

## **Rev. 10:1-11:14 “Bittersweet”**

**For the Children:** Sometimes I used to eat out at a Chinese restaurant with some of my friends. One of them liked to show off by ordering unusual meals – meals with fungus or fins floating in them. However, when the order was delivered to the table, he often couldn't bring himself to eat the food. He had only pretended to like the dish. It is far worse to pretend to like God's Word, or to speak about it to impress others. If we really do love it, we will take it into our hearts and use it. We will want to share it with others. **Questions:** How can we show we do love God's Word? What good can come from telling others about the Lord? What unpleasant consequences can come from telling others the Gospel?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Sweet Gospel**

- 1) **The Gospel's Progress:** In this vision, John is told about the progress of the Gospel in this age. A mighty angel who is described in Christ-like terms controls that progress over all the land and sea. His universal message – the Gospel - is loud enough for all the world to hear. It has a powerful effect on all the world and its history - to judge and to save
- 2) **Digesting the Word:** John must inwardly digest this Word, producing sweetness in his mouth – the joy, peace and gratitude of knowing Christ and forgiveness of sins through Him. See Ezk. 2-3, Jer. 15:16, Ps. 19:9
- 3) **Sweet Security:** The sweetness of the Gospel is reinforced by its certainty, which enables us to feel secure in the Lord. The angel swears an oath to confirm that there will be no delay (10:6), no thwarting of God's plan. This is an answer to the martyrs' "How long?" The Gospel, the "mystery of God," must first be preached in all the world, then the end will certainly come, with vindication for the saints, as promised to the martyrs
- 4) **The Mystery of Jews and Gentiles:** Part of the mystery of the Gospel is that elect Gentiles will be grafted into the branch of true Israel along with an elect remnant of physical Israel (Rom. 11:25). Therefore when John has digested the Gospel, he has to put it to use by proclaiming it to the Gentile nations. See Gal. 3:28-29. The church, too, is a witness to all the world – depicted here as the two witnesses/prophets. The church is given power to witness by the Holy Spirit, depicted as oil from two olive trees. See Zech. 4:1-6. The Lord protects His church as she does so, as symbolized by His measuring of the sanctuary and numbering of His worshippers (11:1-3). See Ezk. 40:5. 42:20

#### **Second Point: The “Bitter” Gospel**

- 1) **A Bitter Stomach:** John finds that eating the scroll produces bitterness in his stomach as well as sweetness in his mouth. For the Gospel not only delights God's people; it also produces a bitter reaction from those who reject it. They become angry, more rebellious, even more inclined to persecute the church. The Gospel is an "aroma of death to death" to them (2 Cor. 2:16). Hence the two witnesses are dressed in sackcloth (11:3)
- 2) **Like Moses and Elijah:** The two witnesses – the church with her witness – are like Moses and Elijah bringing God's judgement upon those who reject the Gospel – fire, drought, plagues etc. See Mal. 4:4. This is part of the solemn duty of the church's witness, to close the kingdom to some
- 3) **Witnesses Killed But Raised:** The church's witness continues for the same period as the world's opposition – 42 months/1260 days/3 ½ years, representing the time between Christ's first and second coming. The Beast (Satan and his allies) can kill the witnesses for 3 ½ days – Satan is permitted to use severe violence against the church only for limited spurts during the age. Those so martyred are raised up to victory in Christ. But the church, too, is raised up after these severe persecutions to continue proclaiming the Gospel. This, along with God's temporal judgements against those trying to destroy the church, causes great fear in those who had thought they'd silenced the Gospel

### **Conclusion:**

