

Every cent an apostate church extorts from a glibble people by false pretense, is theft. That the disastrous sacking of Constantinople, in 1453, did not cause the church to repent of thefts, is evidenced by the fact that a Dominican friar, by the name of Tetzal, was selling indulgences to commit sin through Germany, in 1516, which led to Martin Luther's tacking his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, in protestation. This set aflame the fires of the Reformation.

Thus, we see the destructive agency of the Turks, in the sixth trumpet period, was God's punishment inflicted upon an impenitent apostate church and her people.

How amazing is the corroboration of Apocalyptic symbolism and history!

CHAPTER X

THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK

Text (10:1-11)

1 And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders uttered *their voices*, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and

ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

As an interlude or parenthesis was introduced between sixth and seventh seals, so here between the sixth and seventh trumpet we come to the second parenthesis. Both of these interruptions were designed to bring comfort and blessing to the people of God.

Between the sixth trumpet, or second woe, and the seventh trumpet, or third woe, a parenthetical vision of the mighty angel with the little Book is given.

This vision, however, differs from the message of comfort found between the sixth and seventh seals. That vision emphasized the safety of the persecuted saints of God. This vision describes a mingling of the sweet and the bitter.

This vision belongs to the period of the sixth trumpet as evidenced by two facts:

1. *First*, the end of the sixth period is plainly stated in (Rev. 11:14)
 "The second woe is past; behold, the third woe cometh quickly."
2. *Second*, the mighty angel of this vision says, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound." This plainly indicates the time of the sounding to the seventh angel to yet be future.

These two facts make it clear that this parenthetical vision belongs to the time of the sixth trumpet. We feel it is of utmost importance that we take cognizance of this fact.

The scenes of the first and second woe trumpets had to do with the earth (or Roman Empire) at large; and in beholding the Saracen and Turkoman invasions the question naturally arises, "How did it fare, in the fifth and sixth trumpet periods with the saints of God?" As the action in the happenings of the Roman Empire was arrested between the sixth and seventh seals in order that we might see the state of God's people in that day, so here again comes an interruption for the same reason.

Correspondences of this kind bear testimony to the Divine methodical plan that manifests itself throughout this marvelous book.

As to the time, or point of beginning of this vision of the little Book of the tenth chapter, we have found that the events of the preceding chapter culminated with the sack of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. and the eventual overthrow of the Eastern Roman Empire. Therefore the symbols of the tenth and eleventh chapters must logically be subsequent, or follow that date.

vs. 1, 2 "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

The first thing we note here is that this angel is not one of the seven trumpet angels, but "*another* strong angel."

Nor would this be the Christ, as some have taught. He remains the Lamb of God that was slain, as we found Him in the vision of chapters four and five, at the right hand of God, who sat upon the throne. In that vision John saw "a *strong* angel proclaiming with a *loud* voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Rev. 5:2)

In the vision here in the tenth chapter John sees a "strong angel come down from heaven" (Rev. 10:1), who also "cried with a *loud* voice, as when a lion roareth. (Rev. 10:3) While the vision of the fourth chapter did not describe this strong or mighty angel, as did the vision in the tenth chapter, yet all evidence of circumstances points to the fact that they are one and the same angel. The word "another" refers to another angel other than the seventh trumpet angel.

In the former vision this strong angel appears at the opening of the seven sealed book, in the latter one the strong angel reappears at the giving of the *Little Open Book*. The former scroll *was to be opened by Christ*, the slain Lamb, the latter little book *was already open*, and it *was to be eaten* and digested *by John*. So we have here contrasted the *little open book*, with the *relatively large* (completely sealed—seven—sealed—number of completeness) book of chapter five.

The description of this mighty angel is so similar to that of the Son of Man in the first chapter, that it would seem to signify or symbolize some great movement in the which Christ is the moving cause. It implies that the whole action of this parenthetical vision is animated by the spirit of Christ.

