

I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ² He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land, ³ and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. ⁴ Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them." ⁵ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶ and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, ⁷ but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets. ⁸ Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth." ⁹ So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." ¹⁰ Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹ And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

Introduction

From Chapter 10: v. 1 through to Chapter 11: v.14 is a sort of interlude, or break between the sounding of the 6th and 7th trumpet.

We are introduced to a mighty Angel who has come straight from the presence of God.

The mighty Angel is carrying a little book which John is told to eat.

Basically that is all that is revealed to us in the chapter.

However, as we dig a little deeper we will discover some things about this incident that I hope will be food for our soul.

1. The Mighty Angel - 10: v. 1-7.

The first thing we discover about the angel is that he is coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud.

In Psalm 104: v.3 we are told that God makes the clouds His Chariot. This is just informing us that the angel has indeed come from heaven.

We move on to a description of this mighty angel.

He had a rainbow on his head, his face was like the sun and his feet were like pillars of fire.

Q. What can we learn from the description of the angel.?

- a) The Rainbow takes us back to Ezekiel chapter 1: v. 28 where Ezekiel's vision of God included an appearance like a rainbow.

(Ezekiel Chapter 1: v.28 in N.K.J.)

²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the brightness all around it. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw *it*, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

- b) The Angel's face shining like the sun takes us to the face of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew Chapter 17: v.2 where we read that the face of Jesus was transfigured before them, His face shone like the sun.

Matthew 17: v.1- 2 (N.K.J.)

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

- c) The Angel's feet like pillars of fire. When God was guiding His chosen race out of Egypt, He lead them by a pillar of cloud in the day time and by a pillar of fire at night.

So the pillars of fire represent God's guiding hand in the darkness of the tribulation.

(Exodus 13: v. 21-22 in N.K.J.)

²¹And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. ²²He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

It is very clear that this mighty Angel has come from the very presence of God. Some Scholars feel that because His description represents things that reflect God, that it is none other than the risen, glorified Lord Jesus.

It is possible that it could be because of circumstantial evidence from the Bible.

We are told in v. 2 that the Angel has a little book open in His hand. We will come back to the little book later.

The Angel set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

This action shows us His size and power. The sea and the land stand for the whole world.

This Angel had complete control of the whole universe.

When this Angel spoke it was like a lion roaring and when He cried out, 7 thunders were heard. Quite often in the Bible, the voice of God is described as a roaring lion.

Joel 3: v. 16.

¹⁶The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

Hosea 11: v. 10

¹⁰“They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, Then *His* sons shall come trembling from the west;

Amos 3: v. 8.

⁸A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

In v. 4 we are told that John was about to write down what the 7 thunders had said, but was told **NOT** to write them down.

John could write down everything else he had experienced so far but not what he was told by these 7 thunders.

The 7 thunders or voices of God are likely to be connected to Psalm 29.

If you look up Psalm 29 in the N.K.J. Bible you will discover the 7 voices of God. It is an interesting study.

We don't have time to study these 7 voices of God today, but I will mention them for the benefit of those who would like to study them later.

In Psalm 29 the 7 voices of God are as follows;

1. The voice of the Lord is over the waters – v. 3.
2. The voice of the Lord is powerful – v. 4.
3. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty – v.4.
4. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars – v. 5.
5. The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire – v. 7.
6. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness – v. 8.
7. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth – v. 9.

It is interesting to note that John is given a Revelation that he could not pass on to the believers at that time and can't pass on this revelation to us now.

We must not begin to speculate about what this secret Revelation from God was about.

However, what we do know is that it is not the first time in the Bible where somebody had a "Revelation" from God that he could not pass on to other people.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians Chapter 12: v. 1-6.

It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—⁴how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. ⁶For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

Paul clearly had "Divine" experiences which he couldn't share with anybody.

I can understand why God has protected us from some experiences and revelations about the future.

Perhaps the reason is that we might worry about these future events.

Being over concerned with future events destroys our ability to enjoy the present.

If you knew that the "okonomiyaki" that you were going to eat for lunch today would give you food poisoning, and make you sick, then I don't think you would enjoy your "okonomiyaki" at lunch time today.

Even the mention here of this illustration is going to make some people change their lunch plans today!!!

Jesus says very clearly in Matthew 6: v. 34 ".... Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

So there are some things that God does not want us to know and He withholds this information for our benefit.

