

Revelation 10-11

Intro

Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John

Revelation - to unveil or reveal.

To take what is hidden and make it known

Revelation unveils the future return and reign of Jesus Christ

Revelation 1:19

Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

Book divides into 3 unequal parts

- Chapter 1 - The things John saw that Sunday morning on Patmos
- Chapter 2-3 - The things that are or the churches
- Chapters 4-19 - The things that must take place after this (After the Church Age)

First future event is recorded in chapter 4 when John is caught up to heaven.

This serves as a illustration of the New Testament Doctrine of the Rapture.

Rapture - a generation of believers who will enter heaven without passing through the doorway of death

Once John is caught up into heaven the Tribulation begins on the earth

- Chapters 6-7 - The Seal judgments

Each time a seal is loosed from the scroll judgement is released upon the earth

- Chapters 8-9 - The Trumpet judgments

Each time the trumpet sounds judgment is released upon the earth

Many of the judgments are expressed using various forms of symbolism

Riders on horses, an angel releasing locust like creatures from the bottomless pit and a million-man army riding horses with lion heads.

- We pointed out last time that the text does not require us to expect human headed locust with women's hair or lion headed horses to actually appear on the scene.

There are many Biblical examples that help illustrate this

- We see symbolism used in Daniel's prophecies. He spoke of a lion with eagle wings, a bear raised up on one side with ribs in its mouth and a leopard with four heads and bird wings. History never records these beasts ever appearing on the scene. Instead, human rulers whose behaviors could be illustrated by these beasts arose.
- David wrote of the deliverance he experienced when he cried out for God's assistance in his trial.

2 Samuel 22:7-15

In my distress I called upon the LORD,

And cried out to my God;

He heard my voice from His temple,

And my cry entered His ears.

"Then the earth shook and trembled;

The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken,

Because He was angry.

Smoke went up from His nostrils,

And devouring fire from His mouth;

Coals were kindled by it.

He bowed the heavens also, and came down

With darkness under His feet.

He rode upon a cherub, and flew;

And He was seen upon the wings of the wind.

*He made darkness canopies around Him,
Dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.
From the brightness before Him
Coals of fire were kindled.
“The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice.
He sent out arrows and scattered them;
Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them.*

Nowhere in the narrative do we ever read of this happening. Instead, we hear of a rock making a perfect landing on Goliath’s skull and the philistines creating drama so Saul had to leave his pursuit of David and a host of other very natural events that according to David had a very divine influence

- Notice also that the symbolism of Revelation is not open to widespread interpretation.

2 Peter 1:20

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation

The writer, not the reader gets to determine what the symbols mean.

- In some cases that meaning is found right in the text
- In some cases that meaning is found in other texts
- In some cases, no meaning is provided and we are left to wonder.

It is important not to get distracted from what the text is trying to convey when trying to uncover meaning to symbols that are not provided

With that said let’s make our way through chapter 10

The events recorded here are an interlude between the 6th and 7th Trumpet sound.

John sees

- A Mighty Angel coming down from heaven to earth
- He had a little book in his hand
- When his feet touched down 7 thunders uttered their voices

- John was forbidden to record what he heard
- The Angel then declared that when the final trumpet sounds the mysteries of God would be completed
- John then approached the Angel, took the book and ate it.
 - It was sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach
 - The Angel commands John to declare the message he received

This text raises several important questions

- Who is this Angel?
- What did the thunderous voice declare?
- What is the mystery the prophets declared?
- What was that little book?
- Why did it make John's stomach bitter?

Who is the Angel?

He is described as being:

- Clothed with a cloud
- Wearing a rainbow as a headdress
- Having a face that shone like the sun, feet that were like firs and a voice like a lion's roar

We cannot be certain regarding the identity of this Angel

It is likely not important or John would have divulged that information

We must be careful not to spend too much thought on the identity of symbols or imagery that is not defined for us. Doing so will cause us to lose sight of the main meaning of the text

What we do know is that the message John receives is so important that it came with great pomp.

This was not delivered by a mail courier, but a mighty angel clothed with clouds

What message did the 7 thunders declare?

Revelation 10:4

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."

- As soon as we are told not to do something we are interested in doing it.
- John makes it clear that not only can't we know what the message was but we are not supposed to know

These things were sealed up

In a book that is about revealing what is coming John makes it clear that there are things that we cannot know

What is the mystery of God?

