

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A0551 – December 18, 2005 – Revelation 10:1-11 – The Little Scroll

Revelation 10:1-11 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. 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 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 Then 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 will 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. ⁸ Then 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 So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." ¹⁰ I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was 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."

Outline

- e. The Little Scroll (10:1-11)**
 - i. A Climactic Proclamation (10:1-7)**
 - ii. The Re-commissioning of John (10:8-11)**

e. No Longer Delay (10:1-11)

There is a break between the 6th (9:13) and 7th Trumpet (11:15). You should recall that this follows the earlier pattern of a break between the 6th and the 7th Seal. Between the 6th and 7th Seals two events took place: 1) 144,000 Jews were Sealed (7:1-8) and 2) A Great Multitude From Every Nation Seen in Heaven (7:9-17). Between the 6th and 7th Trumpets two events will also take place: 1) An Angel With a Little Scroll (10:1-11) and 2) The Two Witnesses (11:1-14).

The heart of chapter 10 is the concept that there will no longer be delay. God has been delaying the most horrific judgments in order to give people an opportunity to repent. But there will no longer be delay. God is going to swiftly remove the earth-dwellers beginning with the 7th Trumpet which contains the seven bowls (16:1ff).

This chapter also reveals a little scroll. The scroll is little in comparison to the seven sealed scroll which contains all the tribulation judgments. This small scroll signifies that there are many sweet things to come; but in the end, there is also bitterness. The sweet things are Christ's Second Coming, the Millennial Kingdom and the New Heavens and New Earth. The bitter things are the remaining Tribulation judgments, the Great White Throne Judgment and the Lake of Fire.

i. A Climactic Proclamation (10:1-7)

a. Appearance of the Angel (10:1)

Revelation 10:1 And I saw another (of the same kind) strong (ischuron) angel descending from heaven, having clothed himself with a cloud, and the rainbow upon his head, and his face like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;

And I saw (kai eidon) marks a new aspect of John's trumpet visions. What John *saw* was *another strong angel*. The first *strong angel* was seen in Rev 5:2 announcing a universal search for one worthy to break the seals of the seven-sealed scroll. Here we find a *strong angel* of the same kind. Both angels are associated with scrolls and both have a *great voice*. This *strong angel* is seen *descending from heaven* to earth.

As for this angel's appearance. First, he is *clothed with a cloud*. *Cloud* comings are frequently associated with judgment as here. Second, he has a *rainbow upon his head*.

We saw an emerald **rainbow** around God's throne in Rev 4:3. A **rainbow** (*iris*) may be an arc or a circle. Here it is a full circle, also known as a halo, and has many colors. It is from this passage that the concept of angels wearing halo's find's scriptural support. The **rainbow** reminds us of the Flood in Noah's day and God's promise to never destroy the earth by water again. It thereby symbolizes mercy. Even though there is judgment for the earth-dwellers it is tempered by mercy. Third, **his face is like the sun**. It is extremely bright and illuminates the surroundings. In all likelihood his face **is like the sun** because this angel has been in heaven in God's presence. As Noah's face glowed after being in the presence of the Shechinah Glory so this angel's face glows from being in the presence of God in heaven. Fourth, **his feet are like pillars of fire**. The **feet** are what walk around or firmly planted give us stability. That this angel's **feet are like pillars of fire** reminds us of the **pillars of fire** that led Israel at night during the wilderness wanderings. **fire** is reminiscent of coming judgment but here it is tempered with mercy.

b. Possession of the Angel (10:2a)

Revelation 10:2a and he has in his hand a little scroll which was open.

In this angel's **hand** he holds **a little scroll which** lays **open**. An open scroll signifies its contents are revealed and not sealed. The contents of the seven sealed scroll were sealed but the contents of this **little scroll** are **open**. It is probably **in his** left **hand** because his right hand lifts up to heaven in verse 5. We are not told what the contents of this **little scroll** are but we can safely say it has to do with the bitterness of the unbeliever's future and the sweetness of the believer's future.

c. Position of the Angel (10:2b)

Revelation 10:2b And he placed his right foot upon the sea but his left upon the land;

The angel's position is noteworthy. **And he placed his right foot upon the sea and his left upon the land**. This **strong angel** is obviously of immense stature, able at the same time to bridge both land and sea in his stance. In all likelihood his stance signifies his purpose to take possession of both the sea and the land. The **sea and the land** signify the whole earth. This picture is repeated three times in this discourse signifying its importance to the vision. God's purpose is to take possession of the whole earth and rule in righteousness.

d. Proclamation of the Angel (10:3a)

Revelation 10:3a and he cried out with a great voice as a lion roars;

As a demonstration of his strength, the *angel...cried out with a great voice as a lion roars*. To cry *out with a great voice* shows that the proclamation is for the whole world. The depth and volume of the angel's cry is compared to a *lion roar*. A *lion's roar* can be heard over five miles away.

e. The Seven Thunders (10:3b-4a)

Revelation 10:3b-4a and when he cried out, the seven thunders spoke their voices. ⁴ And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write;

and when he cried out, the seven thunders uttered with their voices. We don't really know what the *seven thunders* are but they speak audibly and intelligently giving special revelation to John. In obedience to his commission "to write the things which you have seen, the things which are, and the things which will happen after these things" (Rev 1:19) John *was about to write* when he was interrupted.

f. Prohibition from Heaven (10:4b)

Revelation 10:4b and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal what the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them."

