

Chapter 10

V.1-2 The Mighty Angel An appropriate title for this chapter would be “The Beginning of the End”. This chapter marks a new commissioning for John that comes from the mighty angel that we are introduced to. Up until this point the revelations have come at the hand of Jesus himself whether it was the message to the churches or the Lamb who is opening the scroll. But now we see a different scroll that is being held by an angel who will pass it along to John. Although this may have appeared to be the end of the revelation to John with preparing to witness the 7th and final trumpet - it is not. We learn in this chapter that there is more to come. We are thankful for this interlude in which we take a much-needed break from the trumpet judgments to give us some perspective about what is happening next. The angel that John sees is majestic and beautiful and extremely large. He is wrapped in a cloud which often signifies the glory of God throughout the Scriptures. We are reminded of the cloud of glory in the Holy of Holies, the cloud on Mt. Sinai, the cloud that led the Israelites in the desert, the shekinah glory that fills God’s temple, the cloud that surrounded Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, the cloud that Jesus ascended into heaven in, and the cloud that Jesus will return on. This angel has a rainbow over his head, his face was like the sun, and his legs were like pillars of fire. Some of his description looks like the picture that we saw of Jesus in chapter 1 (v.13-15) but we are reminded that in the book of Revelation Jesus is not an angel He is one like a Son of Man and we see that John is not confused with this angel and doesn’t try to worship him as he does at other times with other angels. This is a huge angel who put one foot on the sea and one foot on the land. This doesn’t mean he’s standing on the beach! This angel has great authority and may be one of the largest creatures that we see described in the entire Bible. In a couple of chapters, we will get introduced to the Beast who comes out of the sea and to the second Beast or false prophet who comes out of the land. With the picture of this angel, we are reminded that God has authority over every area of the earth and that whatever happens even with the Beast and the False Prophet is only because God allows it.

Although this angel resembles some of the descriptions given about Jesus we cannot concur that it is Jesus without clear demonstration or Jesus could be any one of several angels in Revelation. Hebrews chapter 1 (v.5-14) makes it very clear that Jesus is not an angel, He is the Lord of angels. You might be able to say that Jesus *has* an angel (Rev. 1:1 & 22:16) and this may be him because of the likeness with Christ but Jesus is not an angel He is far above the heavenly host. Angels are ministering spirits that serve those who inherit salvation on behalf of God but Jesus no longer is the servant. He is Master and Lord and King. This conversation gets a little convoluted in the Old Testament because in His preincarnate state Jesus most likely appears as “the angel of the Lord”. We call these appearances Christophanies where Jesus is visibly seen or heard in the Old Testament. It is often difficult to interpret in the Old Testament if an angel of the Lord is Yahweh himself, the preincarnate Jesus, or merely an angel. This complication is only caused because Jesus has not been sent to earth and has not achieved His glorified status. Of course, He is still God even in His preincarnate status but it is different and it is often much more difficult to see if it is Christ appearing as an angel of the Lord or not.

[Theophanies in the Old Testament | Answers in Genesis](#) In the New Testament we should be very careful about attributing angels and their likeness to be Jesus. There are millions and millions of angels but there is only one Son of God. The angels worship Him and He should not be confused with angels as we see them in the book of Revelation regardless of how mighty or similar they may be. Our study is called the “Revelation of Jesus” not the revelation of angels

and there is good reason for that. We respect and honor angels and their work and service but it must be clear that they are not God.

