

THE MIGHTY ANGEL WITH A LITTLE BOOK **Revelation 10:1-11**

The Sixth trumpet judgment is finished and again there is a parenthetical section inserted to give the reader special information about related events going on as time proceeds. After the six trumpet judgments are poured out on to the earth, over half the world's population are dead. There is great famine and pestilence on earth and evil men, unrestrained by the Holy Spirit and following the leadership of the Antichrist, are terrifying the earth. There is anarchy all over the world as men lose confidence in a crazed demoniacally inspired world government. As hell grows on earth, the Revelation of Jesus Christ is again is chronologically stopped and the second parenthetical section is added.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL COMES FROM HEAVEN: Revelation 10:1

Now John sees another angel and clothed or wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow on his head. His face is bright and shines as the sun and his feet are "as" pillars of fire. Who is the angel? Some believe that he is Christ. In fact, many reputable Bible commentators such as Lehman Strauss, Scott & Kelly, conclude this seems to be Christ. Others, such as Walvoord, say it is another angel and not Christ. The question is then who is right?

Often Bible scholars disagree on various passages in Scripture. The question then is how can we determine what is the correct interpretation of the verse? The answer is that we can apply sound principles of biblical interpretation and let the Bible interpret itself. If we do so we can arrive at a correct interpretation and answer the question.

Those that believe this is a reference to Christ do so because the angel is referred to as having a rainbow upon his head, his face was like the sun and his feet were as pillars of fire. In the Old Testament Christ is referred to as the "Angel of His (Jehovah's) presence (Isaiah 63:9) and "the angel of the Lord" (Exodus 3:2). So Christ can be referred as an angel or messenger of the Lord. On the Mount of Transfiguration, it says, "*His face did shine as the sun.*" (Matthew 17:2) In Revelation 1:15, John says Christ's feet were like, "*fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.*" So the descriptions used of the angel are similar or the same as the descriptions referring to Christ at various other places in the Bible. However, we must ask is this conclusive evidence that this angel is in fact Christ? Lehman Strauss makes the conclusion that the angel here is clothed in a cloud. He finds in the Old Testament references to the "pillar of cloud" that led the Children of Israel in the desert and the cloud in the Holy of Holies. (Exodus 13:21, 16:10, 19:9, 16; 34:4-5; 40:34) He concludes this refers to Christ.¹² But let us look further looking at the context and wording of the verse and see if this sheds any light on the matter.

The Scriptures are divinely given to us by God. This is referred to as "verbal plenary inspiration" meaning that every word in the Bible is given of God. The text in English calls this angel, "another" mighty angel. The Greek work translated "another" is the word "*allos*" and normally means "another of the same kind." In other words this angel is another angel like the previous angels who have been bringing the various judgments on earth. There is

another Greek word that is translated into the English word "another" and it is the word "*heteros*." Both "*allos*" and "*heteros*" are translated in our English Bibles into the word "another." (See 1 Cor. 12:8-9 for an example) In Greek, "*heteros*" means another, but of a different kind. Had God used the word "*heteros*" here in Revelation 10:1, it would have meant, that his was an angel that was different from those previously referred to. If the word used here is "*heteros*" it would allow further investigation as to why this angel was different than the earlier angels. But this is not the case because the word "*allos*" is used and this limits the interpretation meaning it is referring to a different individual angel, but of the same kind as those mentioned before.

This interpretation also agrees with the "context" which is speaking of a series of angels bringing judgments on the earth. "Context" simply means the accompanying verses or setting of the passage you are trying to understand. Also, in the overall context of the book, Christ returns at the end of the tribulation and not in the middle. To say that this is Christ is not substantiated by the word used to refer to the angel or the context of the passage. Thus we can be confident that this verse is referring a special angel to whom is given great power, but this is not a reference to Christ. In verse 6, you find the angel making a solemn oath, "by" God, "*who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.*" (Rev. 10:6) Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the world (John 1:1-3) would swear by Himself or to the Father which is further evidence that this is not Christ.

