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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in Revelation

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### Revelation 10:1-7: “The Small Scroll”

**General idea:** John sees another mighty angel reflecting the glory of our Lord and coming down from Heaven with a small scroll. John describes him as surrounded by a cloud and a rainbow, and having the authority of the Most Sovereign God of the universe who continues to bring about more judgment. This angel carries with him the call and ability from God to shout out with a mighty roar. These images are frightful as he has a face like the sun, feet of fire, and the might of a lion to show us that God is serious and we are not to ignore the source, God Almighty. As this angel carries the little scroll and gives his shout, he is answered by the seven thunders, which God asks John to keep secret a little longer. Such a thunder conveys the sentence that God has pronounced to humanity.

God can't wait any longer. The “woe” He gave for all of humanity, including the Church, is at hand. God wants us to clearly understand that He is on the verge of releasing His judgment in whatever form He sees fit. All people know this, for humanity has been warned. Those who seek evil deserve the wrath of God's judgment, signaled by the trumpet blast announcing that the time is at hand. God's mysteries and judgment will be made known and will be fulfilled according to His timing, occasion, and schedule (Eccl. 3:1-8; Psalm 29).

**Vs. 1-4:** This passage is related to Daniel 10:5-6 and Ezekiel 2:1-3:11, as John further warns what God has already decreed. This little scroll is unfolded to us in the upcoming chapters, as some of its contents are made known. John is witness to these events, an example to us as a Church that one day, we too will witness these events at their fruition. In the meantime, we will see the “micro” applications by the sins of those around us (Ezek. 1:27-28; Dan. 10:5-6; Rev. 1:14-16).

- *Mighty Angel* refers to one who is reflecting and/or carrying out the power of God—perhaps the appearance of Christ Himself. This angel is not mighty himself (unless it is Christ; however, the word *another* denotes it is an angel and not Christ. Also, John does not worship him as before), just as we are not mighty; rather, he has God's anointing in demonstrating faithfulness and obedience. In other Jewish writings (1, 2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Enoch), such angels are depicted with rainbows as crowns, and standing tall and proud, shining as the sun—much like the Greek god, Atlas. Perhaps, such an image was in God's mind to send a formidable warning and/or to make His point (Rev. 5:2; 7:1).
- *Rainbow* normally refers to God's mercy and grace, which we are called to reflect. Also, this was God's pledge not to destroy the earth again by water,

but leaving room for other means if man's sins escalate (Gen. 9:8-17; Ezek. 1:26-28; Rev. 4:1-5). Here, it is symbolic language, possibly meant to show the angel's power and prestige.

- *Like the sun.* A metaphor for describing someone who reflects the glory of our Lord.
- *Legs were like fiery pillars.* A metaphor for describing one's territory, dominion, and/or power. Also alludes to how God led and protected His people during the exodus (Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-24; Rev. 8:12).
- *Little book/small scroll.* This is not referring to the big scroll of chapter five as the seals of it have already been opened and examined. This little or small scroll refers to one that is different, or a particular scroll apart from the others. This little scroll, from the context, may refer to what will not be revealed until the time is upon us or when God sees fit (Rev. 6:1-8:1).
- *Which lay open.* God's precepts have been made known to us (entirety of God's Word and/or Revelation up to this point). We have the call and the responsibility to examine and apply them.
- *Right foot on the sea, left foot on the land.* This suggests the angel's incredible size and symbolizes that he is coming as God's representative, pointing to His omnipresence. This term also meant "destiny" as in *all creation is in God's control*.
- *Seven thunders* refers to God's divine punishment and judgment that fall on those who will not bend to God or accept His love and grace. Perhaps, from the context, this implies that the little scroll's revelations are too horrific for or are not understandable to us, or that we are not ready to know them. Some have suggested these are commandments that we already know, like the Ten Commandments (2 Cor. 12:2-4; Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).
- *Seal up* indicates that the prophecies are closed for review or are preserved until the proper time has come. The indication here is that something has not been disclosed, something God doesn't want us to know yet (Deut. 29:29; Dan. 8:26; 12:4-9; Rev. 22:10).

These images are not meant just to strike fear in pagans and those who hate God; even if they were, people tend not to care. No prophecy, no matter how valid and true it is, will sway those who are evil or entrenched in their own ways. Look to Jeremiah, whose prophecy after prophecy came true, yet the Jewish leadership was totally against Him and finally had him killed. These images are more intended to make sure we as the Church (remember the audience is the seven churches of chapters one to four) keep the faith and walk the line with God.

**Vs. 5-7:** John is taking notes like a typical rabbinic or Greek student, an example of being studious, paying attention to what God is saying, and obeying Him through His most precious Word. This is about how we are to glorify Him and not just seek what we want to get from Him. God's judgment is at hand; the angel says there will be no more delays. If this does not strike fear in people, what will?

- *Raised his right hand* was a way people at this time proclaimed an oath to vow allegiance in general or a specific task before their god. The book of Daniel also showed this; possibly, John is making the connection to Daniel, as Revelation is closely tied to it (Gen. 14:22-23; Deut 32:40; Dan. 12:7).
- *Lives forever and ever* refers to the eternal nature of God. As His faithful, we will also be preserved, as we will have a place in His marvelous eternity, heaven. This was also meant to encourage John's readers who were going through persecutions and imminent martyrdom (Rev. 1:18; 4:9-10; 15:7).
- *No more delay.* This shows that the waiting is over and time has come. There will be no further postponement or interruption. The prayers of those in chapter six have been heard and God is at work (Dan. 12:7; Hab. 2:3; Mark 13:19; Rev. 2:21; 6: 9-11; 20:3).
- *Mystery of God.* The entirety of all that has been prophesied in the Old Testament has come or will come to its culmination by this time. All will be known; nothing will be hidden.

