

### **Another Mighty Angel – 10:1-7**

- *The Angel’s Description* 10:1-3

- **Then I saw** – As we have seen several times already [5:1 & 6; 6:9; 7:1 & 2; 8:2; 9:1] and many more times to come [13:11; 14:6; 15:1 & 2; 17:3b & 6; 18:1; 19:11, 17 & 19; 20:1, 4, & 11; 21:1 & 2], this phrase indicates a slight shift in the current vision, though not a new or different vision. As such, though this seems disconnected from what we saw before (for now...see v.7), it is merely a pause similar to what we saw in the previous vision [7:1-17].

- **another mighty angel** – A lot of the descriptors here make this sound like Jesus again [see 1:12-16], and some of the details make a convincing case. However, since there aren’t any details in here that seal the deal for certain, we just have to stick with pointing out the similarities and leave it up to you to formulate your own opinion on the subject.



+ **coming down from heaven** – If the subsequent details didn’t make this fact clear enough, this is a heavenly being, not someone from the earth. This also seems to be a nod to Jesus’ ascension into heaven where Luke tells us that the angels said, **“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”** [Acts 1:11]. And a further detail that seems to lend to that opinion is...

+ **robed in a cloud** – Just as **a cloud hid him from their sight** [Acts 1:9b] when he ascended, so Jesus is robed and hidden in the clouds at his return. This is also likely a reference to one of the ways God made his presence known to Old Testament Israelites. When God led the people of Israel through the wilderness, it was with a pillar of cloud [Exodus 13:21], when they were to stop at Mount Sinai a **“thick cloud”** covered the mountain [Exodus 19:16], and in the Psalms God is described as **“surrounded by clouds and thick darkness”** [Psalm 97:2]. When Jesus was transfigured, the voice of God spoke **“from a cloud”** [Matthew 17:5].

+ **with a rainbow above his head** – In the vision of God’s throne room back in 4:3, God’s throne is encircled by **a rainbow resembling an emerald** [4:3]. The only other place in Scripture (apart from the seal of God’s promise never again to flood the earth [Genesis 9:12-16]) is in one of Ezekiel’s visions. In it, the radiance that surrounds God’s throne is described: **“...and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him”** [Ezekiel 1:28].

+ **his face was like the sun** – This coincides with 1:16, and IF there’s a detail in here that directs us to understand this angel as Christ, this is it. Nowhere in Scripture is an angel attributed with a face that shines like the sun. Yet Jesus received that attribution earlier in the book and also in Matthew 17:2, and even then, only when he was transfigured.

+ **his legs were like fiery pillars** – See notes on chapter 1:15

+ *holding a little scroll* – I suppose this is to show that the message is not exhaustive or overly long, but the message of the scroll itself will be brought to light soon enough. We do not hear about the specific content of the scroll, but in v.9-10 we hear that it is both pleasant and painful (sweet and sour), and in v.11 we hear it is a message to be prophesied “*about many peoples, nations, languages and kings*”

+ *[scroll], which lay open in his hand* – Unlike the scroll in the vision of the Seven Seals, this scroll is open and the writing is public knowledge. More about that later.

+ *he planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land* – Later in the book [] we’ll see special symbolism for the “beasts” that arise out land and sea as the distinct pillars of society that are “church” and “state.” The important thing to note at this point, however, is that this “angel,” our Savior Jesus holds dominion over both the church and the state, over both the land and the sea. Which is an important thing to note when the message John was tasked to bring is such a mixed one...

+ *he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion* – This shows 1) he speaks with authority (think of the volume of a lion’s roar, perhaps even the “king” of the animals is in view) and 2) he strikes fear with his words (both a loud shout and a lion’s roar would be fear-inducing...so is the message of the scroll)

- *the voices of the seven thunders spoke* – Not too much can be said about these as this is the only place in Scripture where “seven thunders” are mentioned (probably because their message was sealed). It is entirely possible that they spoke of judgment, as thunder commonly accompanied those messages [Exodus 9:23, 1 Samuel 7:10, and Isaiah 29:6]. Whatever their message, Becker mentions a good point about their message’s non-mention:

“The command to John not to write reminds us that there are many things about the future that God does not want us to know...[but] While the seven thunders symbolize what we are not allowed to know about the future, the open book in the hand of the Savior tells us all we need to know” (Becker, 157)



- *Sealing the Words of the Seven Thunders 10:4*

- *I was about to write...* – John has apparently been stenographically writing down everything that he can as quickly as he is able, but he is prevented from revealing the particular truths that the seven thunders spoke (whatever they may be).

