

## Valley Bible Church – Book of Revelation

### "The Mighty Angel & The Little Book"

#### Revelation 10:1-11

##### Interlude #2: Revelation 10:1-11:14

"These verses serve as an interlude between the sixth trumpet and the seventh trumpet (11:15). The seals and the bowls also have a brief interlude between their sixth and seventh judgments (7:1-17; 16:15). God's intention is to encourage and comfort His people in the midst of the fury and to remind them that He is still sovereign, that He remembers His people, and that they will ultimately be victorious."<sup>293</sup> "These verses are also marked by a difference in the method of John's presentation. He now enters into part of the activity."<sup>294</sup> He previously was only a witness to the activity, both seeing and hearing what was taking place. Now he actually takes part in the some of the activity as he moves from the observer's corner to center stage. "These interludes do not advance the chronology of Revelation, but they do provide detailed information about other events taking place in relation to the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments."<sup>295</sup>

##### The Mighty Angel and the Little Book: (10:1-11)

##### *The Angel's Appearance*: (verses 1-4)

At this point John receives a new vision as is marked by the phrase, *And I saw*. This is consistently used throughout Revelation to mark the beginning of a new vision (cf. 4:1; 7:1,9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1). What John witnesses is *another strong angel coming down out of heaven*. We must first deal with the identity of this strong angel.

The Identity of the Strong Angel: There is some disagreement as to who this strong angel here in 10:1 is. Some see it simply as just an unidentified angel, some seek to identify this angel further as the same one as in 5:2 or possibly the angel Gabriel. Others see this angel (due to the following description and its similarity to Revelation 1) as the Lord Jesus Christ. While I admit that there is some similarity to the description of Christ in Revelation 1, it seems clear that this angel indeed is not Christ Jesus.

**-First**: the term *allos* (another) as I have often mentioned means another of the same kind and would refer to an angel that is similar to the previous 7 trumpet angels or possibly to an angel who is the same kind of angel as the one in 5:2.

**-Second**: when Jesus is referred to in Revelation, John gives Him a recognizable and unmistakable title. For example, John refers to Christ as: the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dean, and the ruler of the kings of the earth (1:5), the son of man (1:13), the first and the last (1:17), the living one (1:18), the Son of God (2:18), He who is holy, who is true (3:7), the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God (3:14), the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (5:5), the Lamb (6:1, 16; 7:17; 8:1), Faithful and True (19:11), the Word of God (19:13), and King of Kings and Lord of Lords (19:16).

**-Third**: The other two places where strong angels are mentioned cannot be identified as Christ in any way (5:1, 18:2).

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**-Fourth:** The New Testament nowhere refers to Jesus as an angel.

**-Fifth:** This angel makes a vow in the name of *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.* By making this vow this angel is differentiating himself as someone other than the Eternal Creator. It is inconceivable that the Lord Jesus would swear by Himself.

**-Sixth:** "This angel came down out of heaven to the earth. To identify him as Christ is to add another coming of Christ to the earth unforeseen elsewhere in Scripture, one that is not in accord with the biblical descriptions of the Second Coming (cf. Matt. 24:30; 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-8)."<sup>296</sup>

It seems best to understand that this strong angel is another of the same kind of angel as previous angels mentioned in Revelation. It is one of God's angels from heaven, who is described in glorious splendor.

The Description of the Strong Angel: John goes on to give a description of the strong angel, who he saw coming down out of heaven.

**First- clothed with a cloud:** In the Old Testament the glory cloud represented the presence and glory of God. In the New Testament however, it is usually used in relation to divine judgment. The appearance of this angel wrapped in a cloud depicts the angel as a messenger of divine wrath or judgment.

**Second-and the rainbow was upon his head:** "The Greek term *iris* was used to describe any bright halo surrounding another object, such as the circle surrounding the eyes on a peacock's tail or the iris of the eye. In 4:3 it was used to describe the emerald rainbow encircling God's throne."<sup>297</sup> "The use of this term could refer back to Genesis 9:12-13, which would signify God's covenant mercy in the midst of judgment as did the rainbow of Noah's day."<sup>298</sup>

**Third-and his face was like the sun:** "Like Christ (1:16), the angel's face radiated glory and majesty. This is because he has been in the presence of God and is marked with delegated authority from God (cp. Exodus 34:29 where Moses' face radiated such glory). Angels often radiate glory when they appear (Luke 2:9, 24:4; Revelation 18:1)."<sup>299</sup>

**Fourth-and his feet like pillars of fire:** The angel's feet are described as pillars of fire. This is somewhat similar to the description of Christ's feet in Revelation 1:15 and 2:18, where they were described as burnished bronze. A similar concept is given in Daniel 10:6, where it is stated as, "gleaming brass" (cf. Ezek. 1:7). The description in 1:15 of Christ's feet was of the process of refinement or smelting in which the metal is purified and made to shine, and it pictures the point in that process where the metal is still at a glow. The emphasis in 1:15 is on the red-hot glow conveying the idea of judgment. Likewise here in 10:1 the emphasis is on judgment. As mentioned before fire throughout scripture and especially in Revelation symbolizes judgment. The angel's feet as pillars of fire symbolize his mission of announcing God's coming judgment.

