

### INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

- We have just left the horrors of the first 6 trumpet judgments in chapter 8 and 9. Once again, we have another “interlude” before the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet sounds.
- At the end of chapter 9 we saw perhaps the saddest verses in scripture that indicated that despite the fact that mankind knows that God is bringing these judgments, “still they did not repent.”
- Now God provides a “breather” of sorts before the final set judgments, worse than the others before it, are unleashed. But this interlude only indicates that more is coming, in fulfillment of prophecies about this time.
- No time is advanced in this chapter. The 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet does not sound until Revelation 11:15, but the 7 Bowl judgments don’t actually begin until chapter 16. There will be some very interesting events and information imparted between now and the final judgments.

<sup>1</sup> I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. <sup>2</sup> He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup> and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars...

- **SPIRITED DEBATE:** The first question that arises here is “who is this angel?” Angels, messengers, are referenced 76 times in Revelation. Is this another “angel” or is this someone else? There is a great debate among scholars about this angel. Some see this particular angel as Jesus.
- **“coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud”** is one indicator it might be Jesus. God is seen clothed in a cloud from Exodus through Revelation. (Exodus 16:10; 19:9; 24:15; 34:5; Psalms 104:3; Matthew 17; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9; Revelation 1:7.) The reference to a **“rainbow”** could be an allusion to the rainbow around the throne in Revelation 4:3. His **“face was like the sun”** is an obvious reference to the radiance of Jesus in Revelation 1:16 and Matthew 17 (the transfiguration). **“Feet like pillars of fire”** (see Revelation 1:15) and a **“voice like a lion”** (Revelation 5:5) also seem to point to Jesus. We know that Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as “The Angel of the Lord.” This particular angel in Revelation 10 seems to have great authority and power. For these reasons, and others, many people identify this angel as Jesus.



- **Many others believe this angel in NOT Jesus.** They point to clues which might indicate that this is simply a very powerful angel, not the glorified Christ. 1) The word “another” here in Greek is specific: it means “another like the others.” It seems to indicate this angel is just like the other angels, which we have just seen announce the first six trumpet judgments. 2) Rainbows are a sign of God’s covenants, and don’t have to refer to the throne of God; 3) angels in the Presence of God (like these in chapter 8 and 9) would probably radiate the light of His Presence (face like the sun) 4) we recall that ONE angel killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night, so we know they are very powerful, this may be one very powerful angel, not Jesus; 5) the phrase here “loud voice *as when* a lion roars” does not indicate it IS a lion, merely that the voice was very loud and commanded attention. When Jesus appears in the book of Revelation, there is clear evidence of His identity (ch 1 and ch 19, no question these appearances are Jesus). Here, (ch. 10) there is question.

▪ **COMMENTARY:** “The identity of this strong angel is debated by Bible teachers. Some contend that this is Christ. Since Christ appeared as the angel of God in the Old Testament, this would be another occasion in which He appears to the nation of Israel. Others say it is not Christ but an unidentified angel. The Lord Jesus Christ does not appear in the book of Revelation as an angel. In fact, we will look in vain for a presentation of him as an angel after the incarnation. Ever since Jesus took on flesh, died for the sins of men, was crucified, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven, He has always appeared as the Son of God in His essential deity. Although this angel possesses some Godlike characteristics, he is not God...Although far beneath the character of God, they [angels] are created beings of an unusually high order. It is rather interesting to see that angels play a prominent part in the book of Revelation...they are always in a position of service. They do not create things, but fulfill the administration of God in the affairs of men. This is not the first time we have been introduced to a mighty angel, for in chapter 5:2 we find the same word used, though there it is translated “strong.” Don’t be deceived by the glorious description of this angel...Actually, in 18:1 we find another angel, pronouncing doom on Babylon, having great power and so much glory that “the earth was made bright with his glory.” No one seems pressed to identify this angel as the Lord Jesus Christ; consequently we should not think it strange that God could have other mighty angels that could easily fit the description of the one in our text.”  
*(“Revelation Unveiled,” LaHaye)*

▪ **COMMENTARY:** “Three angelic beings are identified as “strong” in the Revelation. The first occurrence appears in Revelation 5:2. The second is in Revelation 10:1 and the final occurrence is in Revelation 18:21. What is the significance of the “strong angels?” The characteristics associated with “another strong angel” in Revelation 10:1-7 are closely parallel to an angelic being described in Daniel 10:5-6 and 12:5-7. These similarities have given some interpreters the basis to see a connection between these two texts. Based on Revelation 5:2, 10:1 and 18:21, *strong angels* are revelatory angels. That is, they specifically communicate to man information from God. In Revelation 5:2, the strong angel communicates the identity of the person worthy to open the sealed scroll. In Revelation 10:1, he communicates a significant transition in the program of God. In Revelation 18:21, he communicates the destiny of the capital city of the beast empire. Similarly, an angelic being in Daniel 10 communicates the destiny of the Jews and Jerusalem. *(RevelationCommentary.org)*