V.3-4 The Seven Thunders The last diminutive characteristic of this mighty angel that we see is that he speaks with a loud voice like a lion roaring. When he does that there were apparently seven thunders that responded but we are not told what they said. We are not even told exactly what these seven thunders are and it is the only place in Scripture that we see it mentioned. Is it possible that it is a description of the sevenfold voice of God described in Psalm 29:3-9? We may never know on this side of heaven or at least until we hear it for ourselves in the final days. Don't you hate it when that happens – you're talking to someone in the middle of a story and it sounds like it's going to be a good one and then they interject with "I shouldn't tell you this". That doesn't make it wrong but it is annoying nonetheless. That is the picture we get with the seven thunders. John makes the clear distinction that these thunders speak, but he is told by a voice from heaven to seal up what was said and not write it down. Your guess is as good as mine about what the thunders say but this encounter reminds us that in the book of Revelation that some of this is meant to stay hidden. There is mystery to it and it protects us and also prevents the enemy from knowing more than he should as well. God has revealed what He wanted to reveal and the rest we are welcome to pray about and study and search but at the end of the day we must realize that He is God and we are not. Otherwise, we will be tempted to understand mysteries that are not meant to be understood and try to figure out puzzles that are not meant to be solved. That is part of the challenge of the book of Revelation. We must be careful not to go beyond what Scripture is communicating, but we shouldn't be ignoring it either. Either one of these errors doesn't bring glory to God or to His Word that He went to great lengths to provide. So search and meditate and pray and ponder, but don't manipulate, fascinate, or exaggerate. Part of the mystery of the Gospel which we will look at next is that there is understanding what to say but also when to say it. Look at God Himself and His decision to reveal His Son Jesus after about 4000 years. Sure there were prophecies and Christophanies, and general understandings that a messiah would come, but the actual revelation that it would be Jesus from Nazareth was not fully revealed or seen until the first century AD.

The great scholar and theologian A.W. Tozer said in his book "The Root of the Righteous" – No one should be ashamed to admit that he does not know, and no Christian should fear the effect of such a confession in the realm of things spiritual. Indeed, the very power of the cross lies in the fact that it is the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of man. The day we manage to explain everything spiritual will be the day that we have (for ourselves) destroyed everything divine.

V.5-7 No More Delay With this announcement we understand that there is a completion to something. There will be no more delay, but to what? The answer is the end of the story, the seventh trumpet, and the mystery of God. Up until this point we have been living in the now and the not yet. Jesus has defeated sin, death, and the devil but we still face them. The time has come for the work that was finished on the cross to become a reality on this earth in all of its fullness. There will be no more mystery or musings about the visible and invisible kingdom or the true church. All will be disclosed and every secret will be revealed and every hidden thing will be made known. We might be discouraged by the inability to understand the seven thunders but we are encouraged that the time of hiddenness and mystery has come to an end. Specifically, I believe this announcement is introducing the final three and a half years of human history on the fallen earth. At this point something has happened that can't be stopped or

turned back. The final days are here and the 7th trumpet will blow in just a matter of time. The wait is over and the final 3 ½ years are here. The reason I believe this is because the next three chapters all contain information about the final 3 ½ years of great tribulation and they spell out that time frame. This final 3 ½ years is mentioned 3 places in Revelation and they are in Chapters 11, 12, & 13. As you look at these chapters in this context, I believe it gives sufficient evidence to induce that these following chapters are broad overviews of what is going to happen in the final 3 ½ years. We know that there will be a time of *great* tribulation which we already saw introduced in chapter 7. The length of the final tribulation is greatly debated and often thought to be a period of seven years with two 3 ½ year periods that compose the seven years. It is the second half of these 3 ½ years that I propose is being introduced in this chapter and an overview of it given for the remainder of the book. The seven year time frame is much less clear and is thought to be mentioned by inference in the book of Daniel (Chapter 9:24-27) but the 3 ½ years is mentioned in both Daniel and Revelation each mentioning them three different times. It is for this reason that I think we can speak accurately and soundly about the final 3 ½ years in a way that we can't speak about the seven years. It's important in Revelation to understand when there are no time frames given and when there are. This is part of the complication but I believe we should understand the events leading up to chapter 10 as the general unknown period of time until the *great* tribulation begins. A dispensational pretribulation understanding of Revelation would assume that the previous events are part of the first 3 ½ years. We also have to understand that much of what we see in the book of Revelation is cyclical though and may happen repeatedly throughout history until its final completion in the last days. With that understanding it is very difficult to pinpoint whether we are actually in that specified time of the first 3 ½ years. But in these last 3 ½ years we see some clearly identifiable events that Jesus talks about in the Olivet discourse, Paul talks about in his letters, and John reveals in Revelation. It will be these events that we use to establish our assuredness that we have entered into the *great* tribulation over the next few chapters.

