

Another Mighty Angel and the Little Scroll

10: 1-11

DIG: What is the angel like who announces the coming of the seventh trumpet? In what ways is this picture different from the traditional view of angels? What purposes have the disasters of the first six trumpets led to? What do you anticipate the seventh trumpet will bring forth? What happens to the little scroll? How can a message from God be both sour and bitter?

REFLECT: How has the Lord led you into a project or a ministry that you probably wouldn't have selected yourself? What happened? What is an experience you once thought was sweet, but then later turned sour? Or maybe you thought it would be sour, but it turned out sweet? How has God's Word been both sweet and sour to you?

John has just finished the account of the sounding of the first six of **seven** trumpets, together with the plagues or woes that accompanied them. We should expect **him** now to talk about the sounding of the blast from the seventh *shofar*. Instead of doing so, **he** inserts two parenthetical chapters that do not advance the chronological events of the book, but they do contribute to giving us the big picture of prophecy during the Great Tribulation. The **seventh trumpet** will not be heard until **11:15-19**, where **the mystery of God** will be fulfilled and evil will be punished.²⁸⁵

This interrupted narrative is consistent with **John's** style elsewhere in **Revelation**. Between the sixth and **seventh** seals, he inserted the interlude of the great multitude (**7:9-17**). Between **the seven trumpets** and **seven** bowls, **John** inserts the interlude of the woman and the dragon (**12:1-17**), the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth (**13:1-18**), and the vision of **the Lamb** on Mount Zion (**14:1-20**).

The question of evil in the world has troubled people throughout history. Why has **God** allowed it? Why do the wicked seem to prosper? Why does sin seemingly run wild without restraint? Why do good people suffer? When will **He** act so that the wicked are punished and the righteous are delivered? In the midst of his trials **Job** complained that **the tents of marauders are undisturbed and those who provoke God are secure. Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power (Job 12:6; 21:7)?** The psalmists commonly asked why **ADONAI** tolerates evil men (**Ps 10:1-5, 74:10-11, 83:1-2, 94:3-4**). Echoing their cry, prophets like **Jeremiah** and **Habakkuk** asked the same question (**Jer 12:1-3; Hab 1:13**). Even the Tribulation martyrs in heaven cried out: **How long, Sovereign Ruler, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood (6:10)?**

When the seventh *shofar* sounds, it will proclaim the imminent return and reign of the **Messiah**. The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever (11:15).

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven (10:1a). The phrase I saw marks the beginning of a new section (4:1, 7:1 and 9, 15:5, 18:1, 19:1). After his vision of the first six trumpets (8:6 to 9:21), John saw an angel that he had never seen before. This mighty angel will be very different from the seven trumpet angels. His description is similar to that of the glorified **Messiah**, and many commentators have identified this figure as **Jesus Christ**. But there are **five reasons** this could not be Him.

First, the use of *allos* (another of the same kind) identifies this angel as one exactly like the previously mentioned trumpet angels. If the Greek were referring to **Christ** the word *heteros* (another of a different kind) would be expected, since the **Messiah** is essentially different from angels. However, the Lord cannot be described as an angel because they are created beings and He is the uncreated, eternal **God**.

Secondly, whenever **Christ** appears in the book of Revelation, John gives Him a unique title. He is called the faithful and true witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth (1:5), the living One (1:18), the Son of God (2:18), the One who is holy and true (3:7), the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Ruler of God's creation (3:14), the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David (5:5), the Lamb (6:1 and 16, 7:17, 8:1), Faithful and True (19:11), the Word of God (19:13), and the King of kings and Lord of lords (19:16). It stands to reason that if the **Messiah** is the mighty angel, He would be given a unique title like before. But this angel isn't.

Thirdly, other mighty angles that cannot be identified with **Christ** also appear in the book (5:2 and 18:21). Consequently, there is no compelling reason to associate that title with **Yeshua Messiah**. While it is true that the preincarnate **Jesus** appears as an **Angel** of **God** in the TaNaKh, nowhere in the New Covenant does it refer to Him as merely an angel.

Fourthly, it is inconceivable that **Jesus Christ**, the **Second Person** of the Trinity, could make the oath that this mighty angel makes because he swore by Him who lives for ever and ever (Deuteronomy 32:40), by Him who created the heavens and all that is in them (Genesis 1:1), the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it (10:5-6). Since **Yeshua** is **God**, He would swear by Himself, as He did in Hebrews 6:13.

Finally, this mighty angel came down from heaven to the earth. So if he were Christ, it would add another coming of the Messiah to the earth. This cannot be the Second Coming (Matthew 24:30; Second Thessalonians 1:7-8), so this mighty angel coming down from heaven could not be the Messiah. It would be unbiblical.

This mighty angel will be so magnificent that he made the previous wicked angels look plain and drab by comparison. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head (Ezekiel 1:26-28). After the Flood, ADONAI gave the rainbow as the sign of His promise never again to destroy the world with water (Genesis 9:12-16). The rainbow above the head of this mighty angel will reassure the LORD's people of His mercy in the midst of His judgments to come (Malachi 3:16 to 4:2). Moving to his appearance, we are told that his face was like the sun. But even if the glow of his face surpassed that of Moses (Exodus 34:29-35), it still will not compare to the Shechinah glory of God, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see (First Timothy 6:16). Lastly, John describes his legs as being like immovable fiery pillars (10:1b). This describes his unyielding holiness as he stamps out his judgment upon the earth, pictured here a fire that devours the ungodly (Malachi 4:1).

