

(10.1) And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire

1. So begins the vision of the “little book,” that prepares the way for the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Continuing through to Revelation 11.14, this parenthetical section is like chapter 7, in that it “does not advance the narrative but presents other facts which contribute to the total prophetic scene.”¹
2. There is much controversy concerning the identity of this angel. Many Bible teachers think this is the Lord Jesus Christ, while others do not. Why can we not, therefore, try to decide for ourselves? Let us carefully scrutinize this passage and analyze it.
3. Consider the word “another.” Two Greek words are commonly translated into the English word “another.” Although the words can be synonymous in different contexts, the one Greek word, ἄλλος, tends more to mean another of the same kind, while the other Greek word, ἕτερος, refers to another of a different kind.²
4. Galatians 1.6-7 illustrates this:

⁶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

⁷ Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

In verse 6, Paul refers to the Galatians’ departure to, ἕτερος, another of a different kind of Gospel, which, in verse 7, is not, ἄλλος, another of the same kind Paul had preached to them.

5. Back to Revelation 10.1. This “another” comes from the term that describes another of the same kind, ἄλλος. What is needed to discover the identity of this angel is the place that John is referring to where that ἄλλος, that other of the same kind angel, is the same kind as this angel.
6. Could this other angel be like the four angels in Revelation 9.15? No. Since this angel is holy, and those four were fallen angels, the “another of the same kind” requirement is unmet. How about the angel that blew the sixth trumpet? Was not that a holy angel? Yes, but that angel was not described as a mighty angel.
7. You have to go back to Revelation 5.2 to find a “mighty angel” referred to: “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”

¹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 169.

² Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), pages 46-47 and 399.

- a. The “strong angel” asks if anyone can open the book or the scroll. This word for “strong” is translated from the same Greek term as “mighty” in Revelation 10.1, the word ἰσχυρὸν.
 - b. Therefore, we know that John is not describing the Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 10, because that angel is “another of the same kind” as this angel, and this angel is not the Lord Jesus Christ. Reading through Chapter 5 again will reconfirm this for you.
8. We know this angel is not our Lord Jesus. But, consider those things about this angel which causes many people to erroneously conclude that he is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- a. Revelation 10.1 refers to him coming “down from heaven.” But does Jesus come down from heaven in the middle of the Tribulation? Not if He arrives at the end of the Tribulation, because He sets foot on the earth only once before things change to usher in His kingdom. That this angel sets foot on the ground in Revelation 10.2 means he cannot be the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. Next, this mighty angel is “clothed with a cloud.” Some say this refers to Acts 1.9-11:
 - ⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
 - ¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
 - ¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
- But this passage and the “clothed with a cloud” phrase together can only suggest, by inference, that the angel is Christ. It conclusively proves nothing. Besides, being clothed with a cloud differs from being received up by a cloud.
- c. Third, “And a rainbow was upon his head.” Revelation 4.3 convinces some people this is Christ: “And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” One commentator even states about the rainbow, “... we would not expect any other than the Divine Person to wear it upon His head.”³ But a rainbow on his head, while being significant of great rank and standing as an angel, is still no definite indication that proves the angel’s identity.

³ Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 201.

