

## A Mighty Angel and His Little Book Revelation 10:1-11

### **Introduction**

Has there ever been a time in your life when you feared God had forgotten you? The silence of His voice screamed out and the absence of His presence was everywhere. There are times when God seems distant, far off, out of sight, even if not out of mind. When everything around us is falling apart its easy to think God isn't there and that God doesn't care, that the deists with their absent landlord view of God have it right. It is exactly at those times we most need to hear God speak.

John found himself in just this kind of situation. ½ of the world's population has died as a result of the Great Tribulation. Disasters are striking at every turn and demons are on the loose. Evil appears to be reigning supreme. Suddenly, there is a break in the action. Again there is an interlude that gives us the chance to catch our breath and regain a proper perspective. Out of nowhere there appears a mighty angel and with him, his Little Book. God is still there and He is not silent. Through this angel and out of this little book God speaks. What is it that John both saw and heard that God wanted him, wanted us to learn?

### **I. God's word must be accepted. 10:1-4**

Angels are mentioned more than 60 times in Revelation. Satan has his army of demons but God has His army of angels. Here John sees (I saw marks the start of a new vision; cf. 4:1; 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1) another (*allon*, of the same type as the others) angel, but he is described as mighty, majestic and mammoth! But even more importantly, he has a message.

#### **1. God's will may be revealed. 10:1-3**

Coming down from heaven – The source of his service is God, in contrast to the demons of chapter 9 who come up out of the Abyss.

Clothed with a cloud – (perfect tense) – this angel wears the clouds of heaven as a majestic cloak over his shoulders. Clouds symbolize power, majesty and glory. God led Israel by a cloud (Exodus 16:10). Dark clouds covered Sinai when the law was given (Exodus 19:9). God appeared to Moses in a cloud of glory (Exodus 24:15; 34:5). Indeed the Bible says in Psalm 104:3, “[He] makes the clouds His chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind.” Interestingly 9 of the 20 occurrences of clouds in the New Testament are connected with judgement (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7; 14:14, 15, 16).

A rainbow was on His head – the sign of God's covenant faithfulness adorned His head like a crown (cf. Noah; Genesis 9:12-16).

His face was like the sun – brilliant, radiant, for he had been in the presence of God and as a result, is an awesome reflection of the Lord.

His feet like pillars of fire – pictures stability and uncompromising holiness.

\*This majestic picture has caused some to identify the angel with Jesus. There is remarkable similarity between this vision and that of the glorified Christ in chapter 1. However, he is distinctively said to be an angel like the others, particularly those associated with the blowing of the 7 trumpets. Also, when Christ comes out of heaven

and to the earth, it will be to consummate history and inaugurate the kingdom (cf. 19:11-20:6).

The angel had a little book (mentioned 4 times in chapter 10). This is a different book than the sealed book of chapter 5. So massive is this angel that he lays claim for his message of all the earth, setting his right foot on the sea and his left on the land (mentioned 3 times). Furthermore, his message is to warn all and be heard by all, he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. The whole world is under his feet. The whole world is in the hands of God. Hosea 11:10 says, “the Lord ... will roar like a lion; indeed He will roar.” Joel 3:16 says, “the Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and earth tremble.” His cry is accompanied by 7 thunders which speak or cry. In the little book is the Word of God. In the 7 thunders is additional judgement from God.

### **Application**

God’s will may be revealed. We must be watching. We must be listening! He is really not that hard to find, see, or hear. But, you must be seeking, looking and listening.

## **2. God’s will may be concealed. 10:4**

This is an amazing verse. The 7 thunders have sounded their message, like the 7 seals, 7 trumpets and 7 bowls. John prepares to write but a voice from heaven, no doubt the Lord’s says, “seal up the ... 7 thunders and do not write them.” These are the only words in the book of Revelation that are sealed up. Revelation 22:10 says to not seal the prophecies of this book but here, in this one instance, John is ordered to not write what he heard. Why?

- \* 1) It is another reminder of the patience and mercy of God. As devastating as the seals, trumpets and bowls are, they are not exhaustive. It could have been worse!
- \* 2) Deuteronomy 29:29, “The *secret things* belong to the Lord our God, but those *things which are* revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

God is under no obligation to tell all. The fact is He has told us more than we obey! Some things God shares with us. Some things God keeps to Himself. I can live with that. Actually, I rejoice in it. That was not always the case. It is a wonderful freedom to come to the realization that God is God and we are not. Instead of wondering about what we don’t know, let’s get busy obeying what we do know.

### **Transition**

God’s word must be accepted.

