

The Book Of Revelation

Study 50

Revelation 10:8-11 (NKJV)

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."

The time anticipated in the disciples' questions recorded in Mathew 24:3 and Acts 1:6 has come.

Matthew 24:3 (NKJV)

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Acts 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

The prayers of all the saints of all the ages for the consummation of God's kingdom are about to be answered

Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Matthew 6:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

When the **seventh angel** sounds, "The kingdom of the world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (11:15)

At that time **the mystery of God** will have been **finished**, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

Mystery in Scripture refers to truths God has hidden and will reveal in His time.

Paul wrote:

Romans 16:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

²⁶ *but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—*

Mysteries hidden in the past that the New Testament reveals include the:

1. **“mysteries of the kingdom” (Matt 13:11),**
2. **The mystery of Israel’s blindness (Rom 11:25),**
3. **The mystery of the Rapture (1 Cor 15:51),**
4. **The “mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:7),**
5. **The “mystery of Christ” (Eph 3:4),**
6. **The “mystery of Christ and the church” (Eph 5:32),**
7. **The mystery of Christ in the believer (Col 1:26-27),**
8. **The mystery of the Incarnation (1 Tim 3:16)**

Paul saw himself as a “steward” or guardian and dispenser of these great mysteries (*1 Cor 4:1*) to bring to the light these mysteries which for ages have been hidden in God (*Eph 3:9*)

The **mystery of God** (*1 Cor 2:7; Col 2:2*) of which the angel spoke is that of *“the summing up of all things in Christ things in the heavens and things on the earth” (Eph 1:10)*

It is the consummation of God’s plan in bringing His glorious kingdom in Christ to fulfillment.

It involves the salvation of the elect and their place in His glorious kingdom and all that goes with that. It includes the judgment of men and demons.

The **mystery** previously hidden refers to all the unknown details that are revealed from this point to the end of Revelation, when the new heavens and new earth are created.

God had **preached** that mystery (*without all the details revealed in the New Testament*) to **His servants the prophets** in the Old Testament, and men like Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Amos and Zechariah wrote of end-time events.

Much of the detail, however, was hidden and not revealed until the New Testament (for example in *Matt 24, 25, and 2 Thess 1:5-2:12*), and more particularly in the previous chapters of Revelation.

To believers living at that time in a world overrun by demons, murder, sexual immorality, drug abuse, thefts, and unparalleled natural disasters, the realization that God’s glorious plan is on schedule, the promised kingdom is near, when *“the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14)*, will bring great comfort and hope in the midst of judgment.

AN UNUSUAL ASSIGNMENT

Revelation 10:8-11 (NKJV)

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."

The voice John had earlier **heard from heaven** (v4) forbidding him to record the words of the seven peals of thunder spoke to him again.

So as he had been earlier John becomes an active participant in this vision.

He now leaves the place of an observer to become an actor in the drama.

The voice said to Him;

"Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

This is the third reference to the location of the angel and emphasizes strongly the unusual authority he has over the earth.

Then in a graphic illustration of what a proper response on the part of believers to God's impending judgment should be, John was told, *"take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."*

The angel knew what John's reaction to this truth would be.

Obediently, like Ezekiel before him;

Ezekiel 2:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it.

¹⁰ Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.

Ezekiel 3:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

² So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

³ And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

John in the vision symbolically **took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it.**

As the angel had predicted, in John's **mouth it was sweet as honey**; but **when he had eaten it**, his **stomach was made bitter.**

The act of eating the scroll symbolized the absorbing and assimilating of God Word.

When John took in the divine word concerning the remaining judgments as the Lord took possession of the universe, he found the words written on **the little book** both **sweet as honey** and **bitter.**

Sweet because John, like all believers, wanted the Lord to act in judgment to take back the earth that is rightfully His and be exalted, honored, and glorified as He deserved.

But the realization of the terrible doom awaiting unbelievers turned the initial sweet taste into bitterness.

All who love Jesus Christ can relate to John's ambivalence.

Believers long for Christ to return in glory, for Satan to be destroyed, and the glorious kingdom of our Lord to be set up on earth, in which He will rule in universal sovereignty and glory while establishing in the world righteousness, truth, and peace.

But they like Paul;

Romans 9:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ *I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,*

² *that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.*

³ *For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,*

Mourn bitterly over the judgment of the ungodly.

In keeping with his bittersweet experience, John was told, "*you must prophesy again concerning many people and nations and tongues and kings,*"

Again indicates John was being commissioned a second time

The first:

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*

His second commission to write the rest of the prophecies God was going to give him.

What he was about to learn would be more devastating than anything yet revealed and more glorious.

He was to be faithful to his duty to record all the truth he had seen and would soon see.

The prophecies John would receive would relate to everyone (summed up in the four people groups of 5:9 and 7:9) everywhere.

Revelation 5:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,*

Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

So John is to warn of all the bitter judgments coming in the seventh trumpet and the seven bowls.

As an exile on Patmos he had no opportunity to preach to all nations, but he was to write the prophecies and distribute them, so as to warn all people of the bitterness of judgment to come, and of death and hell.

Sinners everywhere may know because John recorded these prophecies that, while judgment is presently restrained, a future day is coming when the seventh angel will sound his trumpet and sin's dominion will be broken, the freedom of Satan and his demons will come to an end, godless men will be judged, and believers will be glorified.

This chapter presents an interlude of hope tinged with bitterness that reminds all Christians of their evangelistic responsibilities to warn the world of that day.

THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11:1-14 (NKJV)

¹ *Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.*

² *But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*

³ *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*

⁴ *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.*

⁵ *And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.*

⁶ *These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.*

⁷ *When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.*

⁸ *And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

⁹ *Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.*

¹⁰ *And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

¹¹ *Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.*

¹² *And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*

¹³ *In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

¹⁴ *The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.*

Throughout history God has faithfully sent His spokesmen to call sinners to repentance.

During the long dark years of Israel's rebellion,

2 Kings 17:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets."*

Tragically,

2 Kings 17:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ *Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not*

believe in the Lord their God.

¹⁵ *And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them.*

2 Chronicles 36:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.*

¹⁶ *But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.*

Jeremiah 44:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ *However I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, "Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!"*

⁵ *But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods.*

⁶ *So My fury and My anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as it is this day.'*

Prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, and the others confronted both wayward Israel and sinful Gentile nations.

Jeremiah's experience was typical of the reception that he prophets often received:

Jeremiah 25:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ *The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon),*

² *which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying:*

³ *"From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened.*

⁴ *And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear.*

⁵ *They said, 'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever.*

⁶ *Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.'*

Yet the picture has not been entirely bleak

God has always preserved a believing remnant.

To the Romans Paul wrote;

Romans 9:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ *Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved.*

Romans 11:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ *But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have*

not bowed the knee to Baal."

⁵ *Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

God's salvation has come to the remnant of faithful Israel, as well as believing Gentiles, through the faithful preaching of the gospel.

Paul says;

Romans 10:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

But there is a condition that Paul speaks of, by asking a question:

Romans 10:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

We are going to stop here tonight but we will continue this later as we look to see the two witnesses that God has during this dark hour.