

Revelation 10 – The Faithful Witness

We will see three events before the blowing of the seventh trumpet, The Mighty Angel's Testimony (Ch. 10), the measuring of the Temple, and the Two Witnesses (Ch. 11)

I. The Mighty Angel From Heaven (1-3a)

A. The Appearance of the Angel (1)

1. There is Debate about the Identity of This Angel

- a. Is it just a heavenly messenger? It's possible it could be a messenger bearing divine authority.
- b. Is it Christ himself (The Angel of the Lord from the OT?)

2. The Evidence For Christ From the Description

- a. He is described using language that is only used of the Father and Christ in Revelation and the OT
- b. He is clothed with a cloud
 - i. Revelation 1:7 - Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.
 - ii. Exodus 33:9 - When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses.
 - iii. Exodus 34:5 - The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.
 - iv. Numbers 11:25 - Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders
 - v. Numbers 12:5 - And the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.
 - vi. Exodus 16:10 - And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.
 - vii. Leviticus 16:2 - For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. (The Shekinah)
 - viii. Also see the Son of Man prophecy in Daniel 7

c. A Rainbow Upon His Head

- i. A description of God upon the throne from Revelation 4:3 - and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

- ii. Also described in Ezekiel's Throne vision in Ezekiel 1:28 - Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.
- d. Face Like The Sun
 - i. Almost identical language describing Jesus from Revelation 1:16 - his face was like the sun shining in full strength
 - ii. Matthew 17:2 (transfiguration)- And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun
- e. Feet Like Pillars of Fire
 - i. Revelation 1:15 - his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace,
 - ii. Ezekiel 1:27 - And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. *And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire*, and there was brightness around him.
- 3. Why is Christ called a "Mighty Angel?"
 - a. In the Old Testament, "The Angel of The Lord" is clearly the Son, the second person of the Trinity
 - b. In Exodus 3:2, "The Angel of the Lord" appears to Moses in the burning bush, but God himself speaks from the bush. He says his name is "I am" and in verse 6, he says he is the God of your Father Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - c. In Judges 2:1-4, "The Angel of the Lord" tells the people "I brought you out of Egypt."
 - d. In Genesis 22:11-18, "The Angel of the Lord" stopped Abraham from killing Isaac and said, "You have not withheld your son from me."
 - e. There are many Old Testament texts distinguishing "The Angel of the Lord" speaking as God.

B. The Authority of the Angel (2)

1. The Angel Holds the Open Book

- a. The book (or scroll) is the word Βιβλαρίδον (Biblaridon) which is the diminutive form of Biblos – this is why it is translated as "little book"
- b. We have seen this book before – In Rev. 5:1 the one who sat on the throne held the book in his right hand. The Lamb came and took the book and now we see it in the right hand of Christ
- c. The book is open because all the seals have been opened

- d. This is another reason to see the “Angel” here as Christ himself - The authority of judgment is given to Christ and he holds the authority
 - i. John 5:22-23 - The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.
 - ii. Acts 17:31 - because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

2. The Angel Stands on the Sea and Land

- a. This demonstrates His sovereignty over all the earth – meaning particularly all people
- b. Notice that almost all commentators from every viewpoint agree about the sea and the land
 - i. The Land is the people of Israel – THE land in the Septuagint is an extremely common term for the promised land
 - Isn’t it interesting here that the word Γη (Ge) is translated “land” in almost every Modern English translation (still says “earth” in the KJV)
 - This is because they recognize the specific context and translate it “land” because they see a reference to the land of Israel here.
 - ii. The Sea is the Gentiles – Isaiah 17:12 - Ah, the thunder of many peoples; they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!

