

The Little Book

Rev. 10:1-11

9/23/20

V1. "And I saw": Once again we have a "break" in the judgments of God upon a Christ rejecting people. This chapter and the events of the next in the first eleven verses will provide two episodes that allow us to see God's grace even in midst of foretelling of His plan of dealing with evil. At the end of the last chapter we found God had sent these things upon mankind as warnings to all. This and the two witnesses we will look at in the next study will only serve to add to the condemnation of the world. We will see that mankind will reject both.

"Another mighty angel": This is what we are being told it is. This is an angel. It is true that in the Old Testament the preincarnate Christ was seen as The Angel of the Lord. In the New Testament He is shown coming to earth, being made lower than the angels, as the Son of Man. He is truly God and truly man. This body He has on the other side of the grave and when He ascended back to Heaven. He is only going to be described in this way and never again as The Angel of the Lord as before. We were shown a strong angel in Rev. 5:2 and this angel is of the same kind.

"Clothed with a cloud": This is denoting his uniform as the special envoy from Christ. A cloud is the symbol of majesty. (Exod. 16:10; Luke 21:27).

"Rainbow upon his head": This "cap" is a reference to the merciful character of the mission and of the faithfulness and patience of God.

"Face as the sun": Moses' face shone after he had been in the presence of God. (Exod. 34:29). This angel has just come from the presence of Jesus and therefore has the glow from His glory on him.

"Feet as pillars of fire": The final description of his appearance is that of coming judgment.

V2. "Little Book opened": The original supports a different book from the one spoken of in Rev. 5:1. Particular attention must be made in the fact that it is opened. There is, it seems to me, a wide contrast between this "little" open book and the 7 sealed book. The book of seven seals had been waiting to be

opened because it contained the secret plans of Providence and this “little” book the revealed teachings of God’s will and of His grace. The 7 sealed book is only to be found in the hands of “a Lamb as if it had been slain” while this open book is being placed in the hands of the writer of the last great prophetic book being meant for the guidance of men on earth. We found that the 7 sealed book had no one who was worthy to open and read it while the “little” book was opened and the apostle is bidden to take it from the hands of the angel. Under the new dispensation, as under the old, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

“Right foot upon the sea, and left on the earth”: This is indicating that the revelation which is to follow affects the whole world.

V3. “Cried with a loud voice”: This is with great force as when a lion roars. What is said is not shown to us. The intent seems to be to set forth the powerful and terrible nature of the messenger who is to deliver God’s message. This figure of expression is common with prophetic writers. (Isa. 42:13; Jer. 25:30; Hos. 11:10; Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2; 3:8).

“Seven thunders”: We can find that the Jewish nation was accustomed to call thunder the seven voices and regard it as the voice of the Lord. (Psa. 29). Again, this is believed to support the loud and mighty character of the utterance of the angel.

V4. “Was about to write”: The intent of John, it would seem, is to obey the command of Rev. 1:11,19. When he begins to write he is stopped.

“A voice from heaven”: This is Christ.

“seal up”: What is to be sealed is the saying of the angel. God has no obligation to reveal all truths. Deut. 29:29. Just as when Jesus wrote on the ground there is no way to know what was said here and the sense is that God is sparing the Church from all His terrors on a Christ rejecting world.

V5. “Lifted up”: The original language supports it to be the right hand only. One would believe the other hand contained the “little” book. This action was customary among the Jews in swearing. (Gen. 14:22; Deut. 32:40).

V6. “Sware by Him”: This is another indicator that this is not Christ because the Godhead can swear by no higher power than themselves.

“Liveth forever...who created”: These two characteristics of God—His eternity and His omnipotence—are referred to in order to demonstrate the certainty of the fulfillment of the prophecy which follows.

“Time should be no longer”: This is speaking of no further delay in the infliction of the last judgment which will be set forth under the seventh trumpet. This language is speaking of the final movement which will have at the end of its work the climax of the 70th week and therefore the once known era of time on this earth when God had patiently waited for man’s return to Him.

V7. “In the days of”: This is saying that in the days of the seventh trumpet the last judgment shall fall, the end shall come, and all things will be made manifest; the mystery of God will be finished.

“He shall begin to sound”: When the seventh angel does sound, the completed time of the fulfillment is simultaneous with his blowing, so that it is properly said that the fulfillment comes in the days when he is about to blow.

“The mystery of God”: This speaking of all that man does not now understand in connection with God’s dealings with man, but of the existence of which God is fully aware of. God’s plans are being steadily and surely worked out, though we are not able to comprehend them.

“As He hath declared...prophets”: Amos 3:7: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.”

The promise of the complete fulfillment of the mystery of God is good news indeed for the fainting Christian, for it tells of the end of his trials and the overthrow of his enemies.

V8. “The voice”: Again this is Christ. John is to receive the “little” book which the mighty angel is still holding.

V9-10. “And I went”: Again the truth that obedience is better than sacrifice applies.