The *voice from heaven* is either the Father or Christ. John is commanded to "*Seal what the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them*". Clearly this is the Father or Christ because it was Christ who commissioned John to write in the first place. None other has the authority to tell John not to write. This prohibition is very similar to the prohibition given to Daniel

Daniel 12:4 "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

Thus, whatever was said by the *seven thunders* was audible and intelligent but remains concealed. This is one of many Scriptures which shows that God has revealed more than has been recorded in Scripture (cf John 21:25). Inspiration is not according to impulse but to God's restraint.

g. The Angel's Oath (10:5-7)

Revelation 10:5-7 And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the land had lifted up his right hand into heaven, ⁶ and he made an oath (to affirm the veracity of one's statement by invoking a transcendent entity) by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will no longer be delay (a period during which something is delayed), ⁷ but in the days of the sound of the seventh angel, when he will sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached the good news to His slaves the prophets.

Verse 5 repeats the angel's stance *upon the sea and upon the land* but adds that he *lifted up his right hand into heaven* apparently keeping the scroll in his left hand. There is a loose allusion here to Daniel 12:7 where an angel dressed in linen raised both his hands toward heaven and made and swore an oath. This *angel* makes a similar gesture but raises only his *right hand*. The raising of the *right hand* is common in courtrooms when a solemn oath is taken. Here he solemnly swears or makes an oath. *Oaths* like this were taken "to affirm the truthfulness of one's statement by invoking a transcendent being"¹ *and he swore by Him who lives forever and ever*. The phrase *forever and ever* always signifies God's eternal existence (cf Rev 12:7). The angel further describes him as the One *WHO CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE LAND AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT*. The angel reminds us that God created the forms on days 1-3 and then filled the forms on days 4-6

FORM	FILLED
Day 1 Heaven	Day 4 Sun, Moon, Stars
Day 2 Sea	Day 5 Fish, Great Sea Monsters
Day 3 Land	Day 6 Cattle, Creeping Things, Beasts, Man

The creation account is a very logical and systematic. This is the work of an engineer. An engineer builds domains and then fills those domains. God is perfectly logical and systematic in the way He does things. He is a model for how we ought to think and work. So, here the *angel* makes a solemn oath *by* the eternal God who is Creator of all. The ultimate announcement the angel wants to make is that *there will no longer be delay*. This is the heart of Chapter 10. Some versions say *there will no longer be time* but that is clearly not John's intention with the word *chronos*. Time will certainly go on after this point. There is still time left in the "great tribulation" and the 1,000-year Millennium to

follow as well as a time element in the New Heavens and New Earth for all creatures. Thus, the angel announces on no uncertain terms that *there will no longer be delay*. It is time to finally and completely answer the martyrs' prayer. "*How long?*" the asked until God would avenge their blood and judge the earth-dwellers (Rev 6:9-10). After the 7th seal was broken seven angels appeared and seven trumpets were given them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hands. Then a storm theophany took place and the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound (Rev 8:1-6). The trumpet judgments are God's answer to the martyr's prayers. In them God strategically judges nature and men to avenge the martyrs' blood and cause them to repent. Now there will no longer be delay. The sixth trumpet has sounded and the seventh contains the seven bowl judgments. *There will no longer be delay*. Now the fury of God's wrath will be released as never before.

Verse 7, *but in the days of the sound of the seventh angel, when he will sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached the good news to His slaves the prophets. when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet then the mystery of God is finished*. The *mystery of God is* not finished when the angel is "about to sound" but when he sounds as confirmed by

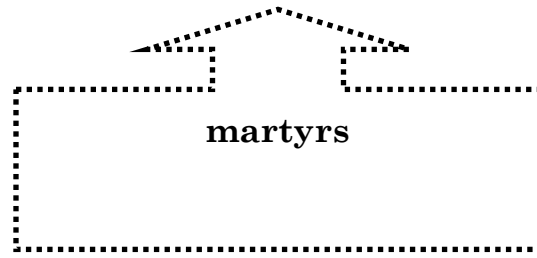
Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

But how can this be? How can God say *the mystery of God is finished* when the bowl judgments have yet to take place? Two things should be noted. First, the *seventh* trumpet contains and is the seven bowls. Notice carefully verse 7 does not say *in the day of the sound of the seventh angel* but *in the days*. The seventh trumpet lasts for many days confirming our theory that the seventh trumpet will not end until the end of the great tribulation at which point *the mystery of God* will be *finished*. The 7th Seal, 7th Trumpet, and 7th Bowl all end at the same time! Thus, when

Revelation 16:17 ...the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air...a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."

