The Book of Revelation

Zanesville, OH | Wednesday/Sunday Bible Study

**Chapter 10**

* **10:1-11– The Angel and The Little Book**
  + A sort of interlude occurs in 10:1-11:14 after six of the seven trumpets have been sounded. This pattern is identical to the interlude in chapter 7 which comes after the sixth seal but prior to the seventh. Both of these interludes contain two visions that relate particularly to the saints (church).
  + John is recommissioned to prophesy in relation to the content he is given. This message shows the nature of the relationship between the believers and unbelievers and God’s plan for the unrighteous at the end of human history. The behavior of the godly and ungodly in chapter 11 moves history to its climactic close when Christ will return.
  + This interlude also provides an understanding of why the six trumpets are sounded and why the earth-dwellers are inflicted with severe punishment. Throughout the church age, God’s people are ruthlessly persecuted by their enemies but there will no longer be a delay to their day of reckoning.
  + **Verse 1**– John observes a strong angel in a majestic, radiant form coming down out of Heaven. Some identify this angel as the same one of 5:2 and 18:21. Others suggest this strong angel here is different than the angel in 5:2 and 18:21 because of the description given him.
  + Thus many believe because of the description, this angel is to be identified as Christ since it mirrors descriptions of Christ/God elsewhere in the book (1:7, 15-16; 4:3). These descriptions are largely gotten from OT passages which speak of God/Son of Man in a radiant/majestic way.
  + The clouds allude to the Exodus image of God leading His people by day and night (Ex. 13:21-22; cf. Psa. 104:3). The rainbow reminds us of the description of the glory of God in Ezek. 1:26-28. The face being like that of the sun reminds us of Dan. 10:6 later used in Rev. 1:16 and alluded to in Matt. 17:2.
  + The feet/legs being like pillars of fire is also reminiscent of Ex. 13:21-22 and similar to Dan. 10:6 and Rev. 1:15. It seems that there are too many similarities between this angel and Jesus for one to dismiss this strong angel as being Christ Himself. Rev. 14:14-16 would also seem to support that this strong angel is Jesus.
  + If the little book of v. 2 is to be identified with the scroll of chapter 5, then this is also fairly strong evidence indicating Christ is the strong angel since it is The Lamb who is able to take the scroll and break its seals. Due to the nature of this interlude, that this angel is Christ would make sense.
  + Furthermore, this particular description seems to be tied into the OT mention of the angel of the LORD (YHWH) who is sometimes recognized as God Himself (Gen. 16:7-10; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-12; Judg. 2:1-5; 6:22; 13:3-5, 8-23). If this is the same way it is used here, it may indeed be indicative of deity.
  + At the very least this angel is Christ-like or having the conveyance of His authority to carry out His divine will (cf. Dan. 10:13-21; Jude 1:9). It may be the same angel described as being the angel of the LORD in the OT. Whether he is Christ or not, He is acting according the will of the Sovereign God.
  + **Verse 2**– This mighty angel is seen with a book in his hand. The little book (scroll) seems to be the same scroll of chapter 5 which The Lamb is worthy to take (5:1-5). There are several similarities between the contents of both of them thus demonstrating they are likely the same book.
  + He is said to be on land and sea indicating the sovereign authority he has over all the earth (cf. Josh. 10:24-26; Psa. 2:8; Matt. 28:18). This is important because it affects the destiny of both the saints and the unbelieves in the immediate context in chapters 10 and 11.
  + **Verse 3**– The angel cries out with a loud voice like that of a lion (cf. Jer. 25:30; Amos 1:2; 3:8; Rev. 5:5). After the angel cries out, the seven peals of thunder are heard uttering their voices (cf. Jn. 12:28-29; Rev. 6:1; 14:2). These may stand for some kind of heavenly being(s). It may also symbolize God’s judgment (Psa. 29:3-9; 77:17-18; Rev. 8:5).
  + **Verse 4**– As John heard the seven thunders speak, he was intending to write what they said but was halted by a voice from heaven. He is told to seal up what he heard and not to write them (cf. Dan. 8:26; 12:4-9). The idea of sealing something up pertains to the fact that the time is not yet near for its content to be executed/revealed. John is not to convey what they said to his audience.
  + **Verses 5-6**– Attention returns to the mighty angel who lifts his hand up to Heaven to swear by God that there will no longer be any delay to the conclusion of God’s sovereign will for redemption and judgment to be climaxed at the end of human history.
  + Several OT passages are the source for this particular image here but in particular it is identical to Dan. 12:6-7 which further illustrates that the content in Revelation is fulfilling the prophecies made in Daniel. If this strong angel is Christ, it isn’t impossible for Him to swear by God.
  + God swore by Himself several times in the OT and in almost all of these instances it deals with judgment against His enemies and redemption for His followers (Gen. 22:16; Ex. 32:13; Isa. 45:23; Jer. 49:13;Ezek. 20:5; Amos 6:8). Perhaps the passage largely used here besides Dan. 12:6-7 is Deut. 32:35-43.
  + God is invoked in this oath specifically being described as the One who made all things for the purpose of demonstrating His incomparable power and strength and also His infinite nature to know all things from beginning to end (cf. Ex. 20:11; Neh. 9:6; Psa. 95:3-6; 146:5-7; 148:1-7; Acts 14:15).
  + **Verse 7**– That there will no longer be any delay is an answer to the prayers of the saints in 6:9-11. God’s sovereign will for history will come to a close in His time and His people will be redeemed. This takes place when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet and the “mystery” of God is finished. This again alludes to Dan. 11:29-12:13.
  + A mystery suggests something that is hidden or secret. In the OT the fullness of God’s plan was vague and hidden but because of Christ’s fulfillment of the plan of salvation the mystery that was once hidden is now revealed moving to its glorious conclusion (cf. Eph. 3:3-9; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).
  + **Verse 8**– The story now turns to John as he is called to prophesy these things. Verses 8-10 are strongly reminiscent of Ezek. 2:8-3:3 in which Ezekiel is called to prophesy a message of judgment against the house of Israel. John is told by the voice from Heaven to go towards the angel and take the book which is in his hand (cf. Ezek. 2:8-10).
  + **Verse 9**–  John proceeds as commanded and the angel instructs him to eat it and declares that the scroll will make his stomach bitter but in his mouth it is sweet as honey (cf. Ezek. 3:1-3). The sweetness is indicative of the power and positive attributes of God’s word and this sweetness is tasted for those who submit to Him (cf. Psa. 19:7-11; 119:97-104; Jer. 15:16).
  + The sweetness is short-lived as the digesting of the word now leads to bitterness which is likely indicative of the woes and lamentations to befall the people. There may be a sense here as well in which the prophet is upset because people refuse to listen to God’s message and repent (cf. Ezek. 3:14).
  + **Verse 10**–  John does exactly as the angel has instructed and true to his instruction the word is sweet as first but then becomes bitter in the end. This message will play out in chapter 11 and throughout the remainder of the book.
  + **Verse 11**– John is now told to prophesy these things concerning many peoples, nations, tongues and kings. This four-fold description has been used in this book before to describe all men everywhere without exception (cf. 5:9; 7:9). This may be the same idea here as well but the description of “kings” is usually negative in the book (6:15; 16:12, 14; 17:1-2, 10-12, 15-16, 18; 18:3, 9; 19:18-19).