- d. Fourth, “His face *was* as it were the sun.” Many teachers refer to Christ’s transfiguration and say this is the same thing. Still, though, inconclusive.
 - e. Finally, “his feet as pillars of fire.” In Revelation 1.15, John describes His glorified Lord: “And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” Some would say, “This proves it.” But are feet like fine brass comparable to having feet as pillars of fire? And what if this angel is a seraph, meaning “burning one”?⁴ It would then be most reasonable for him to have a face like the sun and feet that are pillars of fire.
9. No matter what additional descriptions John might have given us, we should not, I believe, allow ourselves to be convinced that this angel is Christ. Why not? Because the very first piece of information John gave us showed, beyond any doubt, that the angel in this verse is some “other of the same kind.” And even if it is not the angel of Revelation 5.2, this angel cannot be our Lord Jesus Christ. Why not? Because when compared to anyone other than another person of the Triune Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ can *only* be described as “another of a different kind.” This angel, therefore, is not the glorified Son of God.
 10. Do I make too much of a single word? Such a thing is possible. One must always be careful of going to seed on the meaning of a single word, especially such a word as “another.” But if you keep in mind that this angel sets foot on the earth according to verse 2, then you have to consider that if this is the Lord Jesus Christ, He comes to earth three and one-half years before His Second Coming, in the middle of the 70th week of Daniel! Such a thing, I think, will not happen.
 11. Revelation 10.1 describes, I believe, a most potent and glorious angel, one of God’s most capable servants. Yet, since an angel, any angel is only a creature of God’s making and not to be compared either to God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ in either power or glory, it should stagger the imagination to ponder the glory of God and Jesus when the glory of this mere angel is considered. I think J. Vernon McGee had it right when he commented about this angel, “He has come to make a special and solemn announcement of coming judgment. All of these features of identification are his credentials and connect him to the Person of Christ as His special envoy.”⁵

(10.2) And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left foot on the earth

1. I do not precisely know what the little book is. Maybe it is the angel’s authority in written form. Or, maybe, this book is the scroll Christ has opened and this angel is using it to serve Christ. However, this is unlikely since this is a “little book,” a βιβλαρίδιον, and Christ’s scroll in His hand in Revelation 5.1 was not described as a “little book,” but was the word βιβλίον.

⁴ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1991), page 1673.

⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part I*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 81.

2. A. T. Robertson observes that this “little book” is a βιβλαρίδιον, which itself is the diminutive of βιβλάριον, which is, in turn, a diminutive of βιβλίον.⁶ So, this “little book” is a smaller form of a book, a smaller form of the book found in Revelation 5.1.
3. Notice that the book is open. What are the contents of this book, and what is meant by the comment that it is open? “The contents of the book are nowhere revealed in Revelation, but they seem to represent in this vision the written authority given to the angel to fulfill his mission.”⁷
4. We know this mighty angel sets foot on this planet. One foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. Maybe he does so to take possession of the earth for his master, the first step in a heavenly occupation. Perhaps he is reclaiming the earth. Whatever he is doing is essential, because John mentions that he stands on the sea and the earth three times in this short chapter. The other two times are in Revelation 10.5 and 8.

(10.3) And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

1. Something is said with a booming loud voice, like the fearsome roaring of a lion, but we do not yet know what is said. The phrase “loud voice” translates the words φωνῆ μεγάλη, from which we get megaphone.
2. Whatever this mighty angel says, “seven thunders uttered their voices.” But what does that phrase mean? Psalm 29.3-9:
 - ³ The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters.
 - ⁴ The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.
 - ⁵ The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
 - ⁶ He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
 - ⁷ The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.
 - ⁸ The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
 - ⁹ The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.
2. It might be a safe guess to conclude that whatever this mighty angel said with his megaphone voice, the response to what he said is an affirmation from heaven in

⁶ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol VI*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1930), pages 370-371.

⁷ Walvoord, page 170.

what is likely the very voice of God, Himself. But without more information, we cannot be sure.

(10.4) And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

1. Whether or not John understood what the mighty angel said, he did seem to understand what the seven thunders which responded said since he was about to write the response down when the voice from heaven told him to seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not.
2. This verse has a natural application for us today concerning our study of the book of Revelation. How many of you felt, at one time, or were told that Revelation could not be understood, was not an understandable book because it is a closed book?
3. But is Revelation a closed book? No. It is an open book. Only the things that the seven thunders uttered have been sealed out of everything we have read.
4. If anyone tells you this last book of the Bible cannot be understood, tell him he is mistaken. That is not true. We may not understand all of it. We may not understand fully. But this is not a closed book to the believer who will prayerfully study.

