

Revelation 10

"The Bitter Sweet Reality Of The Word Of God"

Once again judgment seems to stall as a shaft of light pierces the darkness that made for Ch 9. We've been seeing judgment, devastation & destruction in unparalleled fashion all throughout Ch's 8 & 9 as the 7th seal of the scroll was opened & it set in motion the sounding of 7 trumpets.

1 by 1 the trumpets sounded & planet earth was pulverized, brutalized, decimated & annihilated (that was Ch 8), the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon & the stars all took an incomprehensible beating & people all over the planet were dying.

But in Ch 9 death took a holiday for 5 months, God forbade anyone to die as the transition took place from the natural into the supernatural. John saw a star fallen from heaven (who we believe to be Satan himself) & he was handed the key to the bottomless pit. **And as the pit was opened smoke as the smoke of a great furnace filled the air polluting the atmosphere, darkening the sky & swarms of demonic entities were released to torment mankind for 5 months. & In those days (the bible says) men will seek death & not find it, they will desire to die but death will flee from them. These demonic hordes will torment men in an unrelenting fashion for 5 months (that's the sounding of the 5th trumpet).**

Then the 6th angel sounded & 4 powerful angels who were bound at the great river Euphrates were released & their mission, their directive & objective was made clear, they would kill 1/3 of mankind via an army of 200 million mounted troops (again demonic in nature).

Yet for all of that, (as unbelievable as it may sound) those who remain alive after the sounding of the 6th trumpet refuse to repent but rather harden themselves in their sin. They continued in occult activity, murders, drug abuse, immorality & thievery. Lawlessness abounds & the love of many grows cold. By the time we reach Ch 10 the darkness is so oppressive that we almost find it difficult to breathe. But in the midst of this darkness God gives us a ray of light, notice.

Vs 1-10

Well it's certainly an "awe inspiring" scene to say the least wouldn't you agree?

As the final curtain begins to be drawn back it's like the heavy hitters are taking the stage. We seen the mighty angel of Ch 4, 4 more in Ch 7, in Ch 9 Satan opens the pit, demonic hordes swarm the earth, he's commanding his armies... yet it's all at God's bidding; God remains sovereign throughout all of it. 4 more powerful angels are released, an army of 200 million satanic minions kill 1/3 of the earth, things are going *off* when suddenly God seems to hit the pause button & gives to planet earth a moment of reprieve, another opportunity to repent...

John sees another mighty angel, evidently colossal in size descending from heaven and planting his feet upon the earth & upon the sea.

Vs 1 describes him for us, he's clothed w/a cloud, there's a rainbow upon his head (perhaps the halo effect), his face was like the sun shining in its brilliance & his feet were like pillars of fire...

Now because of this description there are several commentators who will take the position that this is actually Christ. If you want to agree w/them you'll be in good company however if you want to be right you'll have to come along w/me on this one ☺, there are several others who are right about this & you'll be in good company there as well ☺.

Certainly there are Christ-like qualities that we see in this angel, no one would/could really deny that. All over the scriptures God is associated w/the clouds, when He came down on Sinai He was covered in a cloud (His shekinah glory); at the MT of transfiguration His presence was shrouded in that same cloud, we know that when Jesus returns the bible tells us that He's coming w/clouds & every eye will see Him.

Earlier in the book of Revelation we see the countenance of Christ like the sun & feet as bronze as though refined in a fire. We see a rainbow around this guy's head, the covenant sign of mercy reminding us that even in His wrath God will remember mercy. Yet for all of that I remind you again that even though Christ is seen at times throughout the OT pre-incarnate as the "Angel of the Lord", after His incarnation we never see Him identified w/an angel again *ever* in the NT nor in the book of Revelation. On top of that when John uses the word "another" (Vs 1) it's the word that speaks not of something else, but another of the same kind. It's *another mighty angel*.

Having said that it would make sense that he should have some of the *characteristics* of the Lord having come from the *presence* of the Lord. Perhaps you remember the scene found in Ex 34... As Moses spent time in the *presence* of the Lord he began to take on the *radiance* of the Lord, his face began to shine forth God's *glory* due to the time he's spent in *God's presence*. Of course therein lies a principle that you & I do well to grab hold of & make our own & that is this. As we spend time in the presence *of* the Lord, we will become *like* (& take on more & more characteristics *of*) the Lord.