The "rainbow upon His head" speaks of the covenant protection and promise vouch-saved to those having a part in this movement. Being "clothed with a cloud" and coming down from heaven indicates a mission of divine or heavenly character, coming to the earth or the Roman Empire. "His face as it were the sun" signifies the bringing of the light of the gospel of Christ again to the earth. This recalls to our minds the statement of Paul:

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (II Cor. 4:4)

The mention of "his feet as pillars of fire" is significant. The feet carry the messenger of God as he spreads the gospel over the earth. Again we quote Paul:

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15)

Remembering as we must that this vision corresponds to the time when the world was religiously and intellectually coming out of the "Dark Ages" and entering into the time of the "Renaissance"—that transitional movement in Europe between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,—the shining of the face and feet indicates a spreading of light and intelligence throughout the earth.

His having in his hand a little book sharply directs our attention to the source of this awakening, especially spiritually.

Remembering that in the closing verses of the second woe period (Rev. 9:20-21) we have the description of the great Roman Catholic apostacy, in which the worship of saints, idols of gold, silver, brass and stone, murders, sorceries, fornication and thefts are delineated, it would be both natural and logical that this movement described in the tenth and eleventh chapters has to do with the destruction of this apostacy by the instrumentality of a *little book*.

A Study in History

Shall we take a brief journey into history? Was there a movement at this time in the annals of the world in which a little book was the heart, center and soul? Indeed there was such a movement.

JOHN WYCLIFFE It began in the fourteenth century under the leadership of John Wycliffe, who was called "the morning star of

the Reformation." He was the first man to begin a systematic translation of the Bible into English. I quote from the World Book Encyclopedia, Volume XII, pages 7902 and 3:

"He, Wycliffe, made systematic attacks on the established order of the church, and laid special emphasis on numerous vulnerable points, principally the right of the secular power to control the activities of the church.

More and more definitely, his ideas began to take form, and by 1375 he developed the thought which became the guiding principle of all his acts: that each individual Christian may claim immediate dependence upon God, without intervention of clergy, each individual having the right to take *the Bible* and reason as the foundations of his belief. In 1373 Pope Gregory XI issued *five bulls* against him."

JOHN HUSS Following Wycliffe came John Huss (1373-1415) a Bohemian religious reformer and martyr. Again I turn to The World Book Encyclopedia, Volume VI, page 3299.

"To whom (John Huss) it was given to transmit from John Wycliffe to Martin Luther the torch when kindled the fires of the Protestant Reformation. In 1401 he was ordained a priest, becoming a popular preacher and confessor to the Queen of Bohemia. By this time the teachings of the English reformer Wycliffe made a profound impression upon him, and his translations of Wycliffe writings and spirited defense of his opinions stirred up the opposition of the university authorities, who forbade him to discuss the new doctrines. Neither this prohibition nor the bull issued by Pope Alexander V in 1409 against Wycliffe's teachings, nor the decree of excommunication directed against him and his disciples the following year seemed to turn Huss. Affairs moved rapidly to a crisis. In 1414 he was summoned to appear before the Council of Constance to answer charges of heresy. On his arrival in Constance, Huss was arrested and cast into Prison. On June 5, 1415, his case came to trial. The Council found him guilty of heresy and he was delivered over to the civil authorities to be burned at the stake. The sentence was carried out July 6th, and on the day of his execution his ashes were thrown into the waters of the Rhine."

JEROME OF PRAGUE He was a staunch companion and champion of John Huss and his defense of Huss's principles cost him his life. He was burned at stake May 30, 1416, and his ashes thrown into the River Rhine.

The movements, centered around "the Little Book," *Ta Biblica*—the Book, beginning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reached maturity in the sixteenth century, about sixty-five years after the fall of Constantiople in 1453 A.D. This leads us to the great reformer, called the founder of Protestantism—Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D.)

MARTIN LUTHER He entered the monastery of the Augustine order at Erfurt and in 1507 was ordained a priest. Then came the fateful year of 1517. I quote from Vol. VII, *The World Book Encyclopedia*, page 4158.

"In the year 1517, Johann Tetzel, a Dominican priest, appeared in the vicinity of Wittenburg (where Luther held the chair of Philosophy at the university; as a messenger of Pope Leo X, asking the people to secure indulgences. The proceeds of this sale were to go toward the building of Saint Peter's church in Rome."