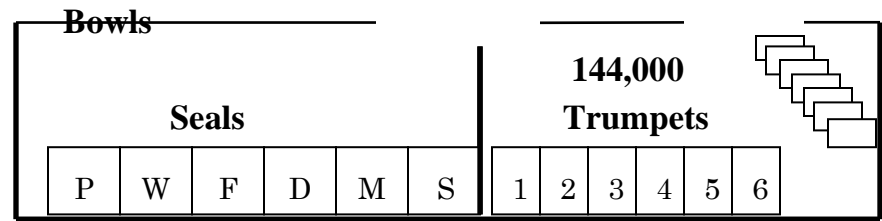
70th Week of Daniel 9

2 Divisions of Birth Pangs



n
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7 Years



1st Half (3 ½ years)

2nd Half (3 ½ years)

Second, the word *is finished* is a proleptic aorist. That is, the end is so certain that it can be announced beforehand as if already accomplished. This also explains how the “loud voices in heaven” in Rev 11:15 can say that when “the seventh angel sounded...The kingdom of the world *has become the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ.” It is as good as done. The light at the end of the tunnel can be seen by all. There is no chance for Satan the usurper and his cohorts to maintain possession of the world. Christ’s take-over and restoration are as good as accomplished!

If there *will no longer be delay* in finishing *the mystery of God*, just what is *the mystery of God*? A *mystery* was something unrevealed in the OT but now made known by God. There are twelve mysteries in the NT (see Ephesians: Lesson 28, “The 12 Mysteries of the NT”). The Tribulation period before Messiah’s coming was well-known in the OT. However, what was completely unrevealed was the chronology of Tribulation judgments and that they would come in three stages of seven judgments each (i.e., 21 judgments). Further, John adds *as He preached the good news to His slaves the prophets*. He did not just *preach*. The word means *He preached good news* (cf Rev 14:6). The *good news* includes the establishment of Christ’s kingdom on earth (cf 11:15). Christ’s redemptive works was not provided solely personal individuals but also for the whole world. It is good news that *He preached* to His servants *the prophets*, both OT and NT *prophets*. The previously undisclosed details about the Kingdom and the New Heavens and New Earth are a part of the *mystery* that will be revealed in Rev 19-22. So, the *mystery of God* is the chronology and 21 Tribulation judgments as well as previously hidden truths

regarding the Kingdom and the New Heavens and New Earth. There will no longer be delay, there is but a short time left (Rev 12:12).

ii. The Re-commissioning of John (10:8-11)

a. The Command from Heaven to Take (10:8)

Revelation 10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the open scroll in the hand of the angel standing upon the sea and upon the land."

Verses 8-11 describe the re-commissioning of John. He was first commissioned to write in Rev 1:9-11; 17-20. But when John was about to write what the seven thunders uttered, he was told not to write the things they uttered but to seal them up. In order to continue the prophetic process, God re-commissions John. This is necessary for John to start writing again. Thus, the vision and eating of the little scroll pictures the re-commissioning of John. He will take the words of God into his mouth, things both bitter and sweet, and he will reveal them to the world.

the voice...from heaven is the voice of God. God commands John *saying, "Go, take the open scroll in the hand of the angel standing upon the sea and upon the land."*

b. The Command from the Angel to Eat (10:9)

Revelation 10:9 And I departed to the angel, asking him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

Verse 9, and John *departed to the angel, asking him to give him the little scroll* as God commanded. *and the angel...said to John, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."* This is very similar to Jeremiah's description of receiving God's word

Jeremiah 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

It is also very similar to God's commissioning of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 2:8 - 3:3 "Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you." ⁹ Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll *was* in it. ¹⁰ When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe. ¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." ² So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. ³ He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

We use Scripture to interpret Scripture and here we find that the eating of a scroll signified God's revelation to His prophets which was to be sent to the world. The same picture is used here in Revelation in the re-commissioning of John to continue receiving revelation and to record it so as to send it to the world (thus, we are meant to understand John's revelation).

What is recorded on the *little scroll*? Verse 11 says it concerns *many peoples and nations and tongues and kings*. It probably contains the rest of the contents of Revelation.

The angel commands John "*Take and eat it*" and then he predicts the effects of eating it. *it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.*" *bitterness* is listed first because of what is about to follow, the most intense fury of God's wrath the world has ever seen. His hatred of sin and infinite holiness will be made visible before the whole world. *sweetness* is mentioned second because of what follows God's wrath, a time of peace and righteousness in Christ's earthly kingdom and the eternal New Heavens and New Earth.

c. The Bitter-Sweet Scroll (10:10-11)

Revelation 10:10-11 *And I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was as sweet honey; but when I ate it, my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹ And they said to me, "It is necessary for you to prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."*

In response, John *took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it*. And just as the angel predicted so it was sweet in his mouth, as sweet as honey, but when he ate it, his stomach was made bitter. *And they said to me*. *They* probably refers to God and Christ as they are the only one's fit to commission John. "*It is necessary for you to prophesy*

again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." The fact that God and Christ say this is *prophecy* once again shows that Revelation is not apocalyptic genre and must be interpreted normally throughout taking into account figures of speech. The rest of the prophecy concerns *many peoples and nations and tongues and kings* (cf 5:9). What follows is global in scope and has ramifications for all peoples, nations, tongues and even kings. None escape the sovereign counsels of God and all will fulfill His purpose.

ⁱ BAGD

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