**Fifth-and he had in his hand a little book which was open:** "The Greek word *biblaridion* is a diminutive form of the Greek *biblion* and means "little scroll." This rare word is without example elsewhere in other Greek literature and is only used here in the New Testament. There exists some controversy over the identification of this book.

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The use of the rare term *biblaridion* is apparently used to distinguish this little scroll from the one that appears in 5:1. This little scroll is already opened suggesting that its contents is to be revealed and understood, while in 5:1 the seven sealed scroll could only be opened by the Lamb. This little scroll likely contains the commission given to John in verse 11 to prophesy."<sup>300</sup>

The Activity of the Strong Angel: It is at this point that John's focus moves from what this strong angel looked like to the activity of the strong angel.

**First-** *And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land:* "This angel's encompassing stance suggests not only his gigantic size, but also intimates that his message involves the whole world. This angel acting as God's messenger places his feet of fire upon the land and sea, demonstrating God's power in judgment and His authority as extending over the whole earth."<sup>301</sup>

**Second-** *and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars:* The Greek term *krazo* means to "cry aloud." There is emphasis placed upon the loudness of this cry. Not only does the verb *cried* emphasize the loudness of this cry, but also the voice is said to be a loud or great voice and then it is compared to the sound of a lion's roar. This is not a distressed or fearful crying out but a shout of power related to coming judgment. This angel cries out in a loud shout as he comes to execute God's program. After John hears the strong angel cry out, he hears a reply as *the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.* "Thunder is often a harbinger of judgment in Scripture (cf. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18; 1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 22:14; Ps. 18:13; John 12:28-30)."<sup>302</sup> "In John 12:28-29 the voice of the Father to Christ was thought by some to be thunder, while in Psalm 29:3-9 the Lord speaks in the sevenfold voice of the thunderstorm upon the sea."<sup>303</sup> The seven thunders could likely be a reference to the voice of God (cf. Psalm 18:13, 1 Sam. 7:10). John was about to record what the seven peals of thunder had said, but was commanded not to by a voice from heaven. The voice from heaven commanded John to seal up the things, which the seven peals of thunder had spoken. Once again the voice from heaven cannot be identified as no information is supplied. It could possibly be the voice of God, Christ the Lamb, or an angel. Whatever the case the command originated with God. The information that John was to seal up (meaning not permitted to write down) was for his ears only. It was not to be revealed to mankind at least at this juncture and it would be foolish to speculate as to what might have been spoken. If God had wanted it to be known then John would not have been forbidden to record it.

*The Angel's Announcement: (Verses 5-7)*

We have examined the identity of this strong angel, who we identified as another one of God's angels participating in the unfolding of God's plan and judgment.

We also examined John's description of this strong angel as one who has just come down to the earth from heaven, from the very presence of God and is arrayed in glorious splendor.

Lastly, we examined the first couple of actions of this strong angel. The first, being in a role as God's agent, he places his fiery feet on the land and sea emphasizing that his message is for the whole world. The second, is a great or loud cry. The loudness of the cry is emphasized not only by the Greek verb used, but also by the additional phrases used to describe the loudness.

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Now we move on to look further into this vision, which serves as an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments. We will examine the angel's announcement and the assignment given to the Apostle John.

