

Revelation Chapters 10-11

Last week we studied how mankind will suffer severe punishment for their sins from the first to the 6th trumpet. Even in the light of terrible judgment, many of those left behind after the terrible plagues will not be willing to repent of their sins, even though it is clear from the warning of “Woe” that other horrendous disasters are yet to come upon the world. Chapter 10 opens when we are on the brink of another disaster, but it seems that God has another intermission in this series, a dramatic interlude to once again show that His desire for mankind is once again for mercy to triumph over justice.

(slide 6 of Scenario 3) Chapter 10 and 11 come in between the 6th and 7th trumpet, here shown in this slide from Dan’s lecture on the six seals a few weeks ago. It is difficult to get a clear understanding of how long any of these disasters will last because God showed John what will happen from the point of view of eternity, whereas we are constrained by our limited understanding of time. So an accurate understanding of the timing of all these events remains a mystery. The realization that many events are repeated also add some mystery, because we are left to speculate whether the judgments will be the same series of events, but presented to us from a different viewpoint, or perhaps they are different events which spiral in intensity as the end comes near.

Mysteries seem to be characteristic of the Book of Revelation. How many of you like solving mysteries? The mysteries in the Bible are not ones that you solve. They are the type of mysteries that are revealed over time. One of the fun aspects of studying Scripture is that the longer we work with it, the more the mysteries are revealed. This lesson is a one of several mysteries revealed.

(slide 7)

1. The mystery of the seven thunders in chapter 10:4
2. The mystery of God that will be accomplished in 10: 7
3. The mystery of what is contained in the little scroll in 10:9

The Bible and indeed, life in earth is full of mysteries; but it will not always be so. A day will come when all the answers we have always wanted to know will be revealed. But before you leave here tonight, you'll know a deeper insight into the meaning of these special mysteries that have intrigued people for ages

When we ended chapter 9 last week, the survivors of the plagues of locusts did not repent of their murders, magic arts, sexual sin, or their thefts. Surely they deserved whatever punishment would come next, but that punishment is interrupted by the arrival of the mighty angel. Based on his appearance, he has just come from the presence of the Almighty. In his hand is a small scroll.

Surely after the 6 trumpet judgments that John has just witnessed, the arrival of this angel would have aroused great relief and curiosity. When this mighty angel planted his feet one on the land and one on the sea, he was asserting his ownership of the entire earth, standing like a great colossus, and roaring like a lion, the One from the tribe of Judah.

To the roar of this Angel, seven great peals of thunder reply. Can you imagine? Seven rolls of thunder speaking in a language that John understands. But just as he is about to write it down, so that we would know the reply, another voice from heaven says, "Do not write it, but seal it up."

Do not write it down? If John is not permitted to record what was said, why should he even note this incident? It is a mystery at first glance, but often the mysteries of God are revealed to those who diligently seek them out in His Word, and so after a diligent study of the word, "thunder" in my concordance, I found the most tell-tale clues in Psalm 29 where we read, (slide 8-9)

- The God of glory thunders,
- The Lord Almighty thunders over the mighty waters.
- The voice of the Lord is powerful,
- The voice of the Lord is majestic.
- The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning.
- All in His temple cry, "Glory!"

- The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
- The Lord is enthroned as King forever.

We'll soon see that what the seven thunders will reply to the angel is indeed a foreshadow of what was to come with the sound of the seventh trumpet.

Then the angel raises his right hand to heaven, issues an oath on the name of the Creator of the universe that, "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced to his servants the prophets. "

The mystery of God . . . did you wonder, in your study this week and in your groups this evening, what that might be?

- If one is poor in spirit, the mystery might be, "why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?"
- If one is persecuted, the mystery might be, 'Why does evil exist and where is God in it?"
- If one has suffered, the mystery might be, "What did I do to deserve this pain?"
- Possibly, the mystery also regards the great question "Why did God allow Satan to rebel and go his own way?"

