

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 2ND, 2018 // BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 10 records the significance of sounding of the "7th Trumpet" and how it will bring about the full completion of God's plan. God's Word and God's plan is both sweet and bitter to those for whom He gives it.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE SEVEN THUNDERS (10:1-4)

John's words, "I saw" mark the beginning of a fresh new vision.

- Following the vision of the six trumpets, John saw a vision of a powerful angel coming down from heaven and standing on earth.
- So far John has reported all of vision two (chap. 4-9) from a heavenly vantage point, but now he moves to earth and gets personally involved.

This mighty angel John sees is dressed in spectacular attire- clothed with a cloud with a rainbow on his head.

- Clouds symbolize power and judgment, and the rainbow represents God's covenant mercy in the midst of judgment.
- He had a face like the sun and legs like fiery pillars- imagery that alludes to the pillar of fire that accompanied Israel out of Egypt.

His right foot was on the sea and left foot was on the land- suggesting that this was an angel of enormous size.

- The angel held, "in his hand a little book which was open".
- The book most likely contained all of the terrors of judgment yet to come on the earth.
- This angel is clearly an incredible being, but who is he?

Some scholars have seen the similarities between this angel and Jesus's description in Revelation 1 and concluded that this is Christ.

- However, John doesn't worship this angel, the oath-taking of this angel is uncharacteristic of Christ, and John clearly identifies this as angel.
- Due to the similarities of this passage to Dan. 12:7, this is most likely the angel Gabriel, who "stands in the very presence of God" (Luke 1:19).

The mighty angel called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring, and as he did, "the seven thunders sounded".

- "Seven" speaks of completeness and perfection, and "thunder" is often a mark of judgment in Scripture.
- The "seven thunders" may represent the voice of God decreeing judgment on the earth.

But before John could record the message of the 7 peals of thunder, he heard a voice from heaven commanding him not to write it down.

- The reason he was forbidden to record the message isn't revealed.
- It may be that this judgment was too terrifying to record, but we don't know.
- If God wanted this to be known, He wouldn't have forbidden John to write it.

SUFFICIENT, YET NOT EXHAUSTIVE.

- The Bible doesn't give us all the details about the end of the world.
- But it does give us ample teaching about how we are to prepare and what kind of lives we are to live.
- The things that are necessary to know and please God are made main and plain in Scripture. (2 Pet. 3:10-11)

"NO MORE DELAY" (10:5-7)

What seemed to impress John most about this mighty angel was his size and that he was standing on both land and sea (vs. 3,5,8).

- John then sees the angel lifting up his right hand to heaven to take a solemn vow.
- This vow is an indication that what the angel was about to say was very important and completely true.

The angel took a vow in the name of God using a title that stresses His eternity and sovereign power in and over all creation (vs. 6).

- The angel vowed "no more delay" in the fulfillment of the "mystery of God".
- The martyrs in 6:10 and the prayers of the saints in 8:3-5 had asked "how long?", and now this angel provides the answer.

The judgment of the 7th trumpet is about to come, but it's not a single event- it's a period of time ("the days of the trumpet call") indicated by 7 bowls of God's judgment.

- The time of God's patience and tolerance of evil has ended and the final acts of judgment are at hand.
- The "mystery of God" is about to be fulfilled.

Mystery in Scripture refers to truths God has hidden and will reveal in His time.

- There are mysteries of God mentioned in the NT ("mysteries of the kingdom", Matt. 13:11, "mystery of the incarnation", 1 Tim. 3:16, "mystery of the rapture", 1 Cor. 15:51).
- This mystery that the angel spoke of is that of the consummation of God's plan in bringing His kingdom in Christ to fulfillment.

The fulfillment of Christ establishing His kingdom involves the final salvation and reign of His Church, and it also involves judgment on humanity, Satan and demons.

- It's called a "mystery" because up until this point all of the details had been unknown.
- This plan is laid out for us from this point to the end of Revelation, when the new heavens and new earth are created.

To the believers living at that time in a world overrun by demons, sin, and natural disasters- this realization that God's plan is on schedule will bring great comfort and hope in the midst of judgment.

- God's timing is different from our timing- but His timing is perfect.
- Sometimes what seems to be a delay in schedule is actually divine providence.

THE LITTLE SCROLL (10:8-11)

The voice that John had earlier heard from heaven that forbid him from recording the words of the "7 thunders" now speaks to him.

- The voice told him, "Go take the scroll that is open from the hand of the angel".
- Now an active participant in this drama, John obeys and is then commanded to do something very strange.
- He's told to eat the scroll.

John is told that when he eats it, it will be as sweet as honey in his mouth, but it will make his stomach bitter (vs. 9).

- Obediently, John does what he's commanded, and it's just as he was warned.
- John is then told that he has to prophesy again-what he's about to learn is more devastating, intense, and glorious than anything he's seen up to this point.

When God commands John & Ezekiel to "eat" the prophetic word, it's an act designed to symbolize the necessity of reflecting on and understanding the message.

- Even today we might say we are "digesting" someone's words.
- This is a graphic illustration of what a proper response on the part of believers should be to God's impending judgment.

When John took in the divine words concerning the remaining judgments as the Lord took possession of the universe, he found them, "sweet as honey".

- "Sweet" because he wanted Jesus to act in judgment to take back the earth that is rightfully His and be exalted and glorified.
- "Sweet" because the promise of eternity in perfection with Christ is the best news ever.

But John also found this plan to be "bitter".

- "Bitter" because the realization of the terrible doom awaiting those who refuse to repent turned his stomach sour.
- "Bitter" because there was most likely mourning over the judgment of the ungodly and the destruction that will take place.
- "Bitter" because of the reality that John had a responsibility to speak God's Word.

After this brief interlude, John must prophesy again as to what lies ahead about many "peoples, nations, languages, and kings" (vs. 11).

- When God reveals to us His Word, we're never intended to keep it for ourselves.
- John is commanded to record what God has revealed and send it to the 7 churches, and you're commanded to know what God has spoken through His Word and to live it and speak it.
- God's plan for salvation and redemption is beautiful, sweet, and glorious.
- Yet that within that plan of redemption there is pain, difficulty, and suffering.
- The easy path isn't always the right path, and the right path usually isn't the easy path.

THE SMALL GATE AND NARROW ROAD VS. THE WIDE GATE AND BROAD ROAD (MATT. 7:13-14)

- The small gate leads to a "narrow" road, one that will take us through difficulties.
- The wide gate leads to an "easy" road, where we're free to pursue whatever comforts, pleasures, and idols we want.

IN THE END...

- The sweetness of the wide gate and broad road will lead to eternal, neverending bitter destruction.
- The bitterness of the small gate and narrow road will lead to the eternal, neverending sweetness of paradise with God.