

Worship Guide - Lake Mary

# WORSHIP SERVICE -

## 11.14.2021

# THE SWEET AND SOUR SCROLL

## I. INTRODUCTION

**MAIN POINT:** To be a faithful witness for Christ we must take the gospel into our heart before we can take the gospel to the world.

### Revelation 10:1-11

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, 3 and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. 4 And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." 5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven 6 and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, 7 but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. 11 And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

## II. THE VISION OF THE ANGEL AND THE LITTLE SCROLL

### 1. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE MIGHTY ANGEL

V1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

- Who is this angel? Another angel suggests this angel is distinct from the seven angels with the seven trumpets.
- 'Mighty angel' - the sense is that this angel has strength or power greater than expected.
- Scholars have long debated the identity of this angel. Some say that John did not have any particular angel in mind, others that this might be an archangel, like Gabriel or Michael, and some say this is none other than Jesus Christ.
- Reasons that this may not be Jesus is that he is never referred to as an angel in Revelation. Also, no worship is ascribed to him here.
- This must be a glorious angel, a high-ranking angel, that reflects God's glory because he is in the presence of God and he is bringing God's message.
- But there are some good reasons to think that this is a vision John has of Christ.
- **G.K. Beale** *"If he is an angel, he is an extraordinary one, since he is described in a majestic way, unlike any other angel in the book. He is given attributes that are given only to God in the OT or to God or Christ in Revelation."* Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999. Print. *New International Greek Testament Commentary.*
- It seems as if every symbol of deity is ascribed to this angel.

#### **a. Five Descriptors that point to this being Christ:**

##### **i. Coming down from heaven**

- The next time in Revelation where an angel is referenced as coming down from heaven is in **Rev. 18:1** After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory.
- Great authority — Jesus himself said 'all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me' (Matthew 28:18).
- Beale notes in his commentary as do others that every time glory is ascribed to a heavenly figure it is referring to the one seated on the throne or to Christ (God 4:9, 11; 5:13; 7:12; 11:13; 14:7; 15:8; 16:9; 19:1; 21:11, 23 — Christ 1:6; 5:12–13).
- The second time it is used is in Rev. 20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.
- Who has the keys to the bottomless pit? Christ! (Rev. 1:18)
- John, in his gospel, repeatedly uses the phrase, '*coming down from heaven*' in reference to Jesus (John 3.13; 6.33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58).

##### **ii. Wrapped in a cloud**

- Rev. 1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds,
- Daniel 7:13 and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man,
- This is speaking of Jesus, who has been given the everlasting kingdom.
- Acts 1:9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

##### **iii. Rainbow over his head**

- Immediately calls to mind God's covenant with creation after the flood in Gen 9.
- Rev. 4:3 encircling the throne was a rainbow

- Ezekiel 1:28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.

#### **iv. Face like the sun**

- Rev. 1:16c and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
- Matthew 17:2a And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun,

#### **v. Legs like pillars of fire**

- Rev 1:15a his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace,
- The Exodus motif with the symbols of God leading Israel in the cloud by day and pillar of fire at night.

#### **vi. Voice like the Roar of a Lion**

- Symbolizes power, strength, victory (Is. 5:29; Jer 2:15)
- Rev. 1:15c and his voice was like the roar of many waters.
- Rev. 5:5 Christ is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

## **2. THE DOMINION OF THE MIGHTY ANGEL**

2 He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, 3a and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring.

### **a. The open scroll in his hand**

- Rev. 5 - Who was worthy to take the scroll and break its seals? The Lamb
- What did the scroll contain? God's eternal decrees of judgment and salvation.
- This little scroll is most likely some version of the scroll containing God's eternal decrees.

### **b. Feet planted on sea and land**

- Mentioned three times as standing on sea and land.
- Represents God's sovereignty over all of creation. There is no domain outside of his sovereign rule.
- In Scripture, placing a foot on something can be seen as an act of conquest or taking possession of something.
- After the trumpet judgments we will be introduced to a counterfeit trinity, an unholy trinity.
- Ch.12-13 we will see the red dragon and the two beasts that serve the dragon.
- There is only one sovereign God! He alone reigns supreme over devil, sea, and land.
- Before these beasts arise from sea and land, we are reminded that Christ already has his feet planted on the domains from which they will come and they are already conquered.
- All of the promises are grounded in God's comprehensive sovereignty.

### **c. The Seven Thunders**

3b When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. 4 And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down."

- At the calling out of this colossal angel, THE seven angels sound off.
- We've never seen this reference before in Revelation, but the definite article 'the' tells us this is a specific seven thunders.

- John hears what they say and he is about to write it down but then he hears a voice from heaven, this is most likely the Lord, preventing him from revealing the contents of the seven thunders.
- *“Seal up what the seven thunders have said...”*
- These seven thunders would most certainly be like the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls of God’s wrath—they are the judgments of God.
- Thunder is a precursor to God’s final judgment (Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18)
- This parallels what the angel told Daniel in Dan. 12:4 “shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.”
- Why is this kept a mystery?
- There are a few reasons proposed by scholars.
- 1. These seven thunders are judgments that God does not intend to go through with.
- 2. Maybe they cannot be written down, like Paul’s heavenly vision in 2Cor.12, there are things seen in that realm that cannot be told, which man must not know.
- 3. Maybe God is not revealing everything to us concerning future events. Deut. 29:29 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.
- The point is that we don’t have the full picture—but God does!