### The Form of the Announcement: (10:5-6a)

"The form of this announcement is that of a solemn vow or oath. The Greek term *airo* means, "to lift up" and is used technically of raising the hand to swear. This is the standard gesture in taking a solemn oath (Genesis 14:22, Deut. 32:40, Daniel 12:7)."<sup>304</sup> "To take such a vow is to affirm before God that one is going to speak the truth. This vow indicates that what the angel is about to say is of the utmost importance and truthfulness."<sup>305</sup> The strong angel raises his right hand to heaven, the dwelling place of God and then takes his vow in the name of *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*. This designation for God emphasizes God's eternity in the phrase, *Him who lives forever and ever*. This is not the first time that the attribute of God as eternal is spoken of in Revelation (cf. 1:18; 4:9, 10; 15:7). In addition to the attribute of eternity, the role of God as creator is emphasized. "The three phrases relating to the creation of heaven, earth and sea simply demonstrates the scope of God's creative power as being all-encompassing."<sup>306</sup>

### The Content of the Announcement: (10:6b-7)

John MacArthur in his commentary on Revelation 1-11 explains this section well:

"The specific content of the angel's oath was *that there will be delay no longer*, answering the question of the martyrs, "How long?" (6:10), and the prayers of the saints in 8:3-5. The phrase *but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound* indicates that the judgment of the seventh trumpet is about to come and that it is not a single event, but covers *days*—indicating a period of time. This period includes the seven bowl judgments (16:1-21), which would appear to require some weeks or months to unfold. So the sounding of the seventh trumpet brings the final judgment depicted in the bowls of fury poured out on the earth. The time of God's patience is seen as having ended; the time for the final acts of judgment is seen as being at hand. The time anticipated in the disciples' questions recorded in Matthew 24:3 and Acts 1:6 has come. The prayers of all the saints of all the ages for the consummation of God's kingdom are about to be answered... The mystery of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:7; Col. 2:2) of which the angel spoke is that of "the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth" (Eph. 1:10). It is the consummation of God's plan in bringing His glorious kingdom in Christ to fulfillment. It involves the salvation of the elect and their place in His glorious kingdom and all that goes with that. It includes the judgment of men and demons. The mystery previously hidden refers to all unknown details that are revealed from this point to the end of Revelation, when the new heavens and new earth are created."<sup>307</sup>

The time has run out for the people of the earth. God's final wrath and judgment is about to be poured out upon the world. God had revealed this mystery through the preaching of the prophets. Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Amos and Zechariah all have prophesied of end time events. Christ in Matthew 24 and 25 as well as Paul in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians had revealed further information regarding the mystery of end time events. John would have the privilege of writing the book of Revelation as the final revealing of this end time period, which still remains some what of a mystery to us.

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### The Apostle's Assignment: (10:8-11)

It is here where John becomes an active participant in the revelation that he is being given. This section begins with John again hearing the voice, which he had earlier heard from heaven. The voice as identified earlier in 10:4 is likely that of Christ. Christ appeared in Revelation, commissioning John to write all that he has seen. In verse 4 a voice instructs John not to write, but to seal up the things that the seven thunders had spoken. Since the voice is giving instruction as to what John should record or not record, it likely refers to the voice of Christ. John cannot identify the speaker, because he does not see who the speaker is. John is instructed to now participate in the events of this vision. He instructed regarding three different actions.

### The Command to Take the Scroll: (10:8-9a)

The first instruction is a command to take the little book out of the left hand of the strong angel as mentioned in verse 2. John follows through in obedience to the command to take the scroll. He approaches the strong angel and tells the angel to give him the little book.

### The Instruction to Eat the Scroll: (10:9b-10)

John is next instructed to take the scroll and eat it. The Greek term *kataphage* means "to devour." "In Homer, this term was used frequently of an animal of prey devouring its kill, and in the LXX (Greek translation of Hebrew text), it has reference to the clean sweep which birds make of food. 'Eating' is a Hebrew idiom for receiving knowledge, just as we use the word 'digesting' of considering and meditating upon what we have learned."<sup>308</sup> Similar metaphors can be seen in Ezekiel 3:1-3 and Jeremiah 15:16 and may be alluded to in Psalm 19:10. The content of this little scroll is likely the following commission given to John to prophesy the remaining judgment of God. The sweet taste in John's mouth is likely due to his satisfaction over being informed of part of God's holy will and the joy over God's final victory and vindication, which the believer looks forward to. The bitterness in the stomach as the scroll was being digested is likely due to the realization of the terrible doom, awaiting unbelievers. The coming 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet judgment, earlier identified as the 3<sup>rd</sup> woe will be greater than what proceeds in the previous judgments. For the unbeliever it will only get worse as God's final judgment is unleashed upon the earth.

### The Commission to Prophecy: (10:11)

John is not instructed to prophesy concerning many peoples, nations, tongues and kings. The use of the term again emphasizes that this is a second commission given to John, the first being recorded in 1:19. John is now commissioned to prophesy of the remaining judgment of God as recorded in the rest of the book of Revelation. The reference to many peoples, nations, tongues and kings emphasizes that this prophecy is for **all** of mankind. This prophecy includes **all** of the earth's people groups.