Revelation 10:7

*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.*

John refers to something that was declared by the prophets

These mysteries include but are not limited to

- The Gospel message

Colossians 4:3

*meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the **mystery** of Christ, for which I am also in chains*

- That Christ would dwell within the believer

Colossians 1:27

*To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

- That Jew and gentile alike would be untied together in one body in the church

Ephesians 3:6

that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

- That God is not done with His people Israel. When the times of the gentiles is complete, He will restore Israel to Himself

Romans 11:25

*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this **mystery**, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

Here in Revelation 10 the mystery refers to all those prophetic utterances that remain yet unfulfilled

This would include all that will unfold in the remaining chapters of Revelation

And the fulfillment of all the prophets spoke regarding the Messiah's reign

- Daniel spoke of the everlasting kingdom of God spreading and covering the whole earth
- Isaiah spoke poetically of this time:

Isaiah 2:4

*He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.*

What is the little book and why did it make John ill?

Again, it would be foolish to spend too much time trying to find the meaning behind the images that are not clearly explained. Instead, we should seek to draw application from John and his interaction with the little book

- John is told to eat the book.

When he did it had immediate effect upon him

John is not the first Bible character that refers to having consumed the word of God

Jeremiah 15:16

*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.*

1 Peter 2:2

as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

Job 23:12

*I have not departed from the commandment of His lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth
More than my necessary food.*

Matthew 4:4

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

- The prophet Ezekiel had an almost identical experience to the one John has here

Ezekiel 3:1-4

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.

Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

Ezekiel is further instructed that the people he is being sent to (his one nation) will not be receptive. They will be hardened to the message so Ezekiel must be harder with the message. Because they do not want to hear it does not mean he can back down from sharing it. They will be like flint stone and he will need to be harder than flint

The word of God is something that should be consumed by each of us on a daily basis. We will find it to be sweet to our taste. However, since the word of God was not designed to stop with us it will also produce a bitterness within or a need to share it with others

Rather than leaving Revelation 10 questioning what the thunders said or who the Angel is we should leave looking to consume the Word of God for ourselves and declares its message to others in the home, community and church

Chapter 11

Revelation 11:1-2

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

John is commissioned to measure the Temple and its courts.

He is specifically told to ignore the outermost court for it has been given over to the gentiles

Observations

The Temple

- The events that transpired in Revelation 6-19 will happen with a Temple in Israel
- The Temple was destroyed in 70 AD
- The book of Revelation was written around 90 AD

Irenaeus: *"The apocalyptic vision was seen not a very long time since, but almost in our own day, toward the end of Domitian's reign."*

Domitian reigned 81-96 AD

The view that the apostle John penned Revelation near the end of Domitian's reign was widely held in the early church.

In addition to the statement recorded by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus, Eusebius, and Jerome also affirm that Revelation was written during Domitian's reign . . .

- There has been no Temple since 70 AD
- The events described in Revelation must then refer to a yet future period

The Tribulation Period

- Daniel 9 spoke of 70, 7-year periods where God would be dealing directly with His people Israel and their Holy City.

69 of those years led up to the coming of Christ and His crucifixion

One 7-year period remains

- This period is often referred to as the time period of the great tribulation
- This period will be initiated by the Anti-Christ establishing a covenant with Israel. 3 1/2 years in He will break the covenant by doing something abominable that will usher in the wrath of God

It has been suggested that this covenant will include plans for the construction of Israel's Temple.

- Currently on the Temple Mount are two sacred buildings to be the Islamic world

Dome of the Rock

Al-Aqsa Mosque - the farthest mosque as it signifies Muhammad's night journey

- Interestingly John is told not to measure the outer court for it is given to the gentiles.
- This suggests at least the possibility that the Temple could be rebuilt without disturbing the Islamic structures currently on the site

After Measuring the Temple area John's attention is turned toward 2 witnesses

Revelation 11:3

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

These 2 unnamed witnesses will proclaim the message of God for 3/12 years of the tribulation until they are martyred for their message

Their story takes us through 11:14

- We learn that they are both divinely gifted and divinely protected to proclaim their message
 - When their time comes to an end they will be martyred and the world will rejoice until they rise from the dead
- Once again, we become fascinated with the identity of these 2 unnamed figures
 - It seems very clear that one is Elijah

Malachi 4:5-6

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet

Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,

And the hearts of the children to their fathers,

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

This was fulfilled in a shadow form in John the Baptist

He came in the Spirit of Elijah

But by his own admission was not Elijah

- The identity of the other witness is a mystery

But this has not stopped the speculation

Once again, we must not let the speculation distract us from the purpose of the passage

God wants to get the message out even during the tribulation

He wants to do the same today

We all can have divine assistance and protection to proclaim Christ

Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

This statement is foreseeing all that will unfold in the remainder of the book leading to the time when the kingdom of God is established

- Kingdom of God is both present and future

We enter the Kingdom when Christ becomes our King

We will experience the fullness of that when He returns

- When the announcement is made Heaven begins to rejoice

Revelation 11:16

And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God

We saw this happen earlier in chapter 5 where their thrones were also cast before the throne as a sign of worship