God does not always tell us everything because we may not be ready for it, or we may not be able to handle it. Perhaps with John, it was both. We can still trust that His judgment and what He gives us is sufficient. We have all we need in His Word to know Him, grow in Him, and make Him known. We have all we need to know what is relevant and important for our spiritual formation, to lead a godly purposeful life, and to know about future happenings. If we crave what we have not been given, and seek to make up for ourselves our own doctrine, we will greatly stray from His path by our ignorance and arrogance. God wants us focused upon Him and the building of our faith and character, not to satisfy our lust for what He says we are not ready for. God wants us to take what He has given and exercise ourselves with it, living out our doctrine without becoming fat by it. He would have us take what He has given and apply it with passion, pointing others to live by His heart and call by the application of faith. This means God wants us to be faithful and not instigative. We are to be revolutionary with our faith, not with His doctrine. We are to stir up our complacency, not our rebellion of His ways (Acts 1:6-8; 1 Thess. 5:2).

**The Preterist view:** They see the *mighty angel* as Jesus Himself because of the description, and the *rainbow* as the throne of God (Rev. 1:16; 4:3). *Sea and land* represent the Gentile nations, and the little scroll as the Book of Revelation itself.

The *seven thunders* are seen as the voice of Psalm 29 that rocks the nation Israel. *Seal up* is seen as events too terrible to tell or comprehend so as to spare discouragement to the people. Others in this view see this as the event not fulfilled by 70 A.D. that was still to be fulfilled, mainly the “Partial Preterits.” *No more delay* is seen as indicating the wait was over and the prayers of the saints have been answered; their blood would be avenged and Israel would be destroyed. The *mystery* is seen as the Gentiles being included in the Church as the Jewish reign will end, or else they will be equal (Eph. 3:3-6).

**The Futurist view:** They see this passage, chapters 10 and 11, as literal and as a series of extra information as in “parenthetical,” a further, in-depth description of the events of chapters five to nine. The *mighty angel* is Christ Himself, and the *little scroll* that contains extra information we do not have in Revelation is explained in the next chapter. Others see this as the prophecies of the O.T. about the Great Tribulation and Israel. *Seal up* means some things we can't understand or are not ready for. The *mystery* is seen as God allowing Satan to have his way during the tribulation; others have suggested this is the start of the Kingdom of God on earth, while others have said this is God's “predestination” of those who are to be saved, or that God will reveal what it is in His time.

**The Idealist view:** They see this passage as an interlude between judgments as was chapter seven. This passage is not in chronological order, but overlaps or further explains these events. The *mighty angel* is seen as Christ Himself or His representative. *A foot in the sea and land* refers that he has a message for the whole world. The *little scroll* contains more prophecies. The *seven thunders* are seen as a voice to the whole world. *Seal up* refers to things John was not ready to understand or be able to explain (1 Cor. 13:8-12; 2 Cor. 12:4). The *mystery* is seen as a reference to Romans 16:25, Ephesians 3:3-6 and Colossians 2:2, the union of Jews and Gentiles. Others see it as God's purpose in history and human affairs.

**The Historicist view:** They see this passage as the time period when Rome fell to the Barbarians in 476 and the rise of the Papacy (The control of the Holy Roman Empire as the Catholic Church). The corrupt Popes become the antichrists and the opposition to the true believers setting up the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The *mighty angel* is seen as Christ Himself (it is interesting that all views see this when the context seems to denote otherwise). The *little scroll* is the Bible that Christ opens up to us through the Reformers and the printing press. The *seven thunders* and *loud voice* are seen as Christ's challenge to the Catholic Church or the seven crusades. *No more delay* is seen as the start of the Reformation.

***The Essential Inductive Questions*** (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?

2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. Has God ever called you to do something that you would not have done by your own inclinations?
2. How would you describe the glory of our Lord? What does it mean to you to be reflecting His glory? Why does God not always tell us everything? What if He did?
3. Do you think that these images are frightful, such as the angel described as having a face like the sun, feet of fire, and the might of a lion? What is John trying to show here?
4. What do you think are your call and abilities are, given to you from God? How is this passage about being fully utilized by our Lord?
5. If we assume that God is serious (and He is), why would some Christians choose to ignore Him and the source of His precepts?
6. What would it mean to you and your church if people took more seriously God's anointing? How could this help us, as a church, in demonstrating faithfulness and obedience?
7. Why do you suppose that God can't wait any longer? What are the events that might have led God to make that statement?
8. Why does God want us to clearly understand that He is on the verge of releasing His judgment in whatever form He sees fit? How does this strengthen your faith and resolve?
9. How does it make you feel that God's mysteries and judgment will be made known and will be fulfilled at His timing, His occasion, and according to His schedule? Does this make you anxious and wish He would get busy faster? Why, or why not?

10. How is this passage an example to us as a Church that one day, we too may witness these events at their fruition? What can you do to prepare your faith and perseverance so that in the meantime, you can handle the “micro” applications by the sins of those around you?
11. What do you think these revelations might be that are too horrific for or that are not understandable to us?
12. What can you do to take more seriously and pay more attention to what God is saying so you can be better at obeying Him through His most precious Word? What does it mean to you that we have the call and the responsibility to examine and apply His Word?