When we interpret the Bible we must be very careful not to jump to conclusions based on incomplete evidence. Yes, the description of the angel in other places are used of Christ, and at first glance this seems to be talking about Christ. But, further investigation shows in this passage the descriptions are used to describe a special angel and not Christ.

We should be very careful when we are studying the Bible to always apply proper methods of interpretation. Only the Bible is our authority for our faith and practice. When disagreements come over the interpretation some portion of God's word they often the result of people not applying sound hermeneutical practices of interpretation. We must let God's word settle the matter rather than the opinions of men. The principle in Acts 17:11 applies, "*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*" It is easy to become offended at those we disagree with and we lose sight of Christ's command to "love the brethren." As brothers or sisters in Christ we should maintain a "Christ like" spirit towards each other. We must be careful we are not guilty of Christ's condemnation of being, ". . . blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matt. 23:24) Rather when disagreements occur we must look together look to God's Word applying sound principles of interpretation. "*God forbid: yea let God be true, but every man a liar. . .*" (Romans 3:4)

Please understand that this does not apply to those who would compromise God's truth or falsely and unskillfully interpret His words. We are certainly not to tolerate false teachers. We are to boldly contend for the faith as Jude 3 commands and to "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Timothy 4:2).

THE LITTLE BOOK. Revelation 10:2.

In the hand of this powerful angel is a little book and the book is open. This is not the

same book as mentioned in Revelation 5:1, which is the book containing the judgments of God. Again, we must look at the words themselves to determine to what is being referred. The words used in Revelation 5:1 and here in Revelation 10:2, 8, 9-10 are different. In Chapter 5, the word "*biblion*" is used and in here in Chapter 10, it is the word "*biblardion*" which is a diminutive form of the word "*biblion*." This would seem to indicate a different book. However, what the book contains is not revealed. Walvoord says it seems the book contains the authority for John to fulfill his mission in writing the Book of Revelation.

The angel sets his right foot on the sea and his left foot on land. This denotes his authority over all the earth. He then cries with a loud voice like when a lion roars. As he cries aloud, "seven thunders" begin to speak. These seven thunders are literal voices who are speaking and John hears and understands what they are saying. Some writers believe these seven thundering voices can be related to Psalms 29, which names the seven voices of God

John starts to write down what they are saying but is stopped and told not to record what was said. (Rev. 10:4) Paul too was told not to reveal what he saw in heaven. (See 2 Cor. 12:4) It has been said that God knows who He can trust with His secrets. There are many things that God has not chosen to reveal to us. Often men question God on this matter, but we must understand that we are but mortal men. God says, "*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*" (Isa. 55:9). There are not things we do not need to know, nor could we understand even if we were told. God is too great for man to even begin to conceive of and surely man cannot truly comprehend God in all His majesty and power. But as a child of God we realize this and accept that God has not revealed a great deal to us. But we completely trust Him, and know that God has revealed all we need to know.

In verses 8-10, John is told by the voice from heaven to take the book. John obeys and goes to the angel and asks for the book. The angel then instructs John saying, "*Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.*" John then takes the book from the angel's hand and eats it and finds it sweet in his mouth to taste but it sours his stomach.

The promises of God are sweet to the believer, but also they have bitter aspects as well. Romans 3:23, says, "*The wages of sin is dead, but the gift of God is eternal life.*" This verse demonstrates the bitter and sweet features of God's Word. The whole of the Tribulation is such a paradox. It is a bitter time for those who reject God and refuse His offer of salvation. Yet, it is also a sweet time for those who believe and saved.