- *but I heard a voice from heaven* – God has his reasons for not revealing every detail to us, but

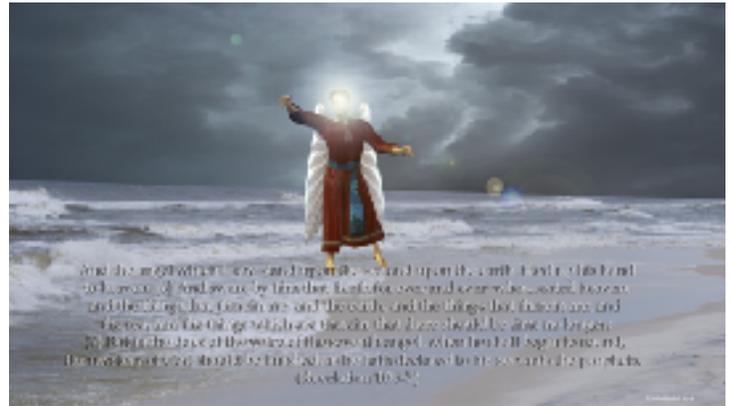
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though we do not know all the things that the future holds, we do know the One who holds the future in the palm of his hand, and he has more than earned our trust, through Jesus!

- *Swearing on the Seventh Trumpet 10:5-7*

- ***standing on the sea and on the land*** – as mentioned above, this indicates authority in both realms.

- ***raised his right hand to heaven*** – Still used in courtrooms today, this is the common symbol for making a sworn statement. To “swear” is to call on a higher authority as witness to the truth of your statement. As God himself, there was no higher authority to appeal to, but Christ appealed to himself to act as witness now.



- ***he swore by (7):***

- + *him who lives forever and ever*
- + *who created the heavens*
- + *and [created] all that is in them*
- + *[created] the earth*
- + *and [created] all that is in it*
- + *and [created] the sea*
- + *and [created] all that is in it*

- ***There will be no more delay!*** – Now (as with the silence leading up to the seventh seal [8:1]) we have the end coming. The waiting is ended and the only thing that remains is to hear what will happen at the sounding of the last trumpet! ...or is it...

As a sidenote: an alternate translation would be: “There will be no more time” and some have taken that in its most absolute sense in that there will no longer be any more perception of time at all.

- ***in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet*** – There is still one last prelude, a final chapter before the “epilogue” of the end of the world. What’s interesting here is that Jesus doesn’t point to a specific number of days, but just that there is an end to the delays and something else is going to happen, something that is a refreshing relief in stark contrast to the frightening events of the other six trumpets.

- ***the mystery of God will be accomplished*** – Often when the “mystery” of God shows up [Romans 11:25-32, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, Ephesians 1:9-10] it points to the plan for mankind that God had always had in place, but in the New Testament had revealed in his gospel promises. This is a message of urgency and one that drives us to spread the Truth that cannot be known apart from that Gospel! Because, as the angel told us, “***There is no more delay!***”

- ***just as he announced to his servants the prophets*** – John reminds us of the Truth that the Word of God is a single unit, comprised of different works of various authors from many places and over the course of thousands of years...yet, since the true author of the whole of Scripture is our Lord himself, the entire Bible focuses us in on the key truths of the human

race: That on our own and left to our own devices we are entirely lost and would be damned to hell, but because of Christ are completely forgiven and have heaven...what a mystery!

### **John’s Commission to Write – 10:8-11**

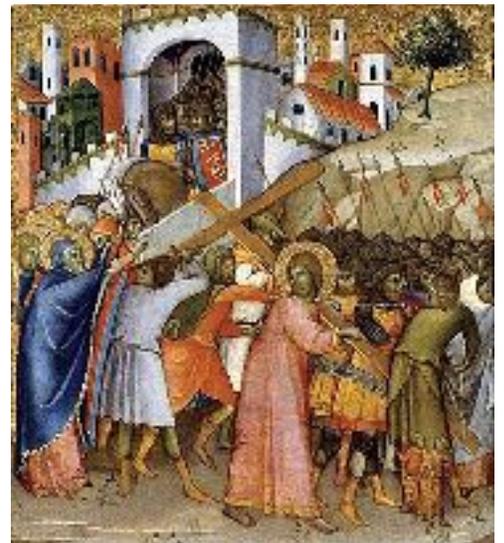
- *Command to Take the Scroll 10:8*  
- *the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more* – The same voice that had commanded John not to write down the words of the thunders, now commanded him to receive the revelation of that scroll. We cannot know whether those messages are the same or different, but as was stated above, though we do not know everything, we do know who does.