C. The Angel Calls Out With A Loud Voice (3a)

- 1. This is another symbolic representation of Christ
- 2. His voice is like a lion’s roar
 - a. Of course we have Christ called the Lion of Judah
 - b. This also may reference the prophecy of Jeremiah 25:30 - The Lord will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice; he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. (This is a prophecy of God punishing those who bring his people into captivity – He gives a list of kings, including Pharaoh of Egypt, and king of Babylon)

II. The Testimony of The Seven Thunders (4)

A. The Seven Thunders Speak

1. There are many debates and speculations about what these thunders are: heavenly beings, judgment oracles?
 - a. In Rev. 6:1, one of the living creatures spoke with a voice like thunder
 - b. In Rev. 19:6, the same phrase is used of the heavenly host's praise to God
 - c. In John 12:28-29, the people heard a voice from heaven that sounded like thunder
2. We are simply not told – any identification is at best an educated guess

B. John is Commanded Not To Record Their Speech

1. The Thunders obviously speak understandably to John rather than just making noise. He prepares to write down their speech
2. John is commanded not to write down what has been said but to seal it up – (meaning keep it hidden)
 - a. Just as Paul when speaking about the man who went into the third heaven – 2 Co. 12:4 - and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.
 - b. Remember there is still things that are unknown, things God has chosen not to reveal

III. The Testimony of The Divine Witness (5-7)

A. The Angel will Give Testimony as if in Court

B. The Angel Raises His Right Hand (5)

1. This is a direct reference to Daniel 12:7 - And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.
 - a. The Son of Man raised his hand and swore by the Father that there would be a set time until the holy people's power is shattered and all these things are completed
 - b. This is what we are seeing here in Revelation – except instead of a time, times, and half a time – we see that the time has come and there will be no more delay
2. Deuteronomy 32:40-43 gives us an example of this covenant oath taken with the hand raised – “For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh—with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.” “Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges

the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land."

C. The Angel Swears By The Creator (6-7)

1. The Description of the Creator (6)

- a. Created the heavens, earth, and sea
- b. Created the things in the heavens, earth, and sea
- c. Just as in Daniel 12:7, He swears by the one who lives forever

2. The Content of The Angel's Oath (6b-7)

- a. There will be no more delay
 - i. The word here is *Χρονος* which technically means time – so saying, time will be no longer is an accurate translation
 - ii. The most scholarly lexicon we have at the moment is called the Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gengrich. (BDAG for short). It is titled *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*. In that Lexicon, The definition of Chronos applied to Revelation 10:6 is "a period during which something is delayed, respite, delay."
 - iii. Where Daniel says the judgment will wait for a time, times, and half a time – Christ now swears that the "time" of waiting will be no longer
 - iv. Bass sees the 40 years between the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem as a 40 year time of testing for Israel – they were given the Messiah and rejected him through the period of testing – now that time is over.
- b. At the seventh trumpet, the mystery will be completed
 - i. When the seventh trumpet sounds the fulfillment will be realized (later we will examine the case of whether the bowls (vials) recapitulate the trumpet judgments
 - ii. What is the "Mystery" that will be completed?
 - In the Bible, a "mystery" is not something that is just a secret or unknown – it is something once hidden and now revealed.
 - Romans 16:25-26 - Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known

to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God

- Eph. 1:9 - making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
- Eph. 3:3-6 - how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
- Col 1:26-27 - the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- The end of the age = the completion of salvation history – 1 Co. 10:11 - Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

iii. This completed mystery, which is the gospel for both Jew and Gentile – the uniting of one people under Christ – was revealed in the gospel, inaugurated in the death, burial, and resurrection – as the gospel went forth through the Apostles – and vindicated as God destroyed the remaining vestiges of the Old Covenant – and it will be consummated at Christ's second coming.

c. This mystery is the gospel that was first preached (the word is Euangelion) to the prophets

IV. John is Commissioned With The Testimony (8-11)

- A. John is Told to Take the Book (8)
- B. John is Told to Eat the Book (9)

1. This references Ezekiel's Commission as a prophet of judgment upon Israel
 2. Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 - And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe. And he said to me, "Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.
 3. Ezekiel's scroll was sweet in his mouth but the truth became bitter in his spirit (see Eze. 3:14)
- C. John Obeys The Prophetic Commission (10)
- D. John is Commissioned to Prophecy to Nations (11)
1. The Gospel of Salvation (which includes judgment) will go to all the nations
 2. The words which are both sweet and bitter will go to the entire world – heralding either the judgment of nations or their deliverance in Christ.