

Special Features

1. Chs. 10 & 11 are a **kind of pause** in the visions of judgment John had.
2. For visitors & those who are new to our study in Rev. let's do a brief recap.
 - a. John was on the prison Island of Patmos; the Roman Empire's Alcatraz.
 - b. They'd tried to kill him but God miraculously preserved him.
 - c. So they stuck him on this barren rock of an island out in the Aegean Sea.
 - d. There, God gave him visions of the end times.
 - e. It was the Roman Emperor Domitian who banished John.
 - f. When he died, John was allowed to return to the city of Ephesus, where he wrote Revelation, recounting his visions.
3. So far he's recounted for us seeing the throne room of God in heaven.
 - a. God the Father handed Jesus the title dead to Earth.
 - b. As Jesus broke each of its seals, another judgment was poured out on rebel humanity that tries to keep Jesus from closing Escrow on what rightly belongs to Him.
 - c. Jesus broke the first 6 of 7 seals, then there was a pause.
 - d. The 7th seal introduced 7 trumpets that like the seals, each represent another round of judgment – each more severe than the last.
 - e. So far we've looked at 6 trumpet-judgments.
 - f. And as with the seals, **before** the 7th trumpet sounds, there's a pause.
 - g. That pause covers chs. 10 & 11.
4. During these pauses, John gives us behind the scenes action.
 - a. We see what's happening in Heaven and the spiritual realm.
 - b. Think of these pauses like the Special Features on a DVD.
 - c. You have the main movie with its narrative.
 - d. But the Special features fill in the back story and tell about how the movie was made.
 - e. These chs. that pause the judgments of the end times remind us that while the World is in chaos and everything seems uncertain on Earth – God is still in control.
 - f. History follows a script written by God.
 - g. No matter how badly humanity messes up it's lines or tries to ad lib; God knew ahead of time what Man would do and has installed a Plan that can't be thwarted.
5. **THAT** > is the point of the message today.
 - a. We'll track John's visions thru ch. 10.
 - b. But the bottom line of it all is that no matter how crazy things get, God is still God & over rules in the affairs of Earth.
 - c. As your pastor, I have a duty to prepare you > Not just for heaven, but also for the days ahead.
 - d. We believe in a Pre-Tribulation rapture here at Calvary.
 - e. But that doesn't mean there aren't tough times ahead for us.
 - f. It's tough times right now for Christians in ISIS-controlled regions of Syria & Iraq.
 - g. It's tough being a Christian in Pakistan, Iran, China, Indonesia.
 - h. For that matter, it's tough being a follower of Jesus at UC Berkley & UCSB.
 - i. It's a challenge working at WalMart or in construction.
 - j. But chances are > Things are going to get even harder for people of Faith in the days ahead – even before the Rapture.
 - k. When they do, it's important to remember **God is still on His throne & His eye is on YOU!**

Vs. 1-4

¹ I saw still another mighty [strong] angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.

1. Because this description is similar to the vision John had of Jesus in glory in ch1, some think this **is** Jesus.
2. And while the OT **does** occasionally call Jesus THE Angel-Messenger of the LORD, John **never** calls Jesus an angel in Rev.

3. More likely, this angel has spent so much time in Jesus' presence, he's taken on some of his glorious appearance

- a. Just as Moses' face glowed w/the glory of God after spending time w/Him on Mt. Sinai.
- b. Which is a good lesson for us.
- c. If we want to be **more** like Jesus, we need to hang out w/Him.
 - 1) Time in His Word, in worship, in prayer, & fellowship w/other believers who are intimate with Him go far in seeing us take on His image.
 - 2) There's no shortcut to holiness. We must spend time w/Him.
 - 3) And the fact is, the people who draw us closer to the Lord are those who themselves spend much time w/Him.

² He had a little book [scroll] open in his hand.

4. What that book was we'll see in a bit.

And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land,

5. The sea & land meet at the **beach**. This angel straddles the beach.

6. The idea is that the scope of John's vision is **the entire world**.

7. What John sees in Revelation isn't to be understood as some local event; limited to one location like the City of Jerusalem.

8. Which is another indication the Preterists have it all wrong for they want to limit all but the last couple chs of Rev. to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD.

³ and cried w/a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars.