Scripture records many mysteries:

- In Romans 11:25 Paul writes of the mystery of the hardening of the hearts of the Jews.
- Ephesians 3, we learn that the purpose of the Gentile Church is a mystery.
- In Colossians, we read that the living presence of Christ in a believer is a mystery,

But what this mystery of God is actually has been announced to the prophets many times before. In fact, you've prayed for it hundreds of times. What is that mystery? Let's find out more as we prepare for the seventh trumpet to sound.

Then the voice from heaven speaks to John telling him to eat the scroll. When a prophet eats the scroll it symbolizes that he is assimilating it into himself and becoming personally involved with it. Such an action symbolizes the reception of the Word of God into the innermost being as a necessary prerequisite to proclaim it with confidence. This imagery comes from the prophet Ezekiel who was also told to eat his scroll before he testified to the house of Israel. The prophecy tastes sweet at first. These are promises of God and there is an element of those promises that is wonderfully sweet.

Yet as the Word of Truth is swallowed, the reality begins to set in and the warm glow of promises fades into reality. God has plans that require some changes in our lives, some attitudes, bigotries that must be set aside, some enemies that require prayer instead of retaliation, some bad habits that have to go. You might have to pluck out your right eye, cut off your right hand in order to obey. There is hurt in leaving behind family and embracing others as new brothers and sisters in Christ. The stomach begins to sour when we realize that we have some responsibility for those sinners who do not repent, and that their ultimate destination in hell may well be because I, and perhaps you too, did not obey the call to go and make disciples.

With John's stomach still sour, he is given a new assignment. He must prophecy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings. Up until now John has been an observer; now he becomes part of the action and becomes involved in bringing God's work to completion.

And so chapter 11 opens with John's first assignment: Take measurements! John was given a measuring rod and told to measure the temple of God, the altar, and number the worshippers there. What was God up to at this point? He is calculating who and what belongs to Him.

When you are selling your house, you pay for a property assessment. A surveyor comes and measures the size of the building, the yard, and gives you an accurate figure of how much land you own and the square footage of your home. The idea of measuring communicates ownership, preservation and as assessment of assets. In Ezekiel chapters 40-43, the temple was measured, in Zechariah chapter 2, a man measured Jerusalem before it was destroyed, and in Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem is measured and recorded in order to allocate blessings to all who will live there. When John is told to measure the temple, he was measuring for the number of Jews who belonged to Him. John was told to specifically exclude the outer court. "Do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles.

Slide 10

You'll recall that the Temple area has been dominated for 1300 years by the Muslim's Dome of the Rock. When the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans, they destroyed the city so completely that the foundations of the old temple could not be distinguished. Most have long assumed, and I recall teaching on this earlier in our study, that the Dome of the Rock shrine stands on the place of the old temple. But research by Dr. Asher Kaufman, a physicist and historian at Notre Dame University, gives some evidence that the true temple

mount may have actually been located to the north from where the Dome of the Rock shrine is today. **Slide 11**

Using the calculations from Dr. Kaufman's research, he claims that if the temple were to be rebuilt at its true place, the Dome of the Rock would indeed, be in the outer courts. If this is the case, then it would explain why the angel told John leave out the court which is outside the temple, because it belongs to the Muslims!....who are Gentile by birth. God is not even counting that as part of His property!

Non-Jews will desecrate the city of Jerusalem for 42 months. This one is no mystery; it's one of those times that we are given an exact time for the events that will take place. The antichrist is ruling during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation and part of his agenda is to desecrate the rebuilt temple and terrorize any Godly people left in Jerusalem. The mighty angel has cried out, "No more delay!" but the message of the little scroll is instead, 'count them up for one more chance!' He has 144,000 sealed for salvation and He will give them up. This is what He will do, as we read in Revelation 11: 3-6:

"I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Most of you will easily recognize these two men. That they have the power to cause a world-wide drought reminds us of Elijah, and their ability to turn fresh water into blood reminds us of Moses. So they are either modeled after Moses and Elijah, or perhaps they actually are Moses and Elijah who will return to earth for a second visit since the Mount of Transfiguration. These two witnesses will deliver a final warning to the government leaders of the world. For 3 ½ years, they will give powerful testimony of God's purpose and His will, and the truth regarding the lies of the destroyer. They will be a constant thorn in the side of Godless government leaders and others who oppose God, and will be in full view of the media. The world will be deceived to believe that they are *false prophets*. Like their Lord before them, these two witnesses will be killed in the same place that Jesus was, in the city of Jerusalem, which will have fallen so far from its reputation as the Holy City, that it is referred to as the Sodom and Egypt of its day.

