

Preparation for the Seventh Trumpet Blast:
The Vision of the Angel with the Open Booklet
Chapter 10:1-11

Verse 1

The second and third woes (final woe) are yet to come! It will be so terrible that another angel appears to announce it! This angel is the representative of both Christ and God the father. Keep in mind the previous woe, and its torment and death. These did not bring sinful man to repentance! Here we note the first of the intermediate visions before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. How shall the coming devastation affect man and his spiritual relationship to the Lamb of God?

The symbolism leans heavily on that of Daniel 12:7, though it has been modified by John.

We must recall that the opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (see chp. 7). Here the sounding of the seventh trumpet (chp. 11:15) is preceded by a new series of visions (chp. 10:1 to 11:14). John states that "another angel... having been clothed with a cloud." The symbol of the cloud is the vehicle for God's heavenly beings descending and ascending (see Zephaniah 1:15; Daniel 7; Psalms 103, 104; Rev. 1:7, 11:2, 14:14f, and in this verse) "the rainbow on his head" - (see chp. 4:3) probably represents God's faithfulness to His people. God told man in Genesis that the rainbow would be a "sign" that He would never again destroy man by water. The powerful angel's face was as bright as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire. Though this description resembles the description of Christ in chp. 1:15, we cannot say that the strong angel is Christ; because Christ is never called an angel in the Bible.

Verse 2

The strong angel carried "in his hand a little scroll having been opened." The roll mentioned in chp. 5 was on (*epi*) the right hand of the strong angel because it was too large to be concealed in (*en*) the hand. In contrast, here we note the little scroll (*biblaridion* - diminutive form). Swete is probably correct in his assertion that this diminutive shows that the angel's revelation is only a fragment of the total revelation. "And he placed his right foot on the sea and the left on the land."

Verse 3

The giant angel "cried with a loud voice" and "the seven thunders spoke their voices." The Angel's message concerned the entire universe. (See Psalm 29:20.) In John 12:29 the voice out of heaven is identified by the multitude as thunder. There can be no dogmatic identification of the "seven thunders," but it is often the symbol for the voice of heaven which is not understood by human hearers.

Verse 4

When the voices of the seven thunders had uttered their messages, John heard "a voice out of heaven saying—You seal (*sphragison* - 1st. aor. imperative - seal it by a single act - immediately) the things which the seven thunders spoke and not write (*grapsēs* - 1st aor. subjunctive - literally means with the negation *mē* - you may not write). Part of John's revelation was not made available to us. He was forbidden to write it down.

Verse 5

The giant angel raises his hand to heaven (see Genesis 14:22; Daniel 12:7), and swears by God that there shall be delay no longer.

Verse 6

The angel sware by (*ōmosen en* - "sware in" is a Hebrew idiom.) the one living unto the ages of the ages, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the things in the earth, and the things in the sea, that delay (*chronos* - literally means *time* but also delay) shall be no longer." John is not stating that time shall be no longer, but that there shall be no further delay in the sounding of the seventh trumpet - (it is sounded 11:15). (See 6:10 - the cry "how long"?) Check Alexander Campbell's translation - *The Golden Oracles* at Rev. 1:11, 10:6, 12:2; 12:13; see also C. K. Thomas, *Alexander Campbell and His New Version*, The Bethany Press, 1950, pp. 30, 31, 39, and 40.

Verse 7

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, whenever he is about to trumpet even was finished (*etelesthē* - 1st aor. passive) the mystery of God as he preached to his slaves the prophets." The mystery becomes partly revealed now. The

Bible always employs verbs of revelation with the term *mustērion*. (See the note on this term immediately following this chapter - note also Amos 3:7; Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4).

Verse 8

John was commanded to "take (*labe* - 2nd aor. imperative - take, immediately) the scroll" from the giant angel introduced in verse one.

Verse 9

The angel commanded that John "take and devour it, and it will embitter your stomach, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." This symbolism comes directly from Ezekial 3:1-3; Jeremiah 15:16f. God's word is both bitter and sweet. The sweetness of the word is because of God's mercy, the bitterness is because of His judgment. God's word always reveals the plumb line of judgment, and oil horn of mercy."

Verse 10

John obeyed the angel's command, and as was the case with God's O.T. prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, so in John's experience the word was both bitter and sweet.

Verse 11

The Seer of God, on Patmos, was told that he "must (*dei* - expresses absolute necessity. He had no choice but to prophesy) prophesy (*propheteusai* - means both to *speak forth* and to utter *precision predicative prophecy*) again (*palin* - signifies the fact of repetition - do it again - as before) before many peoples (*laois* - this is one of four words used in the N.T. and translated - people. It signifies a people of political unity) and nations (*ethnesin* - signifies people in general) and tongues (*glossais* - languages - people who speak different languages) and kings."

Review Questions - Chapter 10

1. Did the previous two woes cause sinful man to repent - vs. 1?
2. Read Daniel 12:7 and discuss the passage in light of John's use of the symbolism - vs. 1?
3. How is chapter 10 like chapter 7?

4. What does the rainbow symbolize in the O.T.? Does the symbolism fit here too?
5. What does the diminutive form - 'little scroll,' signify in vs. 2?
6. To what does the phrase "delay no longer" refer - vs. 6?
7. Read appendix on *mystery* and discuss its use in vs. 7.
8. In what ways is God's word both bitter and sweet - vs. 9?

Note: *Mystery (Mustērion)*

For the contemporary emphasis on *mystery* in Christian thought see Michael B. Foster, *Mystery and Philosophy*, SCM Press LTD, 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1.

The brilliant Roman Catholic Philosopher, Gabriel Marcel utilizes the distinction between problem, which is solvable, and mystery, which is not solvable by human reason. See Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, Fordham University Press, New York, and Troisfontaines', *De L'Existence a L'Être*, Tome I et II, Secretariat des Publications, 59, Rue Brufelles, Namur, 1953. The issue of mystery in relation to human reason receives full attention in this brilliant interpretative work on Gabriel Marcel's philosophy.

Note also the place of *mystery* in the Eastern and Western Catholic Theology.

What does the New Testament say about *mustērion*?

The word *mystery* (Latin *mysterium*) is found only one time in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10). Other than this single usage in the Gospel records the word appears only in Paul and in The Revelation. It is used in two senses - (1) the total Christian revelation; (2) and of specific Christian doctrines. It is used in sense number one in I Cor. 2:1; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26, 2:2, 4:3; Eph. 1:9, 6:19; I Tim. 3:9, 16; Rev. 10:7. It is used in sense number two in II Thess. 2:7; I Cor. 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51; Rom. 11:25; Eph. 5:32; Matt. 13:11; Rev. 1:20, 17:5, 7. See the brief note in B. T. Westcott, *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 180.

John speaks of the entire Christian revelation (Rev. 10:7) when he declares "and was finished the *mystery (mustērion)* of God, as he preached to his slaves the prophets." John uses the term in the sense of a particular Christian doctrine in (1:20) as