Luther opposed these sales and made public his objections by nailing to the door of all Saints church in Wittenburg a protest which has become celebrated as the "ninety-five thesis." This led to the breaking away from the Roman Catholic church and the empire-shattering movement known as the Reformation. Luther in 1519 publically, at Wittenburg, burned a copy of a Papal Bull threatening him with excommunication.

Summoned before the Diet of Worms in 1521, convened by the Emperor Charles V to demand Luther retract his statements, Luther replied:

"I cannot and I will not retract anything, unless what I have written shall be shown contrary to the *Holy Scriptures*, or to plain reason, for to act against conscience is neither safe nor upright." He closed with these words: "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

Placed under the ban of the Empire he started home, but while passing through a valley near Eisenach, he was seized by a band of masked horsemen and carried to the Castle of Wartburg. This was done by order of his good friend, Frederick, elector of Saxony, who feared for his safety.

During nearly a year of sojourn there Luther made a translation of the New Testament from the original Greek into the German. His translation did for the German what Wycliffe's translation did for the English language and literature.

Summary

Thus we see that the Reformation came at the right time signified by the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets following the fall of Constantinople. It was the mightiest movement since the inauguration of the church on Pentecost and the carrying of the open book to the Roman World in Apostolic days and two centuries following. If the apostacy of the church is a subject of inspired prophesy, we need experience no surprise that the movement to throw off the shackles of that religious apostacy should be revealed to John on Patmos.

It would be almost impossible to employ any imagery of symbolism which could so fittingly portray this earth shattering movement, centered around "A BOOK."

The "book" in the angel's hand is an "open book," unsealed and unrolled that it could be read. It was unrolled out of the dead language and put in the vernacular of the common people. The conspicuous place of prominence given the "Little Book" most assuredly is a symbol of a great prophecy. It is given that "he who runs may read." The Reformation was the *Work* of a *Book*, the *Bible*.

The translation of the Bible by Wycliffe, Tyndale and Coverdale, out of the Latin—a dead language—into English; the translation of the Bible out of the Greek into German by Luther brought on the Reformation. "Indebted for its origin to the "book," it made it an *open book* to the world.

Today the Bible, in whole or in part, has been translated into nearly 1100 languages and dialects. This great accomplishment is most certainly best symbolized by "an book open" in the hands of a radiant angel!

Returning to the latter part of verse 2, in chapter ten, we read of this radiant angel, "which had in his hand a little book open, and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the land." This planting of the feet indicates the world wide scope of this movement of "the little Book."

Again the original commission of the Christ was being obeyed.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 19-20)

And again: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16)

vs. 3 "He cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth." The angel cried with a loud voice, so loud that it was likened to the deafening roar of a lion. While we do not have revealed what he said, yet there is the implication that the angel wished to call the attention of the inhabitants of earth and sea, upon which he had placed his left and right foot, to the book he held in his hand. Since this book was to play the leading role in the spiritual drama he wanted all to take note of the book he held.

"When he cried *seven* thunders uttered their voices." Shall we pause to consider these seven thunders. While we are not told what they said, and we do not wish to be wise above that which is written, perhaps we can arrive at the reason why John was not permitted to write what they said. John was commanded by a voice from heaven to "seal up those things which the thunders uttered, and write them not." However much we would like to know what they said, their pronouncements were not to be permitted to divert our attention from the little book the angel held, and from what the angel had to say. So we will only digress a brief span to ascertain what these thunders were, and the reason for their utterances being withheld.

The Voice of the Seven Thunders

First, we would call attention to the article "the." The definite article "the" precedes the "seven thunders" in all three of the instances in which it occurs. (Rev. 10:3-4) We have no allusions to these thunders, either before or after their brief mention. Perhaps a comparison will help us here. We speak of the mayor, the governor, the president, even if they have not been mentioned before. Why? Because they are so well known to everyone. Perhaps that is the reason why the definite article "the" is used here, because these thunders were such well known facts in history.

A few pages previous to this we spoke of Wycliffe, "the Morning Star of the Reformation." Le Bas, in his life of Wycliffe, page 198, says:

"The thunders which shook the world when they issued *from* the *seven hills*, sent forth an uncertain sound, comparatively

faint and powerless, when launched from a region of less devoted sanctity."