We see the seriousness of this promise that there will be no more delay by the posture of the angel who declares such a thing. In the life of Christ's followers we are often relegated to patiently waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises that we have not seen fulfilled in our lives. Sometimes we can be disillusioned by seemingly unanswered prayers or our ability to endure the delay attached to them. It is in this context that we see the angel say – "There will be no more delay, I swear by Him who lives forever and ever who created the heavens, the earth, the sea and all that is in them." God told his prophets what would happen and now it will all be completed and there's nothing that can stop it. Jesus will return. The king will come. The trump shall sound. Ready or not here He comes.

The mystery of God will be fulfilled. What exactly is this mystery that John is referring to that the angel swears to God about? When we in the Western world think about the term mystery, we imagine something that is unknown, but when the Bible talks about the word mystery it often refers to those things that used to be unknowable in the past but now they have been revealed. We can be certain in the context of Revelation and the end of all things that this phrase is inclusive of all mysteries. Any hidden truth or unknown reality will be made known. The most talked about mystery in the New Testament is the mystery of Christ. Who He was, what He was to accomplish, what His kingdom was, and all that surrounded the coming of the Messiah. It was a mystery to the Jewish people and to the world when He would come, how He would die, why He came, who He came for, and how He would win. Much of what surrounds Jesus' return is mysterious as well and there is inconsistent agreement in the church on the tribulation, the

rapture, the antichrist, Babylon, etc. but all of these mysteries will be finally and completely fulfilled. Regardless of how long the time of the final days consume we can see that the angel's declaration means the time of waiting is over and the mysteries of God have been fulfilled, completed, determined, and set in stone.

V.8-10 The Scroll The mighty angel that we see in this chapter had a little scroll open in his hand. What is the significance of this scroll and how does it relate to the book of Revelation? There are as many different interpretations of what this scroll is as there are commentaries on the book of Revelation. I will try not and make any finite conclusions but I will point out some of the similarities and differences to the other scroll in Revelation that contained the seven seals. The scroll here in chapter 10 appears to be much different in size, scope, and accessibility. The seven sealed scroll first introduced in chapter 5 was described as having writing on both sides and had seven seals which are both indications of how much information was contained in it. This scroll though is described as small and already open. The first scroll God the Father is holding on the throne and this scroll is being held by one of His messengers. The seven sealed scroll can only be opened by the Lamb and this scroll is given to His apostle John. My best inclination as to the contents of this scroll are the final 3 ½ years as we see them described in the book of Revelation. But as I indicated there are some who think that the first scroll was the Old Testament and this scroll is the New Testament, there are some who think it is the book of Daniel, and yet others who believe it is the entire book of Revelation or the same scroll that Ezekiel was given since the circumstances are similar (Ezekiel 2:8-3:3). I think it is interesting to at least point out that in the book of Daniel there are two verses at the end of the book that indicate something about the closing of a scroll or a book. Is this the same scroll that Daniel was not shown and that was sealed before him? Daniel 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." And Daniel 12:9 "He said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.'" We certainly know that Revelation is the time of the end and there is at least some possible connection between the two.

V.11 The Recommissioning The book of Revelation up until this point has been primarily dictated and driven by Jesus Himself. John was commanded to write whatever he saw and heard. In chapter 10 John is given a scroll which he is commanded to eat and, in some ways, becomes part of the message himself. At this point John may have been tiring or beginning to wonder if this was the end of the end, but we find out that it is only the end and not the end of the end. He is told that he must again prophesy about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings. We get the impression that the heavy lifting has been accomplished by the Lamb and that with this chapter we have reached the precipice of the book and that it is all downhill from here. Jesus appears to be preparing for His return and He has relegated the ending to be communicated through His ministering servant. As Dr. Louis Brighton states in his commentary on Revelation "The prime revelator of the message of Revelation is Jesus Christ. The secondary revelator is the mighty angel of Revelation 10. Similarly, as the exalted Christ is the first to commission John to receive and then send to the churches the message (1:1-2,9-20), so now the mighty angel (in the place of Christ) commissions John to proclaim the message to the world (10:9-11)."

All of this chapter is amazingly still apart of the 2nd Woe which we saw instigated by the 6th Trumpet in chapter 9. In the next chapter we will see the blowing of the 7th Trumpet and begin to see part of the narrative for the final 3 ½ years.