

Study 21: Revelation 10:1-11

1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.

- Usually angels are depicted as cute chubby little creatures that look like children. This angel is overwhelming. No wonder those who had angels appear to them in the Bible were usually overcome with fear.
- Angels are ministering spirits. They do God's bidding, so we know that this angel was sent on a mission by God. The word angel literally means "messenger."
- There is a popular doctrine that everyone has a guardian angel. The Bible does not verify this belief, although angels have and do intervene on behalf of God's people. But I don't believe that an angel has been assigned to every person or Christian.
- Yet this "messenger" is so impressive in his appearance, I wonder whether it isn't the Lord Jesus Himself!
- The rainbow is of course a symbol of the covenant between God and man that was made with Noah. The rainbow is a sign of peace, the sun is a source of heat and light, and the fiery pillars for legs are certainly signs that this angel can move anywhere without hindrance.

2 He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land,

- Angels are spirits and therefore can do things like stand on the water. But if this is the Lord Jesus, He is indeed Lord over all the earth.
- The first scroll John saw was in chapter five. It had seven seals. This scroll is open in his hand.

3 and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.

- Since the angel roared like a lion, it would indicate that this was no ordinary lion but rather Jesus. Remember Revelation 5:5, which states, "**Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.'**"
- Revelation is so rich in symbols and unusual connections. Here we see that the seven thunders "spoke." In theology, there is what is called general revelation. This points to the fact that all nature and creation points to the existence of God. Creation "speaks" to mankind, telling him that there is a God, an intelligent being behind all that is. But this general revelation does not speak to man's need for salvation or how

Dr. John Stanko

this salvation can be obtained. That lies in what is called specific revelation, and that can only be secured through God's Word.

- In this verse, the thunders spoke in response to the roar of the angel. Creation responds to the word of God! God rules not only in the affairs of men, but also throughout all creation, including the weather.
- We can see demonic activity in the weather as well. Consider the following report:

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:23-27).

- It would seem that the storm was instigated by Jesus getting into the boat. And it would seem that He spoke to some intelligent force behind the storm to calm it. Do you agree? Even if there was no demonic activity in this story, it still shows Jesus' control over the forces of nature.

4 And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

- I have often felt that some things God shows you and me are personal and are not to be shared with other people. John was recording what he saw and heard, but he was ordered not to record what the seven thunders spoke in this instance. Timing is an important factor in reporting what God is doing. On several occasions, Jesus ordered His disciples not to report what they had seen and heard. Can you keep God's secrets?

5 Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven.

- This would seem to be unusual behavior for an angel, for it seems that this angel is either initiating or endorsing some activity. Since angels don't initiate on their own, this would seem to point to the fact that this angel is Jesus.

6 And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay!"

7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

- The angel announced that there should be no more delay. If something happened 2,000 years after this, I would think that would be a significant delay. My point is that the angel was announcing something that was taking place at that time, not something that would take place in the future.
- What is the mystery? Well, the biblical context for a mystery is something that was once hidden but now is revealed. Paul wrote,

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power (Ephesians 3:2-7).

- The mystery is that the Gentiles were included in the administration of the grace of the gospel! The cataclysmic events, the turmoil in heaven, the terrible events on earth were all about salvation. God was and is saving the Gentiles. The Lord of the land and sea, who is comfortable standing on either one, is declaring that God's purpose will be accomplished! All the world, not just Israel, can avail itself of the salvation of God.
- One of the Old Testament prophets wrote,

Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared-- who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken-- who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:7-8).

- The Lord announced His plan to bless all nations, not just Israel, over and over again in the Old Testament. Jesus came and tried to direct God's people toward the nations. In Revelation, we have the Sovereign Lord speaking to a Jewish prophet with a message for the Gentile churches. The focus of Revelation is on the good news of the gospel!

**8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more:
"Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."**

Dr. John Stanko

9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey."

- Another prophet named Ezekiel was given a similar command.

And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult language, but to the house of Israel--not to many peoples of obscure speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you. But the house of Israel is not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for the whole house of Israel is hardened and obstinate (Ezekiel 3:1-7).

- The scroll tasted sweet but it upset John's stomach. That is how the word of God is: it tastes good but it works on the inside, the heart, and that can definitely upset our systems. The word of God works in us to have its way and to shape us into the people that God wants us to be.

10 I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.

- What happens when your stomach is sour? You burp or throw up what is bothering your stomach. What we take in from the word of God must have an outlet from us. We must talk about what God is doing in us even when it is unpleasant.
- The will of God is pleasant and good, but often it causes us internal problems as it works in us. The word does work in us as Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

11 Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

- This is the mystery of God. God wants to address all the nations, not just Israel or the Church. We must declare to the nations the messages of God. We don't carry the message of the Church or our own agenda. We must deliver the message of God to the nations. This is why we have missions work and outreach, not to do

Dr. John Stanko

social work, but to declare the gospel. We can do social work, but that is not the main focus. John ate the scroll, it did its work in his heart, and now he was to prophesy to the peoples of the earth.

- Are you working among the nations to spread God's word, or are you sitting in the comfort of your own culture, reading Revelation, and trying to figure out what the symbols mean? If you are doing the latter, you are missing the point. The message of Revelation is that God is spreading the good news to all people in the midst of spiritual warfare and cataclysmic events on earth.