Because the world sees these two witnesses as evil, there will erupt mass jubilation throughout the world when the beast from the abyss kills them. Even after their death, the antichrist will humiliate them by refusing a decent burial and allowing their dead bodies to lie in the city streets in full view of their enemies and the worldwide media.

Notice the words, "When they have finished their testimony." No one could overpower them, touch them, or hinder their work until everyone who needs to hear the testimony has heard it. God gives the world one last chance to repent, bow the knee willingly, and everyone measured is in, and for the rest, that chance

is gone . . . forever! The time for testimonies is over, and the stage is set for the most dramatic event in the history of the world.

Does the world realize what is coming?

Will the enemy believe that he has triumphed?

Will the faithful remnant, the 144,000 who were sealed, lose all hope?

Not if they know the rest of the story!

Those who hope in the Lord need not fear the sting of death, for not even death can stop the plans of the Lord. In an amazing turn of events, and in perfect timing, these two bodies will be resurrected and immediately will ascend into the heavens, and everyone will see it! This is no movie with special effects! It terrorizes the world! Recall Psalm 29:

- The God of glory thunders,
- The Lord Almighty thunders over the mighty waters.

An earthquake kills 7,000 people; that's God speaking! The survivors . . . the Jews lift up their heads, recognize that their redemption is nigh, they are instantly and completely amazed when they see none other than the One Whom they have pierced, and . . . give glory to God!

- The voice of the Lord is powerful,
- The voice of the Lord is majestic.

As soon as they give glory to God, the culminating event, the mystery of the ages now takes place! The seventh and final trumpet sounds, and announces the most

pivotal event in mankind's history: the return of Jesus Christ! The earth literally quakes with gladness, along with the whole creation. (music)

The mystery of God which the angel declared in the beginning of our lesson; the day when the prayer we have all been praying for so long, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," will be answered. All the governments of men—including that of every great and small country on earth today—are smashed and fairness, justice and peace will finally come to a sick and broken planet!

Despite all the Psalms and prophecies that speak of God as a majestic king, a ruling authority, none of that has ever physically taken place on earth. God governs human events and times it perfectly, but He does it, in a sense, from a distance. He has never until this moment in time, taken His great power and forced it on us openly reigning upon the earth. But now, He will be known as King to everyone. Every knee bows, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Let the heavens be glad, the Psalm says and the heavens indeed are glad.

Slide 12 Altogether, READ verses 17, Notice, We give thanks to You Lord Almighty who was and is . . . and what do we usually say? . . . Who is to come – is not there because Jesus has just come at this point. The transfer of power has just taken place and it is punctuated with more earthquakes, lightning and thunder.

As the heavens open, visible for the first time since it was lost in the Old Testament times is the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol to the Jews of God's promise to them to always love and protect them. It has been safely in heaven since it was last seen on earth; that's why Indiana Jones couldn't find it!

For the Jews, all their questions, all the pain and rejection, will be answered as they faced the truth of their sin, and of God's great love for them, as they retrace their history in our upcoming lessons in Chapters 12-14

Slide 13 But for now, three mysteries have been revealed:

- The mystery of the thunders: the glory of the Lord is about to be revealed
- The mystery of the little scroll: God was accounting for the Jews who were about to be saved
- The mystery of God that He revealed to the prophets: Jesus Christ: His Kingdom has come!

What a privilege it is to be able to read the last chapters of the history of the earth! Righteousness shall be the characteristic of the times ahead, not unrighteousness as now. Every tear will be wiped away. All wars will cease throughout the earth, addictions will cease, all abortion clinics will be closed, families will live together in harmony, crime statistics and sex scandals will drop to zero, truth and not corruption will be the norm, and Righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! (music)