- **There is one other important clue later in the text that seems to be strong evidence that this is NOT Jesus.** We’ll discuss that in a moment.
- ***“He had a little book open in his hand.”*** What is this book? We’ll discuss that in a moment also.

*When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. <sup>4</sup> Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”*

- In Psalm 29, the phrase “**the voice of the LORD**” is likened to thunder, and is used seven times:

<sup>3</sup> *The voice of the LORD is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The LORD is over many waters.*

<sup>4</sup> *The voice of the LORD is powerful; The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.*

<sup>5</sup> *The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon.*

<sup>6</sup> *He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.*

<sup>7</sup> *The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire.*

<sup>8</sup> *The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh.*

<sup>9</sup> *The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, And strips the forests bare; And in His temple everyone says, “Glory!”*

For this reason, the Jews, by Rabbinic interpretation, consider **God to have seven voices, like thunder**. When a Jew hears the words “7 thunders” he would immediately consider that to be the voice of God. Are these seven utterances the voice God? We don’t know. Perhaps! Either way, this Psalm is a good reminder here of the majesty and power of the One who controls everything, and who ordained and will execute the entire contents of the book of Revelation.

- “*Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.*” John had originally been instructed to write everything he saw and heard, and was obediently prepared to do so here. But he is stopped by a “voice from heaven.”
- Whatever these seven “thunders” uttered, it **is the only thing sealed** in the book of Revelation. Daniel was told to seal up his book, but Revelation, with this one exception, is an “unsealed” book (Revelation 22:10, “*Do NOT seal the words of prophecy of this book...*”). We simply do not know what the content of these utterances were. John Walvoord states: “*This illustrates a divine principle that while God has revealed much, there are secrets which God has not seen fit to reveal to man at this time.*”
- Some have tried to interpret or even **speculate on what these thunders uttered**. It is dangerous to speculate here. They are sealed to our hearing, and to our interpretation or speculation. We should be skeptical of anyone who claims to know what was spoken by these thunders. John is the only human to have actually heard these. They again remind us God has not revealed *everything* to us, yet.

<sup>5</sup> *The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven <sup>6</sup> and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,*

- Now we come to the clue that perhaps this mighty angel is just that, and not Jesus Christ. This angel is taking an oath, and he is swearing on “*Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it....*” Who is that? Who is the One this angel swears on? No question, it is Jesus. This mighty angel is swearing on the Name of Jesus.

- We know that God Himself took an oath when He entered into the covenant with Abraham, and He did a very interesting thing. Hebrews 6:13 reads: ***“For when God made a promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.”*** God swore on Himself, since there is no one higher than Him. Some people interpret this to mean that this mighty angel is also swearing on himself, since they believe he is Jesus. However, we understand that these oaths, and the “swearing” involved, had to be based on some authority and power higher than the one taking the oath. If this angel was Jesus, I believe we would have been told that he swore on himself, as the writer of Hebrews indicates. We are not told this. This angel raised his hand to heaven and swore. It would seem to indicate, then, that this angel IS swearing on someone HIGHER than himself. He is swearing on Jesus (*identification positive and clear here*). This is a mighty angel swearing on Jesus who is higher than he is. ***But still the debate rages on. The actual identity of this “angel” is really not the important focus of this chapter. What he declares and facilitates is what we need to know.***
- ***“there should be delay no longer,”*** – Until this point, God has been very gracious, and longsuffering by delaying the final outpouring of His judgments so all who would come to Him had time to do so. God desires that NONE perish, so He extends His grace period. But that too must end. Time is up for the unbelieving world. The last set of judgments will come quickly and rapidly. To those who are believers and still surviving this terrible time, this is actually a word of hope that the end is coming soon. It appears that we are in the final 3 ½ years of the tribulation now.
- ***“...delay no longer...”*** This is a good reminder to us that God’s grace is not without its time limitation. Paul tells us that ***“today is the day of salvation.”*** (2 Corinthians 6:2) In other words, don’t wait. There are even more sobering verses about this in 2 Thessalonians 2: ***“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*** (9-12). These are frightening verses. They indicate that there is a place, where if we delay too long in our acceptance of His Gift, God sets in motion a non-reversible delusion. (the “lawless one” is the final world leader, the rider of the white horse).