(10.5-7) ⁵ And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

⁶ And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

⁷ But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

1. This mighty angel made a grand gesture of lifting one hand toward heaven, then swore an oath to God, Creator of heaven and earth and all things therein, Who lives forever and ever.
2. If there was any doubt about this angel's identity, this oath seems to settle the issue once and for all. Hebrews 6.13 confirms the angel cannot be the Lord Jesus Christ:

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself”

Had the angel been the Lord Jesus Christ, He would have sworn by Himself, not another.

3. He is swearing that “there should be time no longer.” This does not mean that we are at the end of time here. It means that time has run out on God’s patience, and He is about to blow the last trumpet.⁸
4. We see this in verse 7. When that trumpet blows, all of the things the prophets predicted will pass. This is the midway point of the Tribulation. The Great Tribulation is about to begin. The time of Jacob’s Trouble will commence as soon as God introduces two extraordinary characters to us.
5. What is meant by this phrase “the mystery of God”? John Walvoord offers an opinion:

The reference to the mystery of God seems to mean truth concerning God Himself which has not been fully revealed.

It is often overlooked, however, that the mystery is said to have been “declared to his servants the prophets” (v. 7). The mystery of God which is declared as subject to fulfillment is unfolded therefore in the Old Testament in the many passages which speak of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

The prediction is related to the full manifestation of the divine power, majesty, and holiness of God which will be evident in the glorious return of Christ, the establishment of His millennial kingdom, and the creation of the eternal state which will follow. The ignorance of God and the disregard of His majestic person which characterize the present age as well as the great tribulation will exist no longer when Christ returns and manifests Himself in glory to the entire earth. In that day all, from the least to the greatest, will know the Lord, that is, know the important facts about Him (cf. Jer. 31:34).⁹

- (10.8-11) ⁸ And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, *and* said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.
- ⁹ And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.
- ¹⁰ And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.
- ¹¹ And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

1. “And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again”
 - a. It appears that John is no longer in heaven in this experience that began in Revelation 4.1. When did John’s perspective change so that he spoke as one on earth and no longer as one in heaven? We cannot be sure, but it may have begun in Revelation 9 when John saw the star fall from heaven, and the key to the bottomless pit was given to him.

⁸ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 835.

⁹ Walvoord, page 172.

- b. Whose voice is this? We cannot be sure, but it may be the same voice that John heard in Revelation 4.1: “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” I think this is the case because John did write, “the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again.” Certainly, then, John had heard this voice before.
2. “*and* said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.”
 - a. What the little book is, I have already stated, I do not know. But it has to be some revelation from God because John is commanded to prophesy as soon as he has eaten the book.
 - b. It is interesting to note that when John refers to this angel, he says that the angel stands “upon the sea and upon the earth.” John Walvoord points out that the three times John makes such mention in this chapter, he lists the sea and then the earth, though the normal order in the book of Revelation is to list the earth before the sea.¹⁰
 - c. John’s reason for reversing the order? One cannot be sure, but it may indicate that John is more impressed that the angel is standing upon the sea than the earth. It seems self-evident, however, that authority is pictured by the angel’s stance, dominion over the entire earth.
 - d. Back to “the little book.” How many places in God’s Word is Scripture likened to something which can be eaten? The prophets spoke of eating God’s Word and finding it like honey.¹¹ Peter commands the baby Christian to desire the sincere milk of the Word.¹² And on it goes.
 3. Verse 10: “And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.”
 - a. Why is it sweet to the taste buds and bitter to the stomach? Proverbs 16.24: “Pleasant words *are* as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.” There is much in God’s Word which is thrilling to the soul of any child of God. This aspect makes the study of God’s Word sweet to the taste.
 - b. Isaiah 30.8-11:
 - ⁸ Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

¹⁰ Ibid., page 173.

¹¹ Jeremiah 15.16-18; Ezekiel 2.9-10; 3.1-4, 14

¹² 1 Peter 2.2

- ⁹ That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD:
¹⁰ Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:
¹¹ Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

Here we have the bitter aspect of the Word of God, like that two-edged sword of Hebrews 4.12. There are two cutting edges to God's Word. One edge dispenses blessing, and the other dispenses cursing.