If you want to be *like* Jesus, spend time (lots of time) *with* Jesus; you'll begin to sound more like Him, look more like Him, & act more like Him the more time you spend *with* Him. My suspicion (based upon Dan 12) is that this is Michael the Arc Angel, but that's up for debate...

Vs 2-3

It's almost as if God is establishing His beach head on planet earth, this gargantuan angel stakes God's claim over all the earth & stands there as if to say, "The earth & the sea & all that are in them are God's!" He let's out a cry like the roar of a lion & on that cue 7 thunders uttered their voices.

As we move forward in the book of Revelation we'll see the beast w/7 heads rise out of the sea & the beast w/2 horns like a lamb rise up out of the earth yet this angel stands *upon* those things (the earth & the sea) demonstrating God's absolute authority *over* those things, all things created are under His feet...

2 Things come to the curious surface of our mind when we consider these 2 Vs. #1 We note this little book that the angel has (evidently) in his left hand (since he raises his right to swear an oath) & #2 What are these 7 thunders?

Truth be told the answer to both questions is that we really have no clue. The bible doesn't tell us. We know that this little scroll isn't the same scroll that John seen in the right hand of Him who lives forever & ever back in Ch 5 because he uses the diminutive form of the word, that's why it's translated "little book". Undoubtedly it contains God's word, but as for what portion, or if it's what John will reveal in the remainder of the book, there are interesting thoughts, but there's just no way to know conclusively. It could be something previously concealed but now about to be revealed. Some wonder if it's that which Daniel was told to seal up until the time of the end & having previously been sealed, now at the end it's about to be revealed, we don't know...

As for the 7 thunders we're in a similar situation, there's interesting speculation but at the end of the day that's all it is. Where the bible is silent we must be silent. Now there may be a clue here & there. For instance leave Rev 10 & turn in your bible to **Ps 29** (Vs 3-9).

Here's the point, there's *power* in the word of God. It will always go forth and accomplish the purpose for which He sends it. It "thunders", His voice is powerful & full of majesty...there are 7 references to the voice of God in Ps 29 & His voice is likened to thunder as it sounds off.

So are these 7 thunders (in Rev 10) the voice of God sounding forth? Perhaps, we don't know; it's certainly plausible, perhaps even probable but we just can't say w/certainty.

Vs 4

If you're anything like me this Vs has a tendency to drive you crazy ☺... It's like, "#1 Why won't you tell me what they said & #2 if you can't say what they said than why say they said anything at all!?" Just leave that portion out so that my curiosity doesn't go insane! ☺

There's just something in the human spirit that refuses to take "You don't need to know" as an answer. If we're told "Keep off the grass" we step on the grass, if we're told, "Don't touch, wet paint" we want to touch the wet paint. We just don't like to be told we "can't" do, or "know" something...

Yet for whatever reason God has chosen that even in this book that's meant to "reveal" that there would be something that remains "concealed". One has said & we do well to remember that the purpose of God's word is to save sinners & sanctify character...not to satisfy curiosity.

For as much as God has revealed to us we need to realize that there are things that He has seen fit that we don't need to know. Even as it's true about life presently the same holds true about future events prophetically & that is this: there are some things do not, will not & cannot know. **God has never promised to answer every question &/or satisfy every curiosity. God calls us to trust in Him despite the fact that we don't understand. Anyone who's ever lost a loved one readily relates to the point that I'm making.**

Some questions God will answer, others He calls upon us to trust in Him. The bible is clear, **"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever,"**¹ There are things (I suspect a lot of things) that God has chosen (for whatever reason) not to reveal to us. The Proverbs (25) tell us that it's to the glory of God to conceal a matter...

As it pertains to this particular matter of these thunders I think we do well to realize that even as it pertains to the prophetic scenario there are "secrets", certain mysteries that we just don't know & it should keep our "predictions" & exposition humble.