***<sup>7</sup> but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.***

- This mighty angel says that when the 7<sup>th</sup> angel sounds the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet judgment, the ***“mystery” of God*** would be finished. What is the “mystery” of God? There are several “mysteries” (*musterion* in Greek, which literally means a secret) in scripture. We won’t get into a long discussion about what those are precisely. But in general, the singular mystery of God (not the individual “mysteries,” plural) would seem to indicate the all-inclusive truth about the whole plan of God, our redemption and reunion with Him, that has not yet been revealed to us. We have just heard seven thunders that are not revealed, so this angel is referencing the fact that although we don’t have all the answers now, as we like to say, ***“soon, all will be revealed.”***

- **One of the biggest mysteries of the ages is why God has permitted evil**, and the entire mystery of our redemption through the death of His Son. We have all kinds of pat answers for these, but God’s answer has not really been revealed yet. Someday, all mysteries will be revealed, and the entire plan of God will be known and understood. That will happen after all the judgments are complete, evil is eliminated, and the full manifestation of the divine power, majesty and holiness of God will be seen.
- **The word for “finished” here is *teleo* in Greek.** This word implies the completion of a plan. When this 7<sup>th</sup> angel begins to sound, the remaining judgments in God’s plan are complete. This completion begins at the beginning of the third round of judgments because there is no stopping what remains. The plan was formulated before the beginning of time, and with these judgments, God’s plan for dealing with the evil brought into this world will be complete.
- **“...as he declared to His servants the prophets.”** The parts of God’s plan that we must know and can understand have been **revealed through the prophets**. God could not give all the details, as we would not be able to comprehend them. There is still much we don’t understand. But the basic plan of God has been revealed. What the prophets have told us provide the outline of the plan. This reference to the prophets may be a clue as to what is in the little book.

<sup>8</sup> *Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.”*

- **Notice the angel is not speaking.** The voice from heaven is speaking, and is a voice of authority. Is this God? We don’t know. One thing we must avoid doing in any study of the book of Revelation is leaping to conclusions. We must read the book very carefully and not assume anything that is not clearly stated. It is just one more point that remains a mystery!
- **“take the little book...”** What is this book? First, it is not a book like we understand books. It is a scroll. Everything at this time was written on scrolls. Some have guessed that this might be the 7-sealed scroll seen in Revelation 5. The scroll is open in this verse, so some have assumed that means now that the 7 seals on the original scroll are fully opened and all the remaining judgments will be poured out. We don’t see this begin to happen until chapter 16. If it was the 7-sealed scroll of chapter 5, it seems like we would be given more information to identify it as that scroll. Instead we are told it is a “little” book. The Greek word used here is *bibliaridion* which literally means a booklet, or little book.
- The original scroll (ch. 5) is a *biblion*, which is a larger scroll or writing. *Bibliaridion* (little book) is not used to describe this original 7-sealed scroll (which is a rather BIG book!). **It does not seem that these scrolls are the same.** Most likely this little book is a short, limited revelation about this remaining period of time (most think 3 ½ years now, the last half, or the Great Tribulation). It may even be all the prophecies from the Old Testament that refer to this time. It is the Word of God, whether given through past prophets, or new prophecies about the coming time. In a moment we will see that John is asked to do something with this scroll that seems unusual, but is not new in scripture. His activity with this little book further identifies this scroll as the Word of God.



<sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”<sup>10</sup> Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.<sup>11</sup> And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