## **II. God’s word must be accomplished. 10:5-7**

Isaiah 55:11 says, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

Hebrews 4:12 reminds us, “The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.”

When God speaks His Word it is certain and sure, truth and trustworthy. In these verses we are taught we can always trust God in 2 specific areas.

**1. Trust God to confirm His word. 10:5-6**

In an act of solemn oath taking the angel raises his hand to heaven. In Matthew 5:34-35 Jesus spoke against frivolous and deceitful swearing. His brother James taught the same lesson (James 5:12). However, throughout Scripture godly men and women such as Abraham (Genesis 21:25-31), Isaac (Genesis 26:26-31), David (1 Samuel 20:12-17), Paul (Acts 18:18) and even Jesus (Matthew 26:63-64) and God Himself (Hebrews 6:13) took oaths as a witness of confirmation to speak the truth. This angel swears an oath and he took it in the name of the living God who lives forever and ever. This stresses His eternity (cf. 1:18; 4:9, 10: 15:7). Furthermore, he created heaven, earth, and sea and the things that are in it (repeated 3 times for emphasis). He alone is the uncaused cause of all that is, Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover, the source and ultimate cause of all that is. This angel could not have sworn by any greater. God will confirm His Word. You can count on it. You can count on Him.

**2. Trust God to complete His work. 10:6-7**

The message of God’s servant angel is 2 fold:

**First**, there should be delay no longer. This answers the question of the martyrs in 6:10, “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ ” God will not stop or slow the remaining flood of judgements. Evil will now run its course quickly as Antichrist rises from the Abyss (11:7) and emerges as a world ruler (2 Thessalonians 2:3ff; Revelation 13:1-18). God and evil, Satan and the Savior are headed for a cosmic conflict and a global showdown and it will happen soon.

**Second**, when the 7<sup>th</sup> angel is about to sound to send forth the 7 bowls (chapter 16), the mystery of God will be finished as He declared (announced, preached [*eveggelisen*]) to His servants (*doulous*) the prophets. A mystery is a truth previously concealed but now revealed. God’s purpose in creation and redemption made possible through the blood of the Lamb is made plain. It is nothing less than the answer to the prayers of the saints throughout history, “Thy kingdom come ... on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). The time is now. The kingdom will come. God has willed from eternity past the complete and final defeat of evil. That day is coming. You can trust God to complete His work. We may fail Him, but He will never fail us!

**III. God’s word must be assimilated. 10:8-11**

God’s Word is of no value if we do not seek it, hear it and obey it. Here we discover a proven strategy whereby God’s Word comes to us, stays with us and changes us.

1. **Take the word.**

**10:8**

The voice I heard looks back to verse 4. As a voice from heaven it commands authority and obedient response.

Go and take (imperatives) the little book which is open (its message is plain to all who will read it).

**Application**

We too must take the Word God has given us. No one else can do it for us.

2. **Try the word.**

**10:9-10**

Take and eat down (eat completely) are both imperatives (cf. Ezekiel 2:9-3:3). God's Word is bread (Matthew 4:4); milk (1 Peter 2:2); meat (1 Corinthians 3:1-2), and honey (Psalm 119:103). We must eat it down, try it ourselves. God does not force feed His Word to anyone! Here, and in our lives as well, when the Word has done its work there will be a 2-fold effect:

\*Sweet in the mouth – because it reveals the greatness and goodness of God and His plans and purposes for us.

\*Bitter to the stomach – because of the reality of the terrible doom and judgement awaiting unbelievers, those who have said *no* to Jesus (and perhaps to suffering saints enduring martyrdom in the Tribulation).

There is sorrow and joy, bitterness and sweetness, sadness and gladness when God's Word does its work in our lives. We must never forget it is both a Word of life and a Word of death (2 Corinthians 2:14-17). As John MacArthur well says, "All who love Jesus Christ can relate to John's ambivalence" (p. 288).

3. **Tell the word.**

**10:11**

The angel has a commission for John. Though not identical, it is reminiscent of the commission of Jesus to His church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

You must (moral imperative) prophecy, preach, tell again. (cf. 1:19). There is a divine mandate in these words. These prophecies will concern everyone everywhere. This 4-fold classification is common in Revelation. It occurs 5 times. This chapter is an all too brief interlude of grace and mercy, wrapped in the reality of bitter judgement.

**Conclusion**

John has an evangelistic mandate and responsibility. We have an evangelistic mandate and responsibility. We have in our possession bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty and life for the dying. It is unconscionable that we would keep this precious treasure to ourselves. Take the Word, try the Word, tell the Word. Nothing less will be sufficient for the souls of men. Nothing less will be worthy of the Savior who died for the sins of the world.