- *“Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land”* – All of these details have been commented on above, except the two commands to “go” and “take.” John is given the words that he is to speak and write (while being forbidden from revealing others). The doctrine of inspiration tells us that Scripture tells us everything we need to know. If it’s not in Scripture, it’s not that it isn’t important, it just isn’t as important. Will we find a way to ask questions that were not placed into the hands, hearts and pens of John and the other writers of Scripture? ...almost certainly! Will any of those questions rob us of our certainty about our heavenly home? ...certainly not!

- *Caution Concerning the Scroll’s Bitterness 10:9-10*

- *So I went to the angel* – John immediately does what he is told, without any kind of hesitation. As Christians we follow what God leads us to do, even if it seems strange at the time (eating a scroll, for instance). God knows what is best for us and he knows how best to achieve that goal. As the old army saying goes: “Ours is not to question ‘Why?’ Ours is but to do or die” ...or in the case of Christians: do and live [Luke 10:28] ...though that isn’t quite as poetic  
- *and asked him to give me the little scroll* – John follows his command, but does so in a humble way. He doesn’t go up to the imposing figure of Christ and demand that he be given his Word by right, but rather approaches as an unworthy one. We are given a remarkable gift in God’s



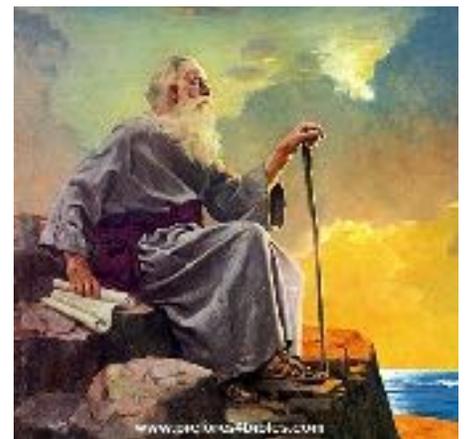
Word, but it is never (and must never be treated as) a gift that we can take for granted! This is a gift to be treasured and cherished as the greatest privilege human hands, lips, and hearts can carry: We get to be proclaimers of the eternal Word of God...what a gift...undeserved... Amazing...Grace.

- ***Take it and eat it*** – This is exceptionally reminiscent of Ezekiel’s call into the ministry [Ezekiel 2:1-3:11] and even uses some of the same descriptors (though the “bitterness” for Ezekiel didn’t happen until 3:14)
- ***It will turn your stomach sour*** – The news wouldn’t sound pleasant. In the case of Ezekiel, it was the realization of the harsh judgments he would have to bring against his own people. We still need to hear those judgments today, that’s why we still hear the Law in sermons...we are forgiven and free in Christ, but we daily sin much, and so the Lord gives us guidance for how to live our lives...though to our sinful nature this news is as sour as lemons and turns our innards inside-out in discomfort.
- ***but in your mouth*** – This scroll was a message that was both to be inwardly consumed (eat... stomach), and also outwardly proclaimed (go...mouth...prophecy). In other words, while this message was for John to see and hear, now it was made clear (if it hadn’t been before) that this was also a message for many others to hear.
- ***it will be as sweet as honey*** – This proclamation would be sweet for John, not always because the content itself was pleasant, but because the proclamation is always needed. We do not always have a “nice” message from God’s Word for people, but we do always have a necessary message...God accomplishes his work through us and there is no *sweeter* work than that!
- ***I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it*** – Once again, John follows his commands, in spite of the unpleasant warning that he was given...so is our work, quite often.
- ***It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour*** – Just as was mentioned, the work was not always going to be the easiest or most pleasant. We call this the “theology of the cross” or suffering for being a Christian. Christ promised that as his followers we would have difficulties and troubles in our lives, simply because we followed him (and what student is greater than the master?!) This is to be expected...and welcomed (!) because even though this isn’t always happy work, it is the proclamation that comes from and witnesses to our Savior...and (as mentioned above), what could be sweeter than that!?

- *Command to Prophecy Again 10:11*

- ***Then I was told*** – By whom? Presumably either the voice from heaven or the “angel” but in either case this command comes from God, and therefore must be obeyed.
- ***You must prophecy again*** – Prophecy is nothing more than acting as a mouthpiece and “speaking a message on another’s behalf.” The prophets spoke God’s Word to his people, and John was now continuing in that long line of men of God, proclaiming his message to his people.
- ***about (4):*** The four-fold division indicates that we are talking about the entire world. The “many” indicates that though we are speaking of everyone on a global scale, John’s task was an individual one, meant to reach out to all of those many...by reaching out to each of them.

+ *Many peoples*



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- + *[many] nations*
- + *[many] languages*
- + *[many] kings*