- **The concept of eating the Word of God is not new in scripture.** In Jeremiah we read: *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your Name, O LORD God of Hosts.”* (15:16). Ezekiel, another prophet, tells us this: *“Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.”* (3:1-3). Ezekiel was commanded to go speak to Israel AFTER he had eaten God’s Word. People of God, and most especially the prophets of God, must digest, absorb (spiritually eat and be nourished by) the Word of God before they can proclaim it. John had to eat and digest a little more before he could finish recording this vision and prophecy of the future.
- The earlier comment about the prophets may indicate that what was “eaten” was the prophecies contained in the Old Testament that relate to what is coming. We have said before that what is contained in Revelation is really not new, as all of these things have been prophesied in the Old Testament. They are merely brought back together in one place in the book of Revelation.
- Eating is a **necessary function to survive**. The physical body must eat food, receiving nourishment for the body. Similarly, the **soul must “eat” the nourishment of God’s Word** to survive, and to thrive. Throughout scripture God’s Word is likened to food (bread in Matthew 4:4, milk in 1 Peter 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:2; meat in 1 Corinthians 3:2, and honey in the Psalms (see below).
- The psalmist David wrote: *“How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!”* (Psalm 119:103) There are many instances in scripture that indicate this. To those who love God, His Word is delightful, sweet, nourishing. To those who reject Him it is bitter, and makes them sick. Jeremiah, Ezekiel and John knew this joy of feasting on God’s Word. But there was also a bitterness for John. Perhaps the sweet predictions of Jesus’ soon return were in contrast to the bitter pronouncement of remaining terrible judgment. It is truly “bittersweet.”
- **COMMENTARY:** “It is sweet to know what God is going to do, but when you find out that judgment is coming, it is bitter...If you and I can take delight in reading this section of the Word of God and the judgments that are to fall upon the earth, then we need to do a great deal of praying to get the mind of God. It is sweet to know the Book of Revelation and what God intends to do, but when we find out that judgment is coming to the Christ-rejecting world around us, we cannot rejoice in that. The prophecy becomes bitter. There is another very real application of this. Many folk begin the study of prophecy with enthusiasm, but when they find that it is applicable to their life and that it makes demands on them personally, they lose interest, and it becomes a bitter thing. Many people say, “I don’t want to hear about the Book of Revelation. I don’t like prophecy. It frightens me!” May I say to you that it is supposed to do that, but it should be in your mouth sweet as honey.

- Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who like to study prophecy because of the natural curiosity to know the future, but they will discover that there is nothing in the Word of God that ministers more to a holy life than the thoughtful study of prophecy....To be a study of prophecy and live a dirty life will only lead to abnormality. The reason we hear so much abnormality in the interpretation of prophecy in our day is that the Word of God is not having its way in the hearts and lives of the folk who study it. It is unfortunate that people will get interested in prophecy, but not in Christian living." (McGee)
- ***“You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”*** The Greek word for “about” in this verse (which has been variously translated as among, about, concerning, etc.) is *epi*, which can also mean “against.” In other words, John will be prophesying *against* all these peoples, nations, tongues and kings.
- This angel is essentially telling John that **“it’s not over yet.”** There is more to come, despite the terrifying conditions that have already been seen. Remember that three woes were forecast. We’ve only seen two so far. The third and final woe is the rapid pouring out of the 7 bowl judgments. Even before we see this happen, there are several “events” that occur, that John must see and describe. And, the angel tells John, what is to come concerns all people, all nations and tongues, and all the earth’s rulers. These prophecies will bring to a close earth’s history, and the history of all peoples, nations, tongues and rulers. With its end, however, comes a glorious new beginning. Hence the bittersweet nature of the Word of God.

### OUR PERSONAL COMMENTARY ON THIS CHAPTER...

Right about now you may be saying, **“That’s interesting, but what does this have to do with me?”** Well, that depends – on whether or not you have received the free Gift God offers you. There are only two groups of people on earth, believers and unbelievers. That distinction is made crystal clear in this book of Revelation. There are those who are called “the inhabitants of the earth” who are the unbelievers. Then there are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, the believers. Both groups are made up of people from every nation, tribe and tongue. There is a message here for both groups:

1) **For unbelievers....**don’t wait too long to believe and be saved. God’s mercy and grace is limited to a time table known only by Him. He will push you in every way, both now and through the Tribulation, to receive that Gift. If you wait too long, you will be sent a “strong delusion” to believe the lie, and thus lose your salvation. The images and events of Revelation are meant to frighten. We can be certain these events will take place just as everything else God has prophesied has taken place with great and exacting precision. If you are studying Revelation merely out of curiosity, with no intention of believing or obeying the rest of God’s Word, you are on very dangerous ground. Your eternal future is in jeopardy. Today, now, is the day of salvation. Don’t wait. And then proceed to number 2 below...

2) **For believers....**EAT, digest and be nourished by the Word of God. God has given us an amazing book that allows us to know Him, and to know His plan. Our spirits were designed and fashioned to need this nourishment. Without it, we will starve spiritually. It is the best way God uses to speak to us, personally, through His Holy Spirit. Do you want to know God? Do you want to know His plan? Then read the love letter He wrote to you! We are told that if we seek Him, with open hearts, we will find Him. We are eager to consume three meals a day most of the time. How often to do open God’s Word with the same hunger and desire to be fed? It is right there in front of you. Don’t neglect this vital nourishment.

