

## Revelation 10:1-11:

- I. In verse 1 we see the appearance of the angel.

*I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire...*

- a. John continues his vision from God.
- b. Dr. Mulholland shares: We come to this interlude in chapter 10. This is a major interlude, chapter 10 and part of chapter 11 is an interlude between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet.
- c. We now see God's response.
- d. The ESV Study Bible shares: *Interlude: The Safety and Suffering of God's City-Sanctuary, His Witnessing Church. Between the sixth trumpet (9:13–21) and the seventh (11:15–18), another interlude is inserted. Like the visions that separated the sixth from the seventh seals (7:1–17), this interlude dramatizes God's patient delay in inflicting his full and final wrath, and it assures believers that God will protect his own through the coming traumas. The vision of the angel with the scroll (10:1–11) reveals John's authority to prophesy and God's perfect timing in consummating history.*<sup>1</sup>
- e. The Moody Bible Commentary adds: *These verses belong to a section (10:1–11:14) that does not advance the narrative chronologically but rather enhances it with more detail. John also switches scenes back and forth between heaven and earth. This literary device, called alternation, is meant to intensify reader (or listener) interest.*<sup>2</sup>
- f. John now sees another angel.
- g. This angel is coming down out of Heaven.
- h. John modified this angel saying that it is a "strong" angel. Some translations say "mighty." It is a Greek adjective modifying the angel.
- i. Now, notice this is another angel. He had seen other angels.
- j. Notice how this angel is described.
  - a. Strong
  - b. Clothed with a cloud
  - c. Rainbow was upon his head
  - d. His face was like the sun
  - e. His feet like pillars of fire
  - f. Who does this sound like?
  - g. In Rev. 1:15 there is a similar description of Jesus' feet.
  - h. Dr. Mulholland makes the case this is Jesus. He writes: *This appears to be Jesus the Messiah coming as a messenger (angelos [<sup>TG</sup>32, <sup>ZG</sup>34]). Most of the attributes of this angel mentioned in this verse have already been associated with Jesus: "surrounded by a*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.esv.org/Revelation+10/>

<sup>2</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 82896-82898). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>TG</sup> Tyndale-Strong's Greek number

<sup>ZG</sup> Zondervan Greek number

cloud" (cf. 1:7), "his face shone like the sun" (1:16), "his feet were like pillars of fire" (1:15). The "rainbow over his head" was an attribute of God (4:3), but already John had seen Jesus and God brought together on the throne where the rainbow is (3:21; 5:13; 6:16; 7:9–10, 17).<sup>3</sup>

- i. Wrapped in a cloud: Daniel 7 and the Son of Man figure in the clouds.
- j. John brings many images together.
- k. We have already seen that where Jesus is is the throne with God.
- l. Another thought is shared in the ESV Study Bible: *Like God on his throne, he is surrounded by a rainbow (cf. 4:3). Like the Son of Man, he comes with a cloud, and his faceshines like the sun (cf. 1:7, 16). His legs like pillars of fire reflect the glory of God's presence in the wilderness (Ex. 13:21–22; 14:24). His voice like a lion roaring could belong to the Lion of Judah (Rev. 5:5; see Amos 3:7–8). Therefore some interpreters think this is Jesus himself. However, since Rev. 1:1 describes an angel sent by Christ to deliver God's revelation to John, many see this as simply "another" great angel.*
- m. I do like the Moody Bible Commentary's thoughts: *Some believe this to be Christ, as his appearance in the clouds is reminiscent of the Son of Man (Dn 7:13-14), and he exercises dominion. However, such a descent seems most unlikely before the second coming. In addition there are no other Christophanies in Scripture after the incarnation. Finally, the wording of the passage suggests that this is another angel of the same kind (cf. angel in vv. 5, 8, 11), presumably, as the one mentioned in 9:1. The book that was open in the angel's hand was different from the scroll of 5:1-2, and its content was not yet revealed. Instead, God spoke through seven peals of thunder.*<sup>4</sup>
- n. Dr. Constable from Dallas Theological Seminary believes this is not Jesus, but a mighty angel. He also writes: *This new role also involves a change in location from heaven to earth, as the angel descends from heaven (10:1) and stands upon the earth where John hears a voice from heaven (10:4, 8) and goes to him (10:8). . . The new style is one element among others that heightens the anticipation and accentuates the solemnity of the apocalyptic events to follow.*<sup>3435</sup>
- o. If you want extra background information here it is from the IVP BBC NT: *Jewish literature pictures a number of angels as being as high as the highest heavens, often shining like the sun (2 Enoch; 3 Enoch; rabbis; cf. Dan 10:6; cf. the Greek figure Atlas). Both evil angels (1 Enoch) and good angels could be very tall. Sometimes they were crowned (e.g., 2 Enoch; 3 Enoch), in this case with a*

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<sup>3</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 494.