These thunders of the ecclesiasticism were all powerful *because* they originated from the seven-hilled city. Rome has ever been known in history as the city resting upon the seven Palatine Hills, the names of which are:

- (1) Quirinal (2) Capitoline (3) Viminal (4) Esquiline
(5) Palatine (6) Aventine and (7) Caelian

How appropriately should the bulls and anathemas hurled from the Roman see, situated on these seven hills be called "*the seven thunders!*"

Here we are viewing a scene where "the little book" is the center of attention and that little book exposed the spiritual corruption and scriptural apostasy of the Roman church. As, in symbolism, the angel with the book in his hand, cried with a loud voice, and he was instantly answered by the voice of the seven thunders; so in history, the instant men with the translated word of God began to speak from the little book, Rome thundered her bulls and anathemas.

It was so with Wycliffe. Quoting from our previous quotation, "He (Wycliffe) developed the thought which became the guiding principle of all his acts: that each individual Christian may claim immediate dependence upon God, without intervention of clergy; each individual having the right to take *the Bible* and reason as the foundations of his belief." In answer to this use of "the Little Book," Pope Gregory XI, in 1373, issued *five bulls* against Wycliffe!

As was the experience of "the Morning Star" of the Reformation, so, likewise Luther, the Founder of the Reformation. Hear Myers on this:

"It was six years after Luther's visit to Rome when Tetzl began in the neighborhood of Wittenburg, where Luther was, the preaching of indulgences. The people were running in great crowds after the preacher of indulgences. Luther was greatly distressed. Not being able to get any one in authority to inter-

vene to put a stop to the scandal, he resolved to take hold of the matter himself. Accordingly he drew up ninety-five theses bearing on indulgences and nailed them upon the door of the castle church at Wittenburg. By means of the press the theses were spread broadcast. They were eagerly read and commented upon by all classes, particularly in Germany. Tetzel issued counter-propositions. . . . At first Pope Leo had been inclined to make light of the whole matter, declaring that it was "a mere squabble of monks," but at length he felt constrained to take decisive measures against Luther. The monk was to be silenced by a *papal bull*. . . .

At length a copy of the papal bull came into Luther's hands. Luther took a startling determination. He resolved to *burn the bull*. A fire was kindled outside one of the gates of Wittenburg, and in the presence of a great throng of doctors, students, and citizens, Luther cast *the bull*, together with the papal decretals and some books of his opponents, into the flames.

The audacious proceeding raised a terrible storm, which raged "high as the heavens, wide as the earth! Luther wrote a friend that he believed the tempest could never be stilled before the day of judgment."—Myers Mediaeval and Modern History, page 302, 303, 304.

So we see that the "Little Book open" which began the Reformation, called forth the "seven thunders that uttered their voices." The papal pronouncements that had for so long shaken the revived Roman empire, in the form of ecclesiastical power, were hurled at the translators of the Bible and the early leaders of the great reformation movement.

The pope, claiming to be the vicar of Christ, hurled his anathemas in the voice of the *seven thunders* coming from the city of the seven Palatine hills.

Shall we now go back to the Scriptures.

vs. 4 John was about to write but we read "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." Why? Because the

pronouncements of an apostate church, and its claimed vice-regent of God, have not the same authority as the Word of God, and must not be considered or treated on the same level with the Scriptures contained in the little Book.

The "Voice from heaven" commanded him to seal up what the voice of the seven thunders uttered. It was to have no lot or portion in the words recorded by divine sanction. The voice from the seven hills have no divine standing or authority and are consigned to oblivion! That is heaven's estimate of the worthlessness of the papal pronouncements. Would to God "the will of God," "might be done on earth as it is in heaven." John was not to record these seven thunders as the Word of God. This symbolism of the voice of the seven thunders simply represents what did happen to those who used the little book that was open.

In 1518 Luther wrote the pope defending his course in attacking Tetzal, but declared, "I will acknowledge thy voice as the voice of Christ!" Like John, who was about to write the voice of the seven thunders into the scriptures, so Luther and the other reformers were at first disposed to receive them as of divine authority. And, again like John, when he had heard the voice from heaven which said, "seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not," did not include these utterances in the book of Revelation, so these reformers, when they too, heard the voice of divine authority from heaven, rejected the thunders from the seven hills.

vs. 5, 6, 7 "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the land, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth forever and ever, 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."

