

Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 4:13 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 10

"No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds!" (2 Corinthians 11:14-25)

Remember last week's lesson, on Revelation 9, where John saw, in a vision, "a star that had fallen from heaven," which turned out to be Satan himself, who was "given the key to the bottomless pit! And when he opened it, it produced "smoke like the smoke of a great furnace" which darkened the sky! And out of the smoke coming "locusts that looked like horses prepared for battle, with crowns like gold on their heads, and faces of men, and hair of women, with breastplates of iron, making the sound of chariots on their wings, having tails like scorpions, with a king over them, whose name meant 'destruction"! Wow!

The "locusts" obviously were not insects from the earth but, as Walvoord notes, probably "hordes of demons," which will be unleashed, to bring great torment upon the people left in the world, as the judgment of the fifth trumpet of the Great Tribulation, which is yet to come!

But there's more! Revelation 9:13-21 says that John then heard the sound of the sixth trumpet, and "a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which was before the Lord," calling for the release of "the four angels who are bound at the great river, Euphrates," (fallen angels strategically positioned near the place of the Garden of Eden, and the Tower of Babel, and the Babylonian Empire, in close proximity to the nation of Israel) prepared and ready, in God's timing, to fulfill God's sovereign plan to execute the sixth trumpet judgment upon the earth which, verse 18 says, will result in the death of one-third of mankind!

The figurative language John uses to describe the vast "armies" that are to carry out this destruction includes a reference to horses "with heads like lions...out of whose mouths will proceed fire and smoke and brimstone...horses with tail like serpents," etc. etc. Again, appearing to represent nothing less than a demonic force, exposing Satan for all he is!

Willmington, in his "Guide to the Bible," calls the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments recorded by John, in Revelation 9, "the most revealing text in all the Bible on the subject on demonology"! But what confounded us most in last week's lesson (as verse 20 notes) was the failure of "the rest of the people who were not killed by these plagues to repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons..."!

And that sets the scene for last night's lesson on Revelation 10 where we find another "break in the action"! A brief interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets (just like the break in the action between the sixth and seventh seal, in Revelation 7). Constable writes that the emphasis shifts, temporarily, from the outpouring of God's wrath on unbelievers, to the consolation and encouragement to believers! MacArthur writes that "it allows John "to pause and assimilate the startling truths that had just been revealed to him"! Whew!

John writes (in Revelation 10:1-4), "I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land; and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices!"

Is it possible that "the strong angel" John saw is actually Christ? With the glorious splendor, "clothed with a cloud," the "open book" in his hand, the "loud voice," the "peals of thunder, etc. Much like His "second coming" described in Matthew 24:29-30!

But it's clearly not Jesus! When identified in Revelation, John always gives Him a clear title! The word "another" (in the Greek) means "another of the same kind" and there is no one like Jesus! And the timing for His coming has not yet come! But the angel (perhaps Michael, the archangel, as in Daniel 12) clearly represents Christ, coming to execute judgment on the earth, but with a "rainbow on his head," as a reminder of God's covenant of promise and hope for salvation! And with one foot on the sea and the other one the land symbolizing that all creation belongs to the Lord, which He rules with sovereign authority (even though it has been temporarily usurped by Satan)!

Revelation 10:3 says, "the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices"! And John is quick to record what had been spoken, but is instructed, interestingly, in a "voice from heaven not to write" what he had heard! Why? We don't know! Maybe too terrifying! But an indication that God has not revealed (yet) all that will take place on earth (or in heaven?) during the time of the Great Tribulation! And certainly not all "beyond"! (Interestingly, Daniel prophesied about "the time of the end" but was told, in Daniel 12:4, 9, to "conceal the words and seal up the book until the end of time"!)

But the angel then announced (in verses 5-7), after making an oath "to the One who lives forever and created all things," that "there would be delay no longer" (presumably in sounding the seventh trumpet) and that with the sounding of it "the mystery of God would be fulfilled"! MacArthur writes that the mystery referred to here is the "final consummation of all things as God destroys Satan and establishes His righteous kingdom on earth (which we'll learn more about in the coming lesson in Revelation)!"

There's a lot of references to "mysteries" in the Bible, most of which have been fulfilled in Christ! Here are just a few:

- In Matthew 13:11, in telling the disciples why He spoke in parables, Jesus said that "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (speaking of unbelieving Israel) it has not been given!"
- In Romans 11:25, Paul spoke of the mystery of "a partial hardening that had happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles had come in...!"
- Paul also spoke (in Colossians 2:26) of the "mystery of the church...which had been hidden from past ages and generations, but now manifested to the saints"!
- And in Ephesians 3, about the "mystery...which had been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit...that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel...!"

- And, in I Corinthians 15:51, about the "mystery of the rapture of the church" (which we believe will take place before the tribulation period that we're studying about in Revelation)!
 - And perhaps most pertinently for this lesson, Paul writes (in I Corinthians 4:1) that just as John was a "steward of the mystery of God" in the book of Revelation, we too should "regard ourselves as stewards of the mysteries of God" to our world!
- Well, there more to our lesson in Revelation 10!

The "little book" held in the hand of the angel, which John was instructed to "take and eat" (symbolizing the process of consuming it, and "taking it all in")!

Sounds like perhaps a smaller version of the same book which only Christ (the Lamb) could open in Revelation 5, containing the seven seals and the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of judgment, now open with everything yet to come able to be seen and assimilated by John who is then told, in verse 11, "to prophesy again concerning them to many peoples, and nations and tongues and kings"!

And so, John "eats," or consumes the "book," and finds it "sweet as honey to his mouth but bitter to his stomach"!

Jeremiah, in the midst of trying times, wrote in Jeremiah 15:16, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts!"

And Psalm 119:103 says, "How sweet are Thy words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

How true this is for all of us as we get into the Word of God and "assimilate" it and apply it to our lives and find joy! But, just as John experienced, there's also a "bitter side" when we read about the horrifying judgment that's coming to the world and particularly, the realization that there's no hope for all eternity in heaven without Christ! All of which motivated John to "prophesy again" and which should motivate us to do the same!

God help us to be good "stewards"!

Lowell