

God's Revelation of the Future

Community Baptist Church
Lesson 7

Adult Bible Fellowship
Fall, 2024

The Angel with the Scroll – 10:1-11

In this vision John sees an angel with a scroll in his hand. John takes the scroll which subsequently he is told to eat.

- John sees "another mighty angel." (10:1)
 - Based on the angel's description, some identify this angel as the Son. However, given the designation "another" and that this angel comes down to earth, this is not likely.
- This angel has "a little scroll" which is open (so not sealed). (10:2)
- As the angel descends to earth and places "his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land." (10:2)
 - This deliberate placement may be an indication of the angel's authority.
 - Also note, the origin of the two beasts in chapter 13.
- When the angel calls out John hears "the seven thunders." (10:3)
 - Likely, these are specially designated and tasked angels.
 - The "thundering" sounds are messages that John hears and understands.
- John, about to write what he hears, is prohibited from recording their messages. (10:4)
 - This is similar to Paul not being permitted to reveal what he had learned when caught up to heaven (2 Corinthians 12:3-4).
- The angel with the scroll then swears by God "that there would be no more delay." (10:5-6)
- The angel desires that when the 7th trumpet sounds "the mystery of God would be fulfilled."
 - At this point, the sounding of the 7th trumpet is still future.
 - Apparently at the sounding of that trumpet, God will no longer delay fulfilling his plans.
 - Recall the significant announcement made with the sounding of that trumpet. (11:15)
 - This "mystery of God" evidently relates to God's "taking control" over the nations of the earth.

- This mystery was revealed to the prophets and is about to be fulfilled. Cf., Daniel 2:44-45; Micah 4:1-5; Isaiah 60:1-5; Zechariah 14:9; and Psalm 2:7-9.
- John now takes an active part. He is told to take the scroll from the angel, which he does. (10:8-9)
- John is commanded to eat the scroll and is told what sensations he would experience because of his eating. (10:9)
 - "It will make your stomach bitter."
 - "In your mouth it will be sweet as honey."
- John's experience was just as the angel told him. (10:10)
 - Question: What is the point of this "eating-the-scroll lesson" for John?
 - John MacArthur suggests the following (*Revelation 1-11*).
 - The scroll symbolizes "the absorbing and assimilating of God's Word." As John understands what God is doing in his judgments, there is both bitter and sweet.
 - The sweet comes because we all want to see God "act in judgment to take back the earth that is rightfully His and be exalter, honored, and glorified."
 - The bitter comes because we realized "the terrible doom awaiting unbelievers."
 - This may specially be the case for John who has just hear the message of the seven thunders.
- Then, after John had been forbidden to record the messages of the seven thunders, he is now told to resume his writing. (10:11)

The Two Witnesses – 11:1-13

This vision starts with more involvement by John as he measures the earthly temple. It then moves on to describe the activities of two men who are called "my two witnesses."

- John is now given a measuring rod and instructed to measure the earthly temple and the altar and its worshipers. (11:1)
 - Which temple is this?
 - It would appear to be the reconstructed temple being used during the 70th week (Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4)

- But John is not to measure “the court outside the temple.” (11:2)
 - This is the area to which the Gentiles have access.
 - It is to be left out because it is “given over to the nations.”
 - At this point, being in the 70th week, God is concerned with his own people.
- John is told the Gentiles would “trample the holy city for forty-two months.” (11:2)
 - The “holy city” is Jerusalem.
 - The “forty-two months” is the 1,260 days of the 2nd half of the 70th week.
 - This period begins at the midpoint when the temple is desecrated and the Antichrist apparently “moves in.”
- At this point John is introduced to “my two witnesses.” (11:3)
 - The significance of two witnesses may be seen in Deuteronomy 19:15. (Cf., Matthew 18:16 and 1 Timothy 5:19.)
 - These are God’s specially commissioned individuals.
- These witnesses will “prophecy for 1,260 days.” (11:3)
 - Likely this is a message of impending judgment for all those who remain opposed to God.
 - The period appears to coincide with the 42 months just mentioned in 11:2. So this is the 2nd half of the 70th week.
- They are “two olive trees and two lamp stands.” (11:4)
 - This is the only way “my two witnesses” are identified!
 - So, who are they?
 - Suggestions abound. However, in the end, no one knows and it really does not matter!
 - It’s what they do that is significant.
- These two witnesses can protect themselves from harm. (11:5)
 - Any attempt to hurt or kill them will result in death to those making such an effort.
- In addition to their ability to protect themselves, they can also bring judgments on those around them. (11:6)
 - These judgments most likely are not worldwide but are limited to the area where they are ministering.
- When their ministry is completed, a beast will kill them. (11:7)
 - When the 1,260 days is over, God’s purpose for their prophetic ministry will have been accomplished. He will now have another way to let them serve him.
 - The identity of this beast “that rises from the bottomless pit” is not known. There have been several suggestions.
 - What is important is that this beast will kill them.
- For three and a half days their bodies will lie “in the street of the great city” while the world watches and celebrates. (11:9-10)
 - The “great city” is Jerusalem
 - Their refusal to bury these two witnesses as well as their celebrations indicate how much they were despised.
- But after three and a half days they will arise and be taken up to heaven. (11:11-12)
 - God is now using them to bring “great fear” to the watching world.
 - Keep in mind that this is three and a half days beyond the end of the 70th week.
- Shortly after their resurrection and rapture there is an earthquake.
 - This earthquake affects the city of Jerusalem.
 - Seven thousand are killed.
 - “The rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.”
 - We would expect fear. But, how would they give glory to God?
 - Ryrie suggests that they are acknowledging that God is who he claims to be. Such an acknowledgement is glorifying to God.

Note: All references are to the book of Revelation unless otherwise specified.