- c. The cursing is bitter to swallow for the unsaved. The demands upon the Christian's life also make for some bitterness in our lives. We ought to ensure that the bitterness we feel in our stomach comes from our knowledge of what God will meet out to the rebellious and the unsaved, and not the understanding that it is us who God will judge for disobedience.
- d. J. Vernon McGee wrote concerning this verse:

Jeremiah likens the appropriation of the Word to eating it. Ezekiel does the same thing:

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness [Ezekiel 3:1-3].

The "roll" here is not a bread roll, but the scroll of that day. Ezekiel said that he ate it, and it was just like cake. That is what the Word of God is to the believer.

In Proverbs 16:24 we are told:

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

In Psalm 119, the psalm which glorifies the Word of God, we find:

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth [Psalm 119:103].

The part of the Word of God taken by John was judgment. It was sweet because the future is sweet. In Genesis 18:17 we read, "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" In effect He was saying to Abraham, "We are friends, and I would like to tell you what I am going to do." It is sweet to know what God is going to do, but when you find out that judgment is coming, it is bitter. John eagerly received the Word of God, but when he saw that more judgment was to follow, it brought travail of soul and sorrow of heart. It was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his digestive system. If you and I can take delight in reading this section of the Word of God and the judgments that are to fall upon the earth, then we need to do a great deal of praying to get the mind of God. It is sweet to know the book of Revelation and what God intends to do, but when we find out that judgment is coming to the Christ-rejecting world around us, we cannot rejoice in that. The prophecy becomes bitter.

There is another very real application of this. Many folk begin the study of prophecy with enthusiasm, but when they find that it is applicable to their life and that it makes demands on them personally, they lose interest, and it becomes a bitter thing. Many people say, “I don’t want to hear about the book of Revelation. I don’t like prophecy. It frightens me!” May I say to you that it is supposed to do that, but it should be in your mouth sweet as honey. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who like to study prophecy because of the natural curiosity to know the future, but they will discover that there is nothing in the Word of God that ministers more to a holy life than the thoughtful study of prophecy. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself” (I John 3:3). To be a student of prophecy and live a dirty life will only lead to abnormality. The reason we hear so much abnormality in the interpretation of prophecy in our day is that the Word of God is not having its way in the hearts and lives of the folk who study it. It is unfortunate that people will get interested in prophecy but not in Christian living.

Years ago after I had just come to California, I went to see Dr. Gaebelein who was visiting here. He said to me, “How do you like your church in California?” I told him, “It’s wonderful. I enjoy it, but there is something strange out here. [I have since learned that this is true everywhere, but I had not detected it before.] I can teach the book of Revelation in my church, and it will fill up on Wednesday nights. But if I teach the Epistle to the Romans, I empty the church.” I never shall forget what Dr. Gaebelein said in his broken Prussian accent, “Brother McGee, you are going to find that a great many of the saints are more interested in Antichrist than they are in Christ.” I have discovered that he was accurate.¹³

- e. So, what did John mean when he said he “ate it up”? Psalm 119.11 says, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Understand that this does not refer to memorizing God’s Word, which is a hiding of God’s Word in your head. To get God’s Word from your head to your heart, you must meditate upon it, consider it, ponder it, ruminare upon it, savor it, and incorporate it into your life.
4. Verse 11: “And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

“After partaking of the Book, John was assigned the task of ministering to many more people than which he himself had received. The believer who receives God’s truth is solemnly obligated to pass it on to others. The minister who fails to preach the whole counsel of God will be held accountable by God (Ezekiel 33:7-9). It is not easy for the minister to deal with matters of sin and judgment, but he has no choice. There are “peoples and nations and tongues and kings” who must hear God’s message of salvation. John was faithful, for in the chapters which follow he prophesies of the final overthrow of the nations, the Great White Throne judgment and hell. The message may not be what the people want, but it is what God wants them to have.”¹⁴

¹³ J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation Volume II*, (Pasadena, California: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), pages 128-129.

¹⁴ Strauss, page 208.