Here we discover a marvelous parallel. In Rev. 6:11, the suffering saints, martyrs of pagan Roman persecution were told that they should rest for a little season (CHRONOS) until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

This second group of martyrs, here referred to, we see are those who suffered at the hands of Papal Rome. To these come the assurance "that there should be time (CHRONOS,—the same word used in Rev. 6:11) should be no longer" or literally time, or *delay* no longer, but that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." (Rev. 10:7) Note: the word "declared" here literally means "preached the glad tidings."

The martyrs of Roman paganism cry "O Lord, how long," here to the second body of martyrs is given assurance that events are hastening to an end.

The mystery of God in this instance is the mystery of his long delay to exercise divine authority, as against pusedo papal authority, and to open the Scriptures to reveal the apostacy of the then existing corrupt church.

We must note carefully that the angel does not declare that time shall not end until the seventh trumpet has been blown, but rather that the days of tribulation are drawing to a close and its end shall not be long delayed.

Then shall the mystery of God, of his creative work, his redemptive labor and his preparation of a place for the redeemed, be completed and fully understood.

vs. 8-10 "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, give me the little book. And he said unto me, take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey."

"And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

Shall we go back to the book of Ezekial which has aided us so much in the interpretation of symbolism. Here the Old Testament

prophet receives a commission concerning the rebellious house of Israel.

“But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me: and, lo, a roll of a book was therein and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without, and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning and woe.” (Ezek. 2:8-10)

Like John, this roll was sweet to the prophet’s mouth, but it became bitter because it was full of “lamentations, mournings and woe.”

Ezekial was commissioned to speak against Jerusalem and the temple, and in John’s vision, a city and a temple appear in symbols in the eleventh chapter. So these two visions, one of the Old Testament and the other in Revelation are in close affinity.

John did eat the book and found it sweet to the taste, in his mouth. The psalmist said, of God’s word, or commandments and judgments, “More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey comb.” (Psalm 19:10)

But in the belly, John found the book he had devoured something bitter. Shall we note that the word “belly” is used rather than “stomach.” The stomach is a storage place for food; but it is in the belly where digestion takes place. The word of God is sweet as honey in the eating, but bitter when digested and assimilated.

John here symbolically experiences what the reformers and their followers actually found out in digesting this little book. While they ate the book with great enjoyment, the results that followed were bitter indeed.

The Roman Catholic church had hidden their ceremonies in ritualistic formalities and their services in Latin, a dead language. They had hidden the Bible in the dust of the monasteries and

buried it under the accumulating debris of ecclesiasticism, tradition, and papal decrees.

While today a gesture is made to indicate their acceptance of the Bible, there is the black record of centuries of opposition to the distribution of God's word with countless instances of burning it publicly. In many countries the Bible was a forbidden book and those who read and followed it were subjected to the bitterest sort of persecution. To cover up this stigma, the Roman church claims it preserved the Bible. The only grain of truth in that pronouncement is that it was a preservation by utter neglect and not one of printing, reading and practicing its teaching.

All, even today who read this "little book," find it sweet to the taste but to digest it in practice brings great bitterness.

vs. 11 "And he said unto me, thou must prophesy again before many peoples and nations, and tongues and kings."

Here we see another result of eating this book. The word prophesy not only means "to predict" but also "to teach and declare" the word of God.

This message of the gospel had been originally declared by the apostles, both in person and through those who had faithfully preached the apostles' doctrine, or teaching. For centuries before this vision the preaching of the word had almost ceased. Now with the eating of this little book brought back to the people by translation and the recently invented printing press, there was experienced a great revival of apostolic preaching.

This word was to be declared to "many peoples, and nations and tongues," and even "to kings in high places."

In closing this chapter we leave a final thought. This book is to be devoured, *in whole* and *not in part*. We are not to eat some choice portions of it—that which is pleasant and agreeable to us, but we are to digest all of it even though the resultant effect is a great bitterness.