In verse 11, it says, "*And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*" John is prophesying even to us now and for us it is a bitter sweet prophecy. To those who are saved and a part of the Bride of Christ we are looking with great expectation to the return of Christ. We read of what is to follow in the Tribulation and it is a horrible picture. We long for Christ's return, but we grieve for those who will suffer as God's wrath is poured upon this earth. It is sweet to know that all this destruction and wrath will end the current reign of Satan on earth and will purge the earth. This will be followed by a thousand years of peace on earth with Christ reigning on the throne. The believer then grieves for the earth having to go through this time, but rejoices in that it ushers in the Millennial reign of the Lord.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE END OF THE AGE. REV. 10:5-7

The angel then swears or makes an oath by God.² Special attention is given in the oath to the authority of God as the Creator. This oath belittles and brushes aside the foolishness of man, who is led by the Antichrist. The Antichrist's purpose is to create a universe apart from God. It declares that it is God who sustains the earth and the entire Universe and exposes the Antichrist and Satan to be fools who attempt to set themselves to be equal and even above God Himself. Even as Satan guides the Antichrist to carry out his evil plans, God declares by this angel, there will be no more delay in His judgments "*there should be time no longer.*" The angel is announcing the coming of the seventh angel who brings the last trumpet judgment to earth. The seventh trumpet judgment is actually the seventh bowl judgment (sometimes called the vial judgments) which is the most terrible of all the wraths of God. In other words, God has tolerated men's rebellion long enough and now will wait no longer to end the matter.

Note that verse 7, says that God is doing this, ". . . as He declared to his servants the prophets." Hundreds of times God says He will keep all His promises to man and in this case to Israel. God told the Old Testament prophets of the coming Tribulation or the time of "Jacob's trouble." (See Jeremiah 30:7) God further told them that He would purge all evil men from the world and set up again the Kingdom under the righteous King, the Messiah. Now God is saying time has run out for men to repent and He is about to fulfill His promises.

The angel then is announcing the end of the Tribulation. (Revelation 10:6) The phrase, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel," means the period of the Tribulation. When the angels begin to sound, the mystery of God as He declared to His prophets is to be fully accomplished.

JOHN IS INSTRUCTED TO TAKE THE LITTLE BOOK AND EAT IT. Rev. 10:8-11

Again the once again hears the voice of the one who speaks in verse 4. John is instructed to take the little book that is open. John faithfully obeys what he is told, knowing that it is coming from God's messenger. As John asks for the book the angel tells him to take it and to also eat it. The angel explains that the book will be sweet to the taste, but will make his belly bitter. Just as the angel said the book gives John a sour stomach.

John is told, ". . . Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." (Rev. 10:11) To this very day, John is prophesying of the things God revealed to him. This book has been read and studied by not all people, but my "many" peoples on earth, nations and languages and rulers. Thus the world since John penned God's word has had a clear and detail plan of what God will do in the Tribulation. We can be sure that many of those who are living in Daniel's 70th week will be read these words as an innumerable number of people will be saved during these seven years. Certainly, the 144,000 will read and understand the prophecies of John.

REVEALANCE OF THIS PASSAGE FOR TODAY.

Lehman Strauss, the well known evangelist and Bible teacher has this to say concerning what all this means to us today:

"Many years ago I promised God that I would preach His Word exactly as He revealed it to me. This is not an easy task. I have found those persons in attendance that was resentful of truth that exposes sin and pronounces judgment. No man who faithfully proclaims God's

Word can escape persecution at the hands of his hearers. The truth is always unwelcome when it strikes at sin and immorality of those who hear it. The faithful Elijah's usually trouble the Ahab's of earth (I Kings 18:17). But I must warn you who are continuing in your sin, that, unless you repent, you must suffer judgment of the Almighty. Receive Christ as your Savior and Lord, and do it at once."³

End Notes

¹ Lehman Strauss, the Book of Revelation, Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1977, Strauss, pg 200-202.

² Special Note: There are limitations placed on swearing in the Church Age. (Matt. 5:33-37, James 5:12) This is in the dispensation of the Tribulation where the institution church is not present and God is working with Israel and the rest of the world. Also, the swearing here is the making of a solemn oath and not a profanity. It is a statement of great gravity and is done to show the absoluteness of what God was decreeing. God here is confirming His promises He made.

³ Strauss, pg 208-209.