But let me just say that whenever we're up against something that we don't know, a question that we can't answer we should always revert to what we do know & questions God *has* answered.

There are certain things that God has assured me of. For instance I know that He is *all powerful*. God is bigger than any problem I'm facing, He's created the earth by His great power & His outstretched arm, there's nothing too hard for Him, He can handle whatever dilemma I can't. Not only is He all powerful He's *all knowing*. He knows exactly what's going on in my life, He searches me & knows me, He knows my sitting down & my rising up, He understands my thoughts afar off.

¹ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Dt 29:29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Not only is He all powerful & all knowing, *He's good*, God is light & in Him is no darkness at all. God's good, & *God is love* & He demonstrated that love (not through circumstantial evidence) in that while we were still sinners Christ *died* for us. He demonstrated His love through the cross of J.C. who loved us & gave Himself for us... **Sure there are things you may not know on this side of eternity, but rest in the things you do know. Trust in the Lord w/all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, He has thoughts of peace & not of evil toward you, to give you a future & a hope.**

“Seal up the things which the 7 thunders uttered”, the thought there is “Seal them up at once & don't even begin to write them”. We just do not, will not, & cannot know it all...

Vs 5-7

Mark it well, God *will* fulfill every jot & tittle, every detail, every nuance that He has ever uttered in His word. Heaven & earth will pass away but God's word will never by no means pass away.

The cry of this angel is not the voice of gracious invitation it's an announcement of God's terrifying vindication against those who've rejected Christ. Everything that God has declared to His prophets is about to come to pass once & for all!

Btw this is another reason why we state that this angel isn't Jesus because He raises his right hand & swears by Him who lives forever & ever & created the heavens & the earth & all things contained therein. **Now the last time I checked who is it that the bible declares created all things? J.C. Himself. If this were Jesus he wouldn't swear an oath in the 3rd person, He'd simply swear by Himself. We've seen God do that in scripture before, when He makes an oath He swears by Himself (Heb 6:13) because there's no one, nor anything higher...**

But here this angel makes an oath by One higher than Himself, namely the Creator (Christ Himself) that the end of all things is now set irrevocably in motion. There is now no turning back.

There is a certain point on every runway that is designated as “the point of no return”. Once the plane crosses that threshold there's no turning back, it's time to fly or die trying because stopping the plane before the end of the runway is no longer an option. This angel declares that the culmination of all things has reached the point of no return.

He swears by Christ Himself. The bible declares in no uncertain terms that this earth & all things contained therein has been created. More so it declares that Jesus is the Creator. **John 1:3, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”²**

² The New King James Version. 1982 [In 1:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Again Col 1:16, *"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."*³

So on the honor of Jesus Himself this angel says that the mystery of God shall be finished & that there shall be delay no longer. Back in Ch 6 the martyrs under the altar were crying "How long O Lord, holy & true, until You judge & avenge our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?" Here the angel declares; it's time. Vengeance is on the way, the events that will culminate in the rule of Christ upon the earth are coming & will not delay.

Ok, real quick let me just say that when your NT speaks of a mystery it's not speaking of a mystery like if you do the work & piece together enough clues you can figure it out. Nor is it something that isn't necessarily known. What it is, is something we *cannot know* unless it were revealed to us by God.

For instance the bible tells us that the gospel itself is a mystery. *There is no way we could've known the message of the gospel, that God would become a Man, lead a sinless life, die a sinners death, shed His blood for the sin of the world, rise from the dead on the 3rd day & by grace through faith in Him we can be forgiven of all our sin, made new in Him, have His righteousness accredited to us being made right in God's sight, had God not made that known to us...* It's a mystery. Now we know it but unless God had chosen to reveal that we never could have. Such is the nature of a biblical mystery.

Now God is going to fulfill that which He declared to His prophets, be it about judgment in the last days, be it about the new heaven & the new earth that He would create & the former would be remembered no more, how that the earth would be filled w/the knowledge & glory of the Lord as water covers the sea. "It's coming" declares this angel, just as God declared to His servants, the prophets...