9. One of the distinctive marks of a lion's roar is that it's heard across a wide area.

- a. A lion will roar to mark it's territory.
- b. Where ever the roar is heard is under his dominion. That's the idea here.
- c. This angel asserts God's dominion over the entire Earth.

When he cried out, 7 thunders uttered their voices.

10. In reply to the angel's cry, 7 thunderously loud voices reply.

⁴ Now when the 7 thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the 7 thunders uttered, and do not write them."

11. John assumed he was to record the message of the thunderous voices, but was told not to.

12. Why then did he hear them? Why tease us like this?

13. THAT's precisely the point. We need to understand there are aspects of the end times we don't know about.

- a. God's told us everything we DO NEED to know; but not every little detail.
- b. As we've already seen in our study in Rev & will see many more times; there are things described here that are difficult to understand.
- c. That's why so many churches and pulpits shy away from studying the book.
- d. But when the last days arrive & these things come to pass, the people who see them will be able to make a direct correlation between current events and these visions.
- e. But not EVERYTHING that happens will have been foretold.
- f. Some of it falls into what John heard but didn't record.

14. The lesson for us is this: While God's Word tells us everything we NEED to know, it doesn't tell us everything.

15. Some things remain hidden from us & require we walk in the Spirit, trusting in God to give us daily guidance.

16. **Heaven** is the realm where all's revealed. But as long as we are in these bodies, walking on this Earth, there will be some things we'll have to commit to the keeping of God.

Vs. 5-7

⁵ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶ and 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, ...

1. Let's pause there for a moment.

2. Here's confirmation this angel **isn't** Jesus. He takes an oath TO Jesus Whom in Colossians, Paul tells us is the Creator of all things.

3. The angel raises his hand in the posture of one taking a solemn oath.
4. WHAT he swore is found next
that there should be delay no longer,⁷ but in the days of the sounding of the 7th angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.
5. Back in 6:10, the martyrs killed for their faith during the Tribulation ask God how long till they are avenged.
 - a. They were told to wait until their number is filled.
 - b. That time is now reached.
6. With the sounding of the 7th Trumpet it seems all those who are going to come to faith during the Tribulation have done so.
 - a. All that's left now are hardcore rebels in league with the antichrist.
 - b. The fullness of God's wrath will be poured out in the symbol of 7 bowls.
7. John says something **provocative** here: The time has come for the mystery of God to be finished.
 - a. That mystery was declared to the prophets.
 - b. In the Bible, a **mystery** is a truth **hidden** by God.
 - c. It can't be known by man for all his clever scheming or investigation **unless God reveals it**.
8. SO: What **is** this Mystery it's now time to complete?
9. It's the great story all History's been telling.
 - a. It started all the way back in Eden & runs all the way up thru Christ's return.
 - b. When Adam & Eve sinned, God promised to send a Savior Who'd undo the Fall and return creation to paradise.
 - c. God then singled out Abraham & His descendants; working thru Israel to bring the Messiah.
 - d. But the great mystery was how God would use a Jewish Messiah to bring salvation to Gentiles, to the entire world.
10. The prophets foretold & affirmed that salvation is not confined to God's covenant with Israel.
 - a. It's not a matter of works or keeping the Law.
 - b. It comes by faith in Jesus and is open to all who repent of sin and believe.
11. The mystery of God is Gospel of Grace Realized in the Person & Work of Christ.
12. Here in v7, the angel announces that it's time for Jesus to close Escrow and come take possession of what rightly belongs to Him.
13. The 7th trumpet are the last acts of God's judgment evicting the rebels who're squatting on What belongs to Jesus.
14. While that's the **meaning** of these vs, the **application** is this ...
 - a. Never forget that God is Lord over history. // **He** sets the times & seasons.
 - b. Man does not dictate to God what will be. **God** is God & in control.
 - c. He raises up nations and takes down kingdoms.
 - d. Man **proposes** but God **disposes**.
 - e. Pro. 16:9 • A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.
 - f. I believe this is a truth we're going to need to cling to in the days ahead.
 - g. The Biblical worldview that fostered Modern Western Civilization has been gutted by an aggressive secular humanism, antagonistic to the Gospel.
 - h. Christianity, the one-time default religious position of Americans hasn't just been **replaced** by skepticism, skeptics are openly hostile to faith.
 - i. Believers are now cast as **dangerous subversives** who threaten an open & tolerant society.
 - j. Even **before** the Rapture, we can expect things to get more difficult for us as we simply seek to faithfully follow Jesus.
 - 1) As I said earlier; we believe the Rapture of the Church happens before the Tribulation at CCO.
 - 2) The Pre-Trib rapture has come under attack in the last ten yrs.
 - 3) I've grown tired of the silly argument by nay-sayers that we **only** believe in a Pre-Trib rapture because we're escapists
 - 4) That we HOPE for the Rapture **only** because we don't want to face hard-times.
 - 5) No! We believe in a Pre-Trib rapture because that's what the Bible teaches.
 - 6) We believe in it because it's what the Church Fathers believed and taught until Augustine came along & messed it all up.

