jesus’ public ministry, some said it thundered when a voice from heaven spoke to Jesus (Jn 12:29).</p>
4	“...seal up the things...and do not write them...”	<p>John heard and understood what the heavenly voice said for he was about to write. However, he was instructed not to write the contents.</p> <p>Later, in Revelation 22:10, John is told “do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book.” Nevertheless, there are certain things within the book that were sealed up as was the case with Daniel (Dan 8:26, 27; 12:9).</p> <p>What does this mean? Evidently, there are certain aspects and details of the Tribulation judgments and events that God does not intend to reveal to man in advance of the Tribulation period.</p>

6	“...and swore by Him who lives forever and ever....that there shall be delay no longer...”	<p>We must remember that the whole series of these Trumpet judgments (including the seventh trumpet which expands into the seven bowls or vials) is God’s response to the prayers of persecuted and martyred saints (6:10-11).</p> <p>In 6:11, the martyred saints in heaven are told to “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, should be completed also.”</p> <p>That time is now about to be fulfilled and the execution of judgment will no longer be delayed.</p>
7	“...in the days of the voice of the seventh angel which he is about to sound...”	<p>This is a reference to the seventh trumpet judgment that is sounded by the seventh angel (cf. 11:15). The sounding of the seventh trumpet judgment results in the pouring out of the seven vial or bowl judgments – the final set of judgments upon the earth during the Tribulation period. These vial or bowl judgments will complete the judgments which God had hitherto kept secret.</p>
7	“...then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets...”	<p>The “mystery of God” here is not the same as the Pauline concept of the mystery in connection with the new dispensation of the body of Christ. There are other references to “mystery” or “secret” in Scripture that are not related to the present dispensation. For instance, in Matthew 13:10, 11, 34, and 35, spiritual truths related to the kingdom of heaven (i.e. the Messianic Kingdom) are referenced.</p> <p>Here, in Revelation, God has revealed the mystery of His coming – a mystery about which partial revelation was provided by the Hebrew prophets of old (Heb 1:1-2) and a mystery about which John was provided more details. But, even John was not allowed to write all of the details that he observed. There is much more that we learn regarding the events leading to and surrounding the 2nd Coming of our Lord from the Revelation given to John. However, there are still many details regarding the Lord’s 2nd Coming of which we are still ignorant.</p>

The *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* articulates a good explanation of the reference to “the mystery of God” in our passage.

Clearly there is some type of progression in the seals, trumpets, and bowls that nears its conclusion as the seventh trumpet is about to sound (v. 7). When the seventh trumpet is finally sounded, there is an announcement that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” and that the time has come to judge the dead, to reward the saints, and to destroy the earth destroyers (11:15, 18). These events are recorded in the remaining chapters of the book, which include the seven bowl judgments and the new heavens and the new earth. Thus here in 10:7 it is announced that “the mystery of God” is accomplished. “The mystery of God” is his purposes for man and the world as revealed to both OT and NT prophets.¹

¹ Frank E. Gaebelain, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1989-1998), electronic version.

John Eats the Little Book (10:8-11)

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

Verse	Phrase	Notes
9	"Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey ..."	<p>The eating of the book has its counterpart in Ezekiel 2:9 and 3:3. Ezekiel ate the pages of the scroll that had been given to him and it was sweet to the taste. "Eating" is a Hebrew idiom for receiving knowledge, just as we use the word "digesting" or "digested" to refer to assimilating the information to which we have been exposed.</p> <p>Ezekiel ate the words of God so that he might speak the words of God (Ezek 3:4). We see similar analogies used in John's Gospel (Jn 6:47, 48, 53, 54).</p> <p>So, the meaning of Revelation 10:9 is this – there was sweetness to John in the knowledge that the prayers of God's saints were to be answered; however there was bitterness in the knowledge of the results of those answered prayers.</p>
11	"And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."	John is commanded to prophesy again. This is a reference to all of the remaining prophecy found in the book of Revelation – prophecies which lead up to Christ's second coming. The renewed commission is an indication that all that is upcoming is far more burdensome to John than what has been previously disclosed to him.