<sup>4</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 82902-82905). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>343</sup> 343. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 10:1.

rainbow; in 3 Enoch, even the crown is more than a five-hundred-year journey high. (Sometimes such language was also used figuratively, e.g., for a particular high priest.) John borrows the imagery of his day for a powerful angel over creation (see comment on Rev 7:1).<sup>6</sup>

II. Verses 2-7 are the actions by this angel.

*and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;*<sup>3</sup> *and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.*<sup>4</sup> *When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."*<sup>5</sup> *Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven,*<sup>6</sup> *and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there will be delay no longer,*<sup>7</sup> *but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.*

- a. So the angel has a little book in his hand.
- b. Now, don't miss the modifiers. The book is "little."
- c. The book was open. Open means there is a purpose to this book.
- d. But, wow! The next part jumps from the book to the Angels feet.
- e. Right foot on the sea
- f. Left foot on the land.
- g. Dr. Mulholland has an interesting thought about this book: *This is in marked contrast to the sealed scroll in the hand of God (5:1). The image suggests something which had already been disclosed, perhaps the old covenant, since there are textual echoes here to the giving of the first covenant in that God appeared to the people in a cloud (Exod 16:10).*<sup>7</sup>
- h. The ESV Study Bible adds: *The scroll is open because the Lamb has broken its seals. The scroll is little compared to the great size of the angel, whose stride spans sea and land. It will be given to John to eat and to proclaim (vv. 10–11), completing the process of transmission (from God to Christ to angel to John to the churches) initiated in 5:7.*<sup>8</sup>
- i. Dr. Constable believes this scroll represents a new revelation from God.
- j. Notice how the NASB says the angel had a "book," but the other translations say "scroll." It is really a scroll.
- k. This image of the angel striding the sea is interesting.
- l. Once again, Dr. Mulholland teaches a more **symbolic view** of Revelation but still interesting, he writes: **This is repeated twice more (10:5, 8), emphasizing the significance**

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<sup>6</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 10:1.

<sup>7</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., ["Revelation,"](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 494.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.esv.org/Revelation+10/>

of this image. *The NLT's "land" represents the same Greek that is translated "earth" in 5:10—it is again a symbol for the rebellious realm of fallen Babylon. The "sea" is also a symbol of the rebellious realm (see discussion of "earth" in note on 3:10, and the discussion of "sea" in note on 4:6). Since "land" and "sea" represent the rebellious realm, this is a vision of Jesus' sovereignty over the entire realm of rebellion. Later in the vision John sees a beast coming from the sea and another from the earth (13:1, 11). First Enoch 60:7–8 gives witness to the imagery of two beasts in intertestamental Judaism, one related to the sea and one to the land. These two beasts represent an incarnation of Satan's rebellion in human history. John was seeing Jesus as the victor over the rebellion.*<sup>9</sup>

- m. The angel cries out with a loud voice.
- n. That makes sense, wouldn't we expect the voice to be loud? He is standing over the sea either symbolically or literally.
- o. His voice was like a lion roaring.
- p. Again, this is the best image John can find.
- q. The seven peals of thunder spoke.
- r. Interesting cross references: John takes a scroll from an angel

Is 31:4 *Indeed, this is what the LORD says to me: "The LORD will be like a growling lion, like a young lion growling over its prey. Though a whole group of shepherds gathers against it, it is not afraid of their shouts or intimidated by their yelling. In this same way the LORD who commands armies will descend to do battle on Mount Zion and on its hill.*

Ho 11:10 *He will roar like a lion, and they will follow the LORD; when he roars, his children will come trembling from the west.*

Re 4:5 *From the throne came out flashes of lightning and roaring and crashes of thunder. Seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God, were burning in front of the throne*

- s. It is very interesting how now we have a connection with Rev. 4:5 and the throne. It sounds almost like John may be seeing these things simultaneously.
- t. Dr. Mulholland: *This is the voice of Jesus, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb, whose death has conquered the rebellion (5:5). In the OT it is also an image of God's judgment against the ungodly (Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2, cf. 4 Ezra 11:37; 12:31).*<sup>10</sup>
- u. In verse 4 John was about to write. One source points out that John starts to take notes like a good Rabbinic student, but he was told not to write at this time. This is like Deut 29:29 the secret things belong to the Lord.
- v. I like Dr. Constable's thoughts: *An authoritative voice, probably belonging to God or Christ (cf. 1:11, 19; Dan. 12:4, 9), did not permit John to record the judgments these seven thunders revealed (cf. 2 Cor. 12:1–4). This indicates that God has not revealed in Scripture all the judgments that will take place on the earth during the Great Tribulation.*<sup>346</sup>

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NLT New Living Translation

<sup>9</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 495.