“Take and eat”: Ezek. 2:9-3:3. The act is no doubt intended to convey the idea that the seer is to carefully receive, to digest thoroughly, as it were, his message and to deliver it faithfully.

“bitter and sweet”: The sweetness expresses the pleasure and readiness with which John receives his commission; the bitterness symbolizes the grief which possesses him when he thoroughly takes in the nature of his message.

V11. “Must prophesy again”: John’s task of communicating prophecy was not complete, but the message of God’s grace and judgment must still be communicated until he completes God’s final plan to consummate end time events which are rapidly approaching.

The Mystery of God: This is the name we are given to the ways of Providence. Providence is the care and superintendence which God exercises over His creation. The ‘Providence of God’ is a source of great consolation to the Child of God. A “mystery” is (1) that which is altogether and necessarily a secret in the mind of God; (2) that which, though revealed as a fact, is beyond our understanding as to mode; (3) that which, even when revealed, we know only in part; (4) that which, disclosed in symbol, will be interpreted by the explanation of the Word or the event; (5) that which, though complete in the Divine mind, is only unrolled, piece by piece, before us; (6) that which, from its nature, can only be disclosed to those who are in a fit state of mind to receive it, and which, to others, must remain shrouded in concealment. In one or other of these senses Scripture speaks of the mystery of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20), of the kingdom of heaven (Mark 4:11), of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:51), of the Gospel (I Cor. 2:7), of the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:3), of the union of Christ and His people (Eph. 5:32), of the final completion of the Church (Eph. 1:9), of the Person of Christ (I Tim. 3:16), of the Christian faith (I Tim. 3:9), of the workings of sin (II Thess. 2:7; Rev. 17:5), of the purposes of God (Rev. 10:7). This last is the one referred to in the text. It is something of which there is a complete and perfect plan in the mind of God, but of which we see only a part before our eyes. The future depends on the will of God. And who can discern that? “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” I Cor. 2:11. The remainder of this chapter will help to explain God’s plan to reveal His will in our journey. Our finite minds could not take in the entire plans of an infinite mind. In some cases a large part must need be concealed; not merely because the Book does not disclose all, but because we could not apprehend all.

The mystery will unfold itself on the lines laid down by the writers of the Bible. An example is Moses speaking to the children of Israel telling them what would happen to the Jewish people in after ages if they were unfaithful to their God. Deuteronomy 28 is being fulfilled to this day. Isaiah in chapter 53 clearly declares the future as concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

As a student of the Bible one will quickly notice that which is foretold by the Old Testament writers is revealed in the New Testament as the evangelists and apostles declare what the Spirit instills in them.

When the seventh angel is about to sound then the mystery of God would be finished; that is as far as the plan of providence is indicated in the book of prophecy, it will be consummated. The “end” will be this: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and He shall reign forever and ever.” The mystery will be finished, as far as God hath seen fit to tell us in His Word. Note: We know nothing prior to that beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. We know nothing later than “the end, when “Christ” shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father that God may be all in all.”

The Author of our faith is also its Finisher. The Redeemer’s cross finished the mystery of the old covenant; His crown shall finish the mystery of the new covenant. The question is will you be numbered among the righteous or the wicked.

The lesson we must learn about this “little” book is it will not do any good if not “eaten”. The thought is that of reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting. What is eaten in nature becomes a part of one’s own flesh and blood. In the spiritual sense the same is true about the Bible. Before the “eating” it lies outside us. Before the “eating”, it is only that which would nourish if it were eaten, but by no other process than by “eating” it can it serve its purpose or ours. God’s words of truth and grace are meant to be the life of human souls, in which they grow and thrive. If the words of God are not so used, they so far miss their aim, and souls miss their support. So long as God’s own message is outside us, it will profit us none. It is to be received by faith as God’s own message to us, and on it we may live day by day, esteeming the words of His mouth more than our necessary food. We cannot speak to others of the virtues of heavenly food when we have not fed on it ourselves. Nor can we tell to others the soul-thriving power it conveys when we ourselves are spiritually starving.

Jesus is telling his servant John to speak from this “open book” to all mankind. This theme is appropriate to the value of Christian ministry concerning the principle of Protestantism in that this “little book” should ever be kept open, and its contents unfolded to the people. This brings about two questions. The first is what has come out of the principles of this chapter, historically? (A) The demand for a free and open Bible, in the language of the people. (B) The institution of preaching as an ordinance of God. (C) The contention for liberty of preaching according to God’s order, apart from the restrictions imposed by man. (D) The continual publication and republication of it as the will of God—that none should walk in darkness, but should know the Word of light and life.

The second question is what should we, individually be focused on concerning this truth. (A) A perpetual protest against its closing, with-holding, or neglecting of “the little book”. (B) The constant prayer that preachers may ever be raised up and qualified to go everywhere, preaching the Word. (C) Every teacher and preacher should take care to “eat” the book, and to digest its contents, in that they may fulfil their intended purpose of giving out the “Whole Counsel of God”.