

The Big Angel with the Little Book

Revelation 10:1-11

INTRODUCTION

- A. As we have studied through Revelation, we have seen much about the judgment of God.
- B. Tonight, our text causes us to switch gears completely.
 - 1. Tonight's text has to do with the message proclaimed by men of God.
 - 2. There is much we learn about the message of God from the big angel in this text:

THE DIVINE MESSAGE HE BRINGS, vv. 1-7

- A. John saw a mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, v. 1.
 - 1. That this angel comes from heaven shows that he speaks with divine authority; since he comes from heaven, he is in a position to inform John of the things about to come to pass.
 - 2. This angel is clothed with a cloud.
 - a. The Greek verb for "clothed" means to be enveloped and here it indicates that the angel was encircled with the cloud.
 - b. The Son of Man was carried to the Ancient of Days on a cloud (Dan. 7:13); this One as the Son of Man had divine authority.
 - c. The idea of this angel being encircled with a cloud demonstrates his divine authority.
- B. This angel had a rainbow on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire, v. 1.
 - 1. The rainbow on the head of this angel reminds us of the description of God (Rev. 4:3).
 - 2. His face was like the sun.
 - a. This reminds us of the time when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and his face shone (Ex. 34:29-30).
 - b. Moses face shone after he had been in the presence of God; this angel's face shines because he has been in God's presence.
 - 3. His feet being like pillars of fire might well be an allusion to the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites in the wilderness.
- C. This angel had a little book open in his hand, and he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, v. 2.
 - 1. The Greek syntax says that this book has been opened and is remaining open; "standing open" is a good translation. This book is obviously the visions John is going to receive.
 - 2. This angel is of colossal size to stand on both the land and the sea.
 - a. There is probably no symbolism meant by the right foot on the sea and the left foot on the land.
 - b. His great size may symbolize his authority over the earth.
- D. This angel cried with a loud voice as when a lion roars, v. 3.
 - 1. The Greek term for roar means a deep, low sound like the growl of thunder.
 - 2. The word may indicate that the voice of the angel had not only volume but depth, at once compelling attention and inspiring awe.
- E. When the angel cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. When the seven thunders sounded, John was about to write, but he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them," vv. 3-4.
 - 1. Throughout Revelation, thunder is closely connected with divine retribution; here we are reminded of God's judgment.
 - 2. That John is not permitted to write down what the seven thunders say may mean that God has not

revealed all the ways he will judge the world.

- F. The angel raise his hand to heaven and swore to Him who lives forever that there should be no more delay, vv. 5-7.
 - 1. In the Old Testament, people often raised their right hand to take an oath.
 - a. Abraham raised his hand and swore to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:22-23).
 - b. In Moses' song, he has God raising his hand to heaven (Deut. 32:40).
 - c. In one of Daniel's visions, an angelic being raised both his hands to heaven and swore by God (Dan. 12:7).
 - 2. This angel "swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it."
 - a. This angels' swearing by "Him who lives forever and ever" would have served as a great comfort to the first century Christians in danger of losing their lives for their faith.
 - b. God's creation of the world and all things therein would have stood in stark contrast to the impotent idols.
 - 3. The angel swore that there would be no more delay, but the mystery of God would be finished - the prayers of the saints would be realized and God's punishment would be completed.
- G. Here's the point of this text - this angel is brining a message from heaven.
 - 1. The book opened in his hand is the message he brings.
 - 2. Inspired men had to have the will of God revealed to them (they would not just know what God wanted and here this angel is aiding John in understanding the will of God.

THE DIVINE MESSAGE HE GIVES, vv. 8-11

- A. The voice John had heard before told him, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth," v. 8.
 - 1. John is serving as God's seer, and he needs to know what is going to take place so that he can reveal it to the church.
 - 2. Thus, John is told to go and take the scroll from the angel's hand. That the voice with these instruction comes from heaven indicates the divine authority of the speaker.
- B. John went to the angel and asked for the book. The angel told him, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." The book, indeed, was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach, vv. 9-10.
 - 1. John had not been told to ask for the scroll, but since a voice from heaven told him to take the scroll, he understood that he was authorized to ask for the scroll.
 - 2. The angel told him that the book would be bitter in his stomach and as sweet as honey in his mouth.
 - a. If John were to proclaim this message, it had to become a part of him. In like manner, those who preach today need to make the message a part of him.
 - b. The book was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach.
 - 1) If John were to proclaim God's message, he had to be prepared for very mixed emotions - the joy of a fuller understanding of God's will and the bitterness of knowing what would come to pass.
 - 2) God's commands are often said to be sweet.
 - a) David describes God's commands as "sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Ps. 19:10).
 - b) "How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103).
 - c) God's Word is so very sweet: from God's Word we learn how to have salvation, the hope of life after death, the blueprint for good marriages.
 - 3) But, God's Word is often bitter.

- a) Think of the time Hezekiah learned that he would die and not live; Hezekiah turned his head to the wall, prayed, and wept bitterly (Is. 38:1-3).
 - b) Think of the difficult time Peter had when Jesus said that he would be betrayed and crucified (Mt. 16:21-23).
- C. The angel told John, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings," v. 11.
- 1. John's vision was not nearly completed; he would need to continue prophesying about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.
 - 2. Just as John's work was not yet done, the preacher's work today is not nearly done - there are many more lessons to be preached, there are many more who need to hear the message, and we cannot rest until the world has been saturated with the Gospel.
- D. Some lessons we need to learn:
- 1. The word of God is not always pleasant; sometimes what God has revealed is quite bitter to our ears.
 - 2. Before we try to tell others the will of God, we need to internalize it; we need to make the word of God part of us.
 - 3. Our work is not nearly done; we need to continue proclaiming the Gospel until the Lord comes or this planet is saturated with the Gospel of Jesus.