<sup>10</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 495.

<sup>346</sup> 346. Newell, p. 142.

- w. Apparently John used the intervals between events in his visions to write down what he had seen and heard or at least to make notes.<sup>11</sup>
- x. I like how Dr. Mulholland adds to this: *This command is typical in visionary experience. Paul heard things that could not be told (2 Cor 12:4), Daniel was told to seal up his vision (Dan 8:26; 12:4, 9), and here we see that John was prohibited from sharing a portion of his vision. The image of thunder is common in the Scriptures as an image for God's voice (Exod 19:9; Job 37:2, 4–5; Ps 29:3; John 12:28–29; and in 4:5 the thunder is used as an image for the one seated upon the throne). Since "seven" represents completeness and wholeness, John may be portraying the fullness of God's speaking in Jesus, the Lion of Judah, whose "roars" evoke the thunders. The prohibition against disclosing what the thunders said at least infers that there is more to God and the Lamb than John is allowed to reveal.*<sup>12</sup>
- y. In verses 5–6 we see the angel whom John saw standing over the sea.
- z. The angel lifts his right hand to heaven.
- aa. This is either symbolic or literal.
- bb. The posture is comparable with Old Testament references: Deut 32:40; Dan 12:7
- cc. The angel speaks
- dd. The angel swore by God (Him who lives forever and ever) that there will be no delay any longer.
- ee. This is really a fulfillment of Rev 6:11 when the martyrs asked how long.
- ff. This oath was accompanied by an Old Testament allusion from Ex 20:11
- gg. Dr. Constable shares: *The fact that the angel took an oath and swore by God seems to confirm that he is not God. Lifting the right hand toward God was and is a customary gesture when making a solemn oath (cf. Gen. 14:22; Deut. 32:40; Dan. 12:7). The little book must have been in the angel's left hand.*
- hh. *10:6 The oath emphasized the certainty of what he announced. What was about to happen was extremely important. He appealed to God as the eternal Creator who can cause whatever He pleases to happen. This appeal strengthens the force of the oath and the certainty of its outcome. His message was that there would be no more delay.<sup>347</sup> Verse 7 explains this affirmation (cf. Dan. 12:7a). The Tribulation martyrs would have to wait no longer for vindication (cf. 6:10). Evidently the seal and trumpet judgments will take some time to unfold giving earth-dwellers time to repent (6:15–17; 9:20–21), but the bowl judgments will come very quickly allowing little or no time for repentance (cf. 2 Pet. 3:1–9).*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tom Constable, [\*Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible\*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 10:4.

<sup>12</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 495.

<sup>347</sup> 347. The Greek word used here, *chronos*, commonly means "time," but that is obviously not what the angel intended here. "Delay" is the only acceptable translation that makes sense in this context. There will be no delay between this announcement and the blowing of the seventh trumpet (11:15). See Alford, 4:652; Swete, pp. 126–27; Charles, 1:263–64; Beckwith, p. 582.

<sup>13</sup> Tom Constable, [\*Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible\*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 10:5–6.

- ii. One more source, the ESV Study Bible: *The angel's stance—one foot on sea, one on land, and right hand raised to heaven—unites three spheres of the created order (see [5:13](#); [Gen. 1:6–10](#)) as their divine Creator is invoked to witness the angel's oath (cf. [Dan. 12:7](#); also [Gen. 14:22](#); [Deut. 32:40](#)). The angel swears that the era of God's longsuffering, which entailed delay of his martyrs' vindication ([Rev. 6:10](#)), will end when the last trumpet sounds. The mystery of God to be fulfilled when the seventh trumpet sounds is his plan to unite all things in heaven and earth under Christ's headship ([Eph. 1:10](#)), making visible to all the sovereignty by which the Son now orchestrates every event for his church's welfare ([Eph. 1:20–22](#)). This "mystery" includes the unrestrained expression of God's wrath, signified in the bowl judgments, toward all who resist his reign (cf. [Rev. 15:1](#), where "finished" translates the same verb [Gk. *teleō*] rendered "fulfilled" in [10:7](#)).*
  - jj. Verse 7 is about the mystery:
  - kk. Notice it says, but **in the days**.
  - ll. When this sounds the mystery of God is finished.
  - mm. This is connected to the servants which are the prophets.
  - nn. The Moody Bible Commentary shares: *The phrase at the beginning of v. 7 is best rendered "but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded" (ESV). The end would not come before the trumpet sounded, but in association with it. Such a future cataclysm was revealed by God to the prophets of old (Is 24–27).*<sup>14</sup>
  - oo. This seventh angel will sound in Rev. 11:15.
  - pp. IVP BBC OT: *All the Old Testament promises, both of judgment and of restoration, came to a head in the day of the Lord.*<sup>15</sup>
  - qq. Dr Constable shares: *The mystery is finished (the aorist passive of teleo) in the sense that God would then have no more to reveal about these kingdom plans beyond what He revealed to John. He had revealed His plans for the future kingdom to His servants the prophets in former times but only partially (cf. Heb. 1:1–2). "His servants the prophets" is a common description of the Old Testament prophets in particular (Jer. 7:25; 25:4; Amos 3:7).*<sup>16</sup>