- 7) Believing in a Pre-Trib Rapture does **not mean** we believe Christians are exempt from hard times. For goodness sake: They've endured hardship for 2000 yrs!
 - 8) The difference is that the troubles of the Tribulation are due to God's Wrath being poured out on Earth – & Jesus has **saved us from** God's Wrath & Judgment!
 - 9) But that doesn't mean we won't face the hostility of a hateful world BEFORE the Tribulation.
 - k. As the culture turns even further away from God, evil will be called good while good is called evil.
 - l. It will seem at times that the whole world has gone insane.
 - m. And we may be tempted to wonder where God is and why He hasn't stepped in.
 - n. Oh, be sure of it: The Devil WILL tempt us to wonder.
 - o. So cling to this truth; God is still God. He's still on His throne and His eye is on you!
 15. This week ISIS took control of Anbar Province in Iraq and more territory in Syria.
 - a. More Christians were taken captive by these butchers.
 - b. A man was tied to a post & tormented by his captors.
 - c. For weeks before ISIS arrived, like you & I, he wondered if he was caught, he'd have the courage to stay faithful to Jesus and not wimp out, denying he was a believer.
 - d. Now, standing tied to that post & facing death, he realized an unusual peace had settled over him.
 - e. Before him were the jeering faces of a dozen bearded killers, telling him what they were about to do to him.
 - f. A doubt came. Like a little ant crawling into his thoughts it suggested God didn't really care for him or he'd not be there. "What good is your faith in Jesus now?" it said.
 - g. Then another voice spoke clearly within his heart; "I'm here. Though you don't see me, I see you. I always have. And you will soon see what you've always longed to. Courage son. Your journey is almost over. It's time to come home."
 - h. And somewhere in Syria, a knife entered a body while a soul entered the glory of heaven.
 16. If our brothers & sisters in Iraq & Syria can **die** for Christ, we here in America who face much lighter hostility ought to be able to **LIVE** for Him.
- Vs. 8-11
- ⁸ Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth." ⁹ So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." ¹⁰ Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹ And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."
1. As directed, John goes to the angel straddling the beach, takes the book & eats it.
 2. It's a picnic at the beach.
 3. It tastes sweet, but causes heartburn.
 4. This scene is similar to something that happened to the prophet Ezekiel. [Eze 3]
 - a. Ezekiel was told to eat a scroll, then go and preach to Israel.
 - b. Ezekiel was to first partake of God's Word, to take it in and apply it to himself first.
 - c. Then he was to go & share it.
 5. It's the same idea here. Note that John is **twice** told to **TAKE** the scroll.
 - a. It's offered by he has to appropriate it himself.
 - b. God offers us His Word & the Spirit is ready to teach us.
 - c. But we have to TAKE it; lay hold of & appropriate it.
 - d. God does not force feed us.
 6. Now: Who of us doesn't know both the sweetness & bitterness of God's Word?
 - a. As the Psalmist says, 119:103
How sweet are Your words to my taste, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth!
 - b. But there are also those words that mark out where sin has broken us.
 - c. God's Word both comforts & convicts.
 7. In v7, John hears the heavenly announcement that The End has begun.
 8. But God has more to show him.

9. Before he can share it – he needs to partake of God’s Word; to make sure it’s a part of Him.
10. What was true for John is true for us.
11. We’re here and not in heaven because God’s got more for us to learn & do.
12. The great key to making sense of it all and to being useful to God is to be a partaker of God’s Word & Spirit.
13. A fitting place for us to end today is to consider the words of Heb. 10:23–25

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.