

**The Revelation to John**  
**Chapter Ten**  
**An Interlude before the Seventh Trumpet Sounds**  
**The Angel and the Little Book**

Leon Combs, M.A., M.Div., Ph.D.

Just as with the seven seals, we now have an interlude before the launching of the seventh trumpet. There will be a similar interlude between the sixth and seventh bowls as we will see later. This interlude is the longest and lasts until Rev 11:15. Just as in life, we cannot predict when God's judgments will come and He is now giving a "breather" after He has unleashed some of His wrath upon the earth and its inhabitants. In this portion of his vision John will see an unusual angel, an unusual book, an unusual event from eating the book, an announcement not to be revealed to us, and an unusual assignment.

**Rev 10:1 "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;"**

It is obvious that this angel is not Jesus. He is "just" another angel. Since John sees him coming out of heaven we suppose that John is now seeing his vision from the vantage point of earth whereas he was previously watching from heaven. This angel has four distinctive descriptive natures. He is clothed with a cloud rather than coming out of a cloud and this reminds us of the chariot of God:

*Psalm 104:3 "He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind;"*

The rainbow is symbolic of the promise of God and also appeared in Rev 4:3. His face was like the sun so no man could look directly into his face. His feet appeared as pillars of fire which is symbolic of judgment and was an image of God to the Jews in the wilderness (Ex 13:21-22).

**Rev 10:2 "and he had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;**  
**Rev 10:3 and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices."**

The little book is not further identified as to its contents. However it seems logical to assume that it is the same book first identified as being sealed. It probably appears small because of the huge size of the angel and that John is going to be commanded to eat it. It is from God and surely is the Word of God and probably contains what has been revealed to John at least to this point. Showing the angel as having his right foot on the sea and his left on the land describes a huge angel! Having his feet on the land and on the sea illustrates his authority over all the earth. The appearance of such a huge being would have been very comforting to the early church since the world saw them as very small

and insignificant. Perhaps the same comparison can be made today as to the world's opinion of the church.

His loud cry like a lion is to get the attention of everyone and has often been used in the Old Testament to signify the power and authority of God such as the following:

- *Jer 25:30* "Therefore you shall prophesy against them all these words, and you shall say to them, 'The Lord will roar from on high, And utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold. He will shout like those who tread the grapes, Against all the inhabitants of the earth.'"
- *Hos 11:10* "They will walk after the Lord, He will roar like a lion; Indeed He will roar, And His sons will come trembling from the west."

After this roar, there were seven peals of thunder. Seven is the number of perfection or completeness and thunder is often a mark of judgment:

*1Sa 2:10* "Those who contend with the Lord will be shattered; Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed."

**Rev 10:4** "And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them."

John does not tell us the person who spoke to him but the person is clearly speaking with the authority of God and could be One of the Trinity or another angel. We are also not told the content of the voices of thunder but it surely must have related to the judgment of God upon the earth and mankind. Evidently John did understand the utterances of the voices of thunder but he was told not to write them so we do not know and such remains one of the mysteries of God:

*Deut 29:29* "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

**Rev 10:5** "And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven,  
**Rev 10:6** and swore by 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, that there shall be delay no longer,  
**Rev 10:7** but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets."

Now the angel praises God. Lifting the right hand to heaven is a symbol of uttering a solemn vow:

- *Deut 32:39-40 “See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, And say, as I live forever,”*
- *Dan 12:7 “And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.”*

The angel swore by the only One to Whom he could swear, the omniscient, eternal, omnipotent God. He swears that the delays are all over. He proclaims that the voice of the seventh angel will bring to an end the hidden mysteries of God that had been preached to His servants the prophets. There are many references to these mysteries throughout the Bible and I leave much of the reading of these to you but here are a few:

- *Dan 2:28 “However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.”*
- *Dan 2:47 “The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.”*
- *Luke 8:10 “”And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”*
- *1Cor 4:1 “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”*
- *1Cor 14:2 “For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.”*
- *Eph 3:9 “and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things;”*

I also refer you to my commentaries on Ephesians and 1 Corinthians for further discussions on the mysteries of God.

**Rev 10:8 “And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, “Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land.”**

**Rev 10:9 And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, “Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.”**

**Rev 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.”**

The same person mentioned in verse four spoke to John again and gives him a command that he quickly obeys. God often tells His servants to go and a true servant goes as he is

told, even as Jonah eventually did. John does go to the angel and this must have taken considerable courage! He tells this awesome being to give him the book! We know that the angels serve God's bondservants:

*Heb 1:14 "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"*

The angel then obeys John and tells him to eat the book. He also reveals to him what result he will experience from eating the book. A similar scene had been revealed involving Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:9-3:3). Eating the Word of God is symbolic of making It an integral part of our being.

- *Psa 19:9-10 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.*
- *Jer 15:16 Thy words were found and I ate them, And Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts.*
- *Ezek 3:1-3 Then 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 fed me this scroll. And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach, and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.*

Jesus also gave His disciples the same command beginning with the following and continuing to John 6:71.

*John 6:47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.*

*John 6:48 "I am the bread of life.*

*John 6:49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.*

*John 6:50 "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.*

*John 6:51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."*

The disciples and others present had a hard time trying to understand the meaning of Jesus in these verses and the early Christians were even called cannibals by critics who misunderstood the meaning of Jesus. The meaning is that we are to make the Word of God as much a part of our life as breathing air. We are not just to taste it but we are to eat it, meaning to digest it thoroughly. Many people just taste the Word of God by attending worship services on some Sundays but then immediately forgetting it. The children of God worship God on Sundays and then study the revealed Word and make It an integral part of their lives throughout the week. To the child of God the Word indeed does taste like honey at first, but when the full meaning to the children and to the world is

understood, the meaning is revealed as bitter with judgment for those who are not bondservants of God. John has already seen many of these judgments and some of the praises of God as revealed by the opening of the book and so he would have understood the Word to be as honey to the bondservants and as bitter judgment to the world.

**Rev 10:11 “And they said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.””**

John is again commissioned to prophesy concerning what is still to come. Although John did not have the opportunity to preach in person to people throughout the world, he was honored to be shown these visions and to write them for all to read. He will now begin to reveal more judgments and the coming of the kingdom of God in all its power and dominance. He is about to be shown even more devastating judgments and more glorious truths. We are indeed all about to be blessed even more by the diligence of John to write what God revealed to him. We remember the promise:

*Rev 1:3 “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*