III. Verses 8-11 we see the mission give to the apostle of God. *Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." <sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he \*said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." <sup>10</sup> I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. <sup>11</sup> And they \*said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."*

<sup>14</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 82909-82911). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>15</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 10:7.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 10:7.

- a. John once again hears the voice from Heaven. **Same voice as verse 4**. He had heard this voice before.
- b. He is to take the book/scroll which was opened in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and the on the land. This refers back to verse 2.
- c. Verse 9: he goes to the angel but the angel warns him of the bitter sweet nature of the scroll.
- d. Verse 9: it is sweet because it is a message from the Lord but bitter because of what the message was about.
- e. Verse 9 cross references with Ezekiel 2:8 and 3:1-3
- f. The ESV Study Bible sums up this section well: *As Ezekiel ate a scroll and found it sweet as honey in his mouth, so John must do the same, receiving God's words in his heart before he speaks them (cf. [Ezek. 3:1-3, 10](#)). The sweet word made his stomach ... bitter. Although some "from every tribe and language and people and nation" will be redeemed by the Lamb ([Rev. 5:9; 7:9-17](#)), at this particular time John will see peoples and nations and languages resisting Christ and his witnesses ([11:9; 13:7; 17:15](#)). Kings in particular will ally themselves with evil ([6:15; 16:12-14; 17:2, 18; 19:18-19](#)).*
- g. I like what Dr. Constable shares: **Evidently the little scroll symbolizes God's revelation that John was about to set forth. It is the revelation that the remainder of the Book of Revelation, or at least part of it, contains.** Eating is a universal idiom for receiving knowledge (cf. [Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1-3](#)).<sup>17</sup>
- h. Dr. Mulholland points out: **For Ezekiel, however, he was to prophesy to the rebellious house of Israel.**<sup>18</sup>
- i. Verse 10 is John doing as instructed.
- j. Dr. Constable says that John may have literally eaten the scroll or metaphorically as eat meant to read. That is interesting since Dr Constable is usually more literal.
- k. Verse 11 is instruction to prophesy.
- l. Verse 11 says "THEY" said to me."
- m. I think this could be the scroll said to him or the scroll and the angel.
- n. He is to prophesy again.
- o. His prophesy is concerning "many" peoples, nations, tongues [languages] and kings.
- p. Dr. Mulholland points out: *John here uses a slight variation upon the usual "tribe, language, people, and nation" found in 5:9; 7:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15, a phrase clearly identifying the composition of fallen Babylon, the people of the rebellious order.*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 10:9.

<sup>18</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., ["Revelation,"](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 495.

<sup>19</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., ["Revelation,"](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 495.

- q. Dr. Constable's words conclude our study on this chapter: **"They" may refer to God or Jesus Christ (vv. 4, 8) and the strong angel (v. 9). Many interpreters, however, believe this is a third person plural of indefinite reference that expresses reverentially the divine prompting that John experienced (cf. 12:6; 13:16; 16:15).**<sup>352</sup> "They" told John that he must (*Gr. dei*) prophesy again, as he had been doing (cf. Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 4:7). They wanted him to communicate the new revelation contained in the little scroll that he had consumed. The new prophecies concerned many different peoples, nations, language groups, and kings (cf. 5:9). The specific mention of kings reflects God's sovereignty and anticipates the judgments in 16:14; 17:10; and 17:12.
- r. This renewed commission stresses that what follows would be more burdensome than what John had prophesied so far.<sup>20</sup>
- s.

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<sup>352</sup> 352. Friedrich Düsterdieck, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation of John*, p. 305; Alford, 4:654; Lee, 4:638; Beckwith, p. 584; Robertson, 6:374; Ford, p. 160; Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> Tom Constable, [\*Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible\*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 10:11.