### 3. THE OATH OF THE MIGHTY ANGEL

5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven 6 and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, 7 but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

- This angel straddling sea and land now swears an oath by the Lord Almighty, Creator of all things, that everything that was prophesied about and foretold by God’s servants, the prophets, will soon be accomplished at the sounding of the 7th trumpet.
- All will come to pass and there will be no more delay.
- The "Mystery of God would be fulfilled" is what God revealed to his prophets about his final purposes for the destruction of his enemies and the vindication of his people.
- It also includes the gospel, which was prophetically announced by God to his prophets.
- **Romans 16:25-27** Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the **revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages** 26 but has **now been disclosed** and **through the prophetic writings has been made known** to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to **bring about the obedience of faith**— 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
- "There would be no more delay", you recall the cry of the martyrs in the 5th seal and God’s response to them was that they were to wait a little longer until the full number was completed.
- That time has now come to and end. The age of witnessing, proclaiming the gospel, and the martyred church has come to an end.
- At the sounding of the 7th trumpet, human history closes and God’s enemies, and the enemies of God’s people, will be finally and eternally condemned.
- The language of this oath comes straight from Daniel 12.
- **Daniel 12:7** And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time,

times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

- What does this oath mean? It means that God has not forgotten his promise to judge the world for its rebellion and for persecuting God's people.
- Everything that is in the little book will be accomplished.

### III. EATING THE SWEET AND SOUR SCROLL

8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. 11 And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

- John is instructed to take this little scroll from the angel and as he does that, he is told to eat the scroll!
  - In Ch. 5 the Greek word 'biblion' is used for book or scroll. It's where we get our English word Bible.
  - This says it is a little scroll, which is a different Greek word - βιβλαρίδιον - 'biblaridion'— it means *small scroll or book*.
  - Commentators have pointed out why this is called a little scroll:
  - It's in the hand of a gigantic angel. It would appear small in his hand.
  - In this vision, John has to eat the scroll, so it has to be smaller in size.
  - Additionally, this may be a summary of the content of the scroll that contains the remainder of what we see in Revelation.
  - Why does John have to eat the scroll?
  - This is the first time that John goes from being a spectator to an active participant in the visions.
  - He's been hearing and seeing things in the vision, now he's asked to do something.
  - John is told to eat the scroll—to consume it, devour it.
  - In his mouth it will be sweet like honey, but when it hits his stomach it will be sour.
  - This account is based on **Ezekiel 2:8–3:3**, where a hand is extended to Ezekiel containing an open scroll, which had writing on both sides (cf. Rev 5:1) with a threefold message of lamentation, mourning, and woe.
  - Ezekiel was instructed to eat the scroll, which tasted sweet to his mouth but it also produced bitterness because it was a message of judgment for rebellious Israel.
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- John is to internalize the content of the little scroll. He is to take it into his heart.
  - This is what God told Ezekiel to do.
  - **Ezek. 3:10** Moreover, he said to me, "Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears."
  - The message is sweet to John in his mouth. Just like it was to Ezekiel.
  - Ezekiel was to preach a message of judgment, calling people to turn from idolatry.
  - But God told him they would not repent. God says he is sending Ezekiel to preach to hard-headed people.
  - So the sweetness Ezekiel experiences in taking in God's Word is accompanied by a bitterness, a sourness—people will reject the message.
  - That is what awaits John.

- John is then commanded that he must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.
- That phrase will be used from this point forward in Revelation to speak of humanity that continues in defiance to God and his gospel.
- John's commission is to herald a message with the theme of judgment to a people who will never repent.

## CONCLUSION

- John's prophetic commission has some very specific application for us.
- We too have been commissioned by Christ to herald his gospel (Matt. 28:19-20).
- **Have you eaten the book?**
- We, like John, are to consume, devour, ingest, and digest God's Word.
- *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* (Psalm 119:103)
- *"Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart,"* (Jer. 15:16)
- We must take the gospel to heart. We must carry the gospel in our hearts. And we must allow the gospel to change and shape our heart.
- **What is the content of the gospel you are proclaiming to others?**
- Can we say we are really preaching the gospel if we are not mentioning the reality of the judgment that looms over impenitent humanity?
- Are we preaching the whole gospel or are we diluting it to make it as inoffensive as possible?
- The good news is not really good news unless it is seen against the backdrop of the really bad news.
- The grace of God is really good news when it is set against the backdrop of the wrath of God that justly falls on sinful and rebellious humanity.
- Are you proclaiming the whole gospel?
- The gospel is the answer to the dilemma of a deserved and impending judgment and the God who made a way through Christ to avert his just wrath that all of humanity deserves.
- **Are you prepared for the bittersweetness of gospel proclamation?**
- The fact that people will reject the message doesn't fill someone with joy and glee...it makes one sick to their stomach.
- It should fill our hearts with grief and it should cause us to be more compassionate.
- Proclaiming the good news is bittersweet.
- It is impossible to be faithful to Christ in this world without experiencing the displeasure and contempt of the world.
- There will be sourness as you pour your heart out and proclaim Christ and the message is met with resistance, refusal, rejection.
- Don't let the sourness of those who reject the gospel cause you to forget the sweetness of the gospel.
- We have the example of our Lord, who wept as he drew near and saw Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44).
- Jesus had compassion on the crowds because he saw they were like sheep without a shepherd, being led to destruction (Matthew 9:36).
- May you and I be moved with the compassionate heart of Christ to take his message into our hearts and then into the world.