In v. 5-7 we have an announcement by the Angel who affirms this announcement with an oath. The announcement is that there will no longer be any delay and the mystery of God would be finished.

We have to remember that we are now in the middle of the "tribulation period" when the "Anti-Christ" will be revealed.

We have to return to 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2 to learn something about the "anti-Christ"

2 Thessalonians 2: v. 1-12.

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ⁵Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who

perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

To put this situation into its time frame, we are told that it all happens in the days of the sounding of the 7th Angel.

Now we need to fast-forward to Chapter 11: v. 15-19.

Rev. 11: v. 15-19 in the N.K.J.

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth." ¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

So at the second half of the tribulation period, the whole purposes of God will be revealed.

God will finally deal with evil and justice will be done according to the purposes of God.

Up to this point it will seem that evil has the victory, but then finally God will get the victory over all evil and all that sets itself up against God and His purposes.

The great thing about the book of Revelation is that God wins in the end and ALL evil is destroyed.

We now move from the "Mighty Angel" to John and the "little book".

2. John eats the little book – 10: v. 8-11.

You will remember in v.2 that the Angel had a little book open in his right hand.

The Angel is now requesting John to take the book from the Angel's hand.

The Angel tells John to take the book and eat it.

However, John is told that the book will taste as sweet as honey in his mouth, but when he has eaten it, the book will become bitter in his stomach.

There are a number of things to note in this passage.

Firstly, please note that John was twice requested to "take the book".

In v. 8 John was requested to "...Go and take the little book..."

In v. 9 he was told to "take and eat it..."

This little book of God's Revelation was not being forced upon John, he had to take it of his own free will.

It is the same with each one of us.

When God's word is preached, proclaimed or taught, you must decide for yourself to receive it into your heart.

God's word is available to all but God does not force it upon people.

The next thing to note is that this experience is very similar to that of Ezekiel in Ezekiel Chapter 3: v. 1-3.

(Ezekiel Chapter 3: v. 1-3)

Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." ² So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. ³ And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

In Revelation and Ezekiel both pictures are the same.

The messenger of God has to take God's message into his very life and being.

It has to in a sense be part of his life.

The sweetness of God's word is a recurring thought in the Bible.

Psalm 19: v.7- 10

⁷ The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,

Yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psalm 119: v. 103.

¹⁰³ How sweet are Your words to my taste, *Sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

It is also interesting to note that there is a bit of Jewish Educational culture behind this theme.

When a Jewish boy was learning the Hebrew Alphabet, it was written on a slate in a mixture of flour and honey.

The boy was told what the letters were and how they sounded.

After the original instruction the teacher would point at a letter and would ask the question.

"What is that letter and how does it sound?"

If the boy answered correctly, he was allowed to lick the letter off the slate as his reward.

To the boy, God's word tasted just like honey because it was actually real honey mixed with flower.

In the passage we are told that there is a slight difference to John's experience compared to that of Ezekiel.

To John the little book was sweet and bitter all at the same time.

When he ate the book it was lovely and sweet but when it reached his stomach it became bitter.

What John means is this:

A message from God to a servant of God can often be a bitter sweet thing.

It is sweet because it is a great thing to be chosen as a messenger of God. However, the message itself may be a foretelling of negative things and therefore it is bitter.

So for John it was an infinite privilege to receive the secrets of heaven but at the same time it was bitter to have to forecast a time of tribulation, even though Jesus wins the victory in the end.

One Commentator by the name of Walvoord says this;

“ To John the word of God is sweet, in that it is a word of promise, a word of grace, and a revelation of the love of God..... More particular, however, the word of God is bitter in that it not only contains promises of grace but, as the book of Revelation itself abundantly illustrates, it reveals the divine judgements which will be poured out on the earth as God deals in wrath with the wicked world.”

So John was given the word of God to eat just like Ezekiel had been given God's word. John, like Ezekiel, is now commissioned to proclaim that word from God.

Application

We too need to proclaim God's word to the people who will listen. The problem is that the gospel we proclaim is also bitter sweet.

On the one hand we proclaim the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, but on the other hand we need to proclaim the judgement of God upon those who refuse God's love and offer of forgiveness.

As Christians we must not hide the reason for the gospel message.

It is a gospel of "rescue" from God's wrath and judgement.

If we know that we are in danger, then we will want to be rescued. However today not many people are convinced that they are in danger and don't seek God's help for the penalty of their sin.

I hope that today you understand the balance between the Love of God and the wrath of God.

We need to know and to proclaim both.