He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his left hand. This is the second scroll mentioned in the book of Revelation. The first scroll in Chapter 5 contained the seven seals. Six were the seal judgments of Chapter 6, and the seventh seal contained the seven trumpet judgments, which describe the events in the first half of the Tribulation. The content of the little scroll deals with the seventh trumpet, which is a mystery.²⁸⁶

The fact that the mighty angel planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land (10:2) demonstrates ADONAI's sovereign ability to judge the entire world that He will take back from Satan. Rabbi Sha'ul wrote: The earth is the Lord's and everything in it (First Corinthians 10:26). So here, this action by the mighty angel anticipates the coming seventh shofar and seven bowls of judgment on the entire earth. The voice of the angel will be equal with his enormous size. He will give a loud shout like the roar of a lion, reflecting the power and authority of God. When he shouted, a startling thing happened: The voices of the seven thunders communicated to John (10:3). And when the seven thunders spoke, John was about to write; but before he could record the message, he heard a voice from heaven saying: Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down (10:4). No one knows why the LORD didn't want the message written down. Dani'el also was forbidden to record certain parts of his visions (Dani'el 8:26, 12:4-9). Up to this point, six of the seven trumpets will have sounded; there will be one to come.

The mystery itself will be revealed with the sounding of the seventh trumpet just prior to the start of the second half of the Great Tribulation (11:14-19). John said: **Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven (Deuteronomy 32:40; Dani'el 12:7), taking a solemn oath to show the importance of this mystery (10:5). And he swore by Him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them (Genesis 1:1), the earth and all that is in it, and said: There will be no more delay (10:6)! Finally nothing will stand in the way of the final dramatic period of human history. Restraint will be removed once the antichrist is revealed (First Thessalonians 2:3). This will be the time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of the nations until then (Dani'el 12:1). It will be the darkness before the dawn of the Second Coming. The period of delay will be over and the Lord's wrath will be irreversibly set in motion.**²⁸⁷

Father, Your Spirit in my heart echoes the words of the mighty angel: There will be no more delay! Come, Lord, and establish Your reign in my heart and over all humanity. My heart aches for Your return.

But it will be a process, in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished. A mystery in the Bible is something that was once hidden, but is now being revealed. And what will be revealed are all the details of the second half of the Great Tribulation and the ushering in of the new heavens and a new earth. ADONAI had previously announced that mystery without all the details to His servants the prophets (10:7). The seventh trumpet that contains the seven bowl judgments is the third and final woe. For this reason, it is the worst of all. The little scroll contains all the information about the seventh trumpet with the bowl judgments (Revelation 15 and 16). Thus, attention will then be focused on the little scroll.

The content of the little book is prophecy, specifically the prophecy of the middle, and then the second half of the Great Tribulation. This gives us a clue to the meaning of the next verses. As the mighty angel fell silent, a booming voice from heaven spoke again. This time the voice from heaven gave John a strange but significant assignment: **Go, and take the scroll that lies open in the left hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land (10:8).** Now John must be more than merely an observer, he must also be a *doer*. The voice from heaven tells him to take the scroll out of the mighty angel's hand. The same is true for us. Following the Messiah requires *doing*, not just observing. The word of God should be like the sound a trumpet, motivating believers into action.

So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me: Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey (10:9). The act of eating the scroll symbolized the absorbing and assimilating of God's Word (Psalm 19:10; Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:8 to 3:4). When John took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour (10:10). It tastes sweet because John, like all believers, wants the Lord to act in judgment to take back the earth that is rightfully His and be exalted, honored, and glorified as He deserves. But the realization of the terrible doom awaiting unbelievers turned that initial sweet taste into bitterness.²⁸⁸ We should have our stomachs turned sour with the knowledge of what is in store for mankind. There is no joy in preaching the wrath of God. The only escape will be the Rapture (Second Thessalonians 4:16-18), and the only requirement for the Rapture (see By - **The Rapture of the Church**) is acceptance of Jesus Christ today.²⁸⁹

The Lord will take no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23, 33:11), and neither should we. He is long-suffering (Second Peter 3:9), and so we should be. So John was told: You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings (10:11). As an exile on Patmos (1:9), John had no opportunity to preach to all the nations, but he was to write the prophecies and distribute them, so as to warn all people of the bitterness of judgment to come and of death and hell. Thus, this chapter introduces the reader to the events of the middle of the Great Tribulation.

We can better understand why John was commanded to eat the scroll of God's Word if we think of the words he was to proclaim to the people of God. As one who was to announce His message, John first had to allow it to nourish his own spiritual life before he could effectively proclaim it to others. So it is with us. Scripture provides the nourishment we crave. With the Lord's spiritual food, our lives can be richer as we experience it with Him.

Admittedly, reading Scripture may sometimes challenge us. The angel told John that the scroll would turn his stomach sour, but in his mouth it would be as sweet as honey (10:9). ADONAI's word can seem sour to us because it challenges us to change our lives and live in conformity to the will of God. Yet, at the same time, it is sweet because it helps us to know the Lord and His tender love. Therefore, as we take the scroll and eat it, let us trust God's promise that His word will taste as sweet as honey in our mouths even if it may prove bitter to our stomachs as we accept the challenges it puts before us. We can take comfort that the bitterness lasts for a short while, even as the sweetness is eternal.²⁹⁰

Father, Your Spirit in my heart resonates with the words of the mighty angel: There will be no more delay! Come, Lord Jesus, and establish Your reign in my heart and over all humanity. My heart aches for Your return.