Vs 8-9

Ok so this seems a little weird, doesn't it? Few things quickly. #1 I want you to realize that John was told "go" so he went, we call this a "ready obedience" to the word of God. He didn't question, didn't hesitate, God said & he did. You & me, we wanna be in this same place. God says, & we do, no questioning, no hesitation, ready obedience. Along w/that #2 you might note that up to this point John has been in "spectator mode" he's been watching all of this, now he's called to participate.

³ The New King James Version. 1982 (Col 1:16) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

There comes a time in each of our lives that God calls us off the side lines of spectating, onto the field of participation. The only question is that of our willing & ready obedience. Players on the sidelines are typically eager to get in the game, however as it pertains to the church often times it's just the opposite, people prefer to spectate. God wants you in the game, He calls us to participate in His plan.

He calls John to consume the book. Now occasionally we talk about some book that we read & we might say, "Man, I ate it up!" Well, John ate this book up, literally! Now he wasn't to nibble on it, he was to consume it. When it comes to the word of God some people nibble, God wants us to eat it all, to consume it, to take it down into our innermost being that we might appropriate/assimilate it, it's not enough to see it, to read it, or know what it says, it needs to become apart of who we are...

The idea of "Feeding" on the word is in no way foreign to scripture. David said, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Psalm 119:103 Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;" Jeremiah 15:16 Job said, "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food." Job 23:12 Ezekiel was shown a scroll in a vision and caused to eat it as well... Here John joins the ranks, the point is evident. God desires His word to be taken deep into our innermost being, permeating us, being assimilated into us that it might become a genuine aspect of who we are, what can we give but that we haven't received it. If it's not real to us how can we present it w/passion to others? Notice...

Vs 10-11

You get the point don't you? The word of God has to have its way in *us* before we can minister it to *others*... We deliver to others that which we 1st receive... God wants us to have a balanced diet of His word. Some people are spiritually anorexic; they never truly take in the word of God. Others are spiritually bulimic, they take God's word in w/great enthusiasm, then they leave church & vomit it back up before it has any real chance to settle in and change them. God wants our diet to be steady, balanced, taking root *in us* bringing forth fruit *from us*.

But here's the deal (& we're done). There's nothing sweeter than the word of God; feasting on it, being changed by it, growing as the result of it. Yet simultaneously an honest evaluation & assimilation of God's word will bring bitterness & sorrow of spirit as well. It's great to feast on the promises of God's word, how sweet it is...

God's kingdom is coming, Jesus is returning, that's sweet... But 1st there needs be much bloodshed, much life lost, more beasts, more satanic deception, more people concreting themselves against the Son of God... That's bitter. We err to take a merely academic interest in the word of God, in the book of Revelation.

If learning of the destruction, the judgment, the wrath that people will absorb only to be lost forever doesn't disturb you... in some way impact you, creating a heaviness of heart... we need to re-evaluate where our heart is at...

There is a bitter/sweet reality to the word of God. There are blessings & there are burdens that come w/the word of God. & Those burdens should be a motivating factor in spreading the word of His blessing. The sweetness of heaven & the sorrow of hell are both found in the word of God...

Once John had *digested* God's word He was ready & obligated to *proclaim* God's word. So to w/you, & so to w/me; having received the word of God, the ways of God, the will of God, we're now obligated to share the heart of God w/those around us... Judgment *is* coming, but grace is available in the Person of J.C. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God You are so good & Your mercy endures forever, even in wrath You remember mercy & we give You praise. Lord we trust in You, help us we pray to trust You more, that we be ok w/not having to know everything, but that we know You & that's all we need to know because You are good & You are in control & nothing is too hard for You. Give a deeper hunger for Your word & a greater passion for the lost, raise us up Oh God in these last days, unite us as 1 to do Your will, to reach the lost & be true to Your will, Your ways, Y Your word. May your word find it's way down into the innermost part of our being & may we be faithful to receive it & share it for Your glory & Your name's sake...

Judgment *is* coming but grace is available, God has loved you w/an everlasting love. Jesus has bled for you, shed His blood for you, because He loves you, longs to forgive you & wants to reconcile you to Himself. Turn from your sin, believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved.