

REVELATION 10

THE MYSTERY OF JESUS

THE BOOK

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus gives God's record of all of history from the founding of Christ's Church through the ages until the end of the earth and the ushering in of Heaven.

- ✓ The 1st three chapters deal with the church age.
- ✓ The 4th and 5th take us heavenward by means of Christ's promised coming and taking His Bride home (the Rapture).
- ✓ Then in chapters 6-19 we find the wrath of God upon sin and sinners, with chapters 6-9 show the six seals and the first six trumpets.

THE CHAPTER

Now in chapter 10 we have the preparations for the second half of the Tribulation by means of the 7th trumpet. Here we see the King of Kings place His feet on land and sea. Jesus is the conqueror, He has taken back His earth, He is planting His feet as Owner and taking possession of what is rightly His. This is Jesus the Redeemer who took the Title Deed to the Universe from the Majesty on High in chapter 5. He is the One who loosed each seal and now He prepares for the final assault upon hard-hearted earthlings who refuse to bow to Him. With a roar like a lion He expresses His POWER and with the sounding of thunder He declares the coming judgment.

THE MYSTERY

In the New Testament, a *mystery* is not something eerie or inscrutable, but rather "a truth that was hidden by God in times past and is now revealed to those who are in His family." A *mystery* is a "sacred secret" that is unknown to unbelievers, but understood and treasured by the people of God.

- ✓ The mystery of the kingdom (see Matt. 13:11) Jesus presented here was the truth that the good news was rejected by the majority. This had not been revealed in the Old Testament.
- ✓ the mystery of Israel's unbelief and rejection of the Messiah (Rom. 11:25);
- ✓ the mystery of the rapture (1 Cor. 15:51–52).

- ✓ the mystery of the unity of believers (Eph. 3: 3–6);
- ✓ the mystery of the church as Christ's bride (Eph. 5: 24–32);
- ✓ the mystery of the indwelling Christ, "the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1: 26–27).
- ✓ The mystery of God in flesh, the incarnation of the Son of God, a truth not fully revealed in the Old Testament (Col. 2: 2–3);
- ✓ the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2: 7);
- ✓ the mystery of Babylon—the terrible, vile, economic and religious system of the end times (Rev. 17);
- ✓ The mystery age will be completed when Christ returns in glory (Rev. 10: 7).

This is the mystery of all of human history. Why has God permitted evil? The answer comes in Revelation 10 as the Lord makes a vow that this mystery will be finished. There will be no more delay.

As Revelation 10 opens, we stare at the mystery of Jesus. It is on the backdrop of an earth which lies in an ecological desolation; the land and sea are ravaged. The benumbed survivors have hastily buried billions of corpses in mass graves. The horrible roar of demon locusts is silent for who knows how much longer. Those horrific mounted calvary from Hell seem to have ceased their murderous campaign. The sun is getting brighter from the strange darkening that caused such weather disasters, the smoke of the grass and forest fires has started to settle and some specks of light green anticipate grass should again soon be poking up from the scorched earth. The bittered waters of the earth are getting clear again and no stellar debris have fallen to earth lately. It is half time and the midpoint of the Tribulation has come. And the mystery is, what has been the effect of all this unleashed wrath of God on the Cosmos? Has the cosmic rebellion ceased? Has Satan bowed his knee and confessed that Jesus is Lord? Have the decimated populace of earth seen "the Light which lighteth every" one born into the world? No.

- ✓ When God flooded the earth and killed everyone but Noah's family, did all the generations that followed believe and follow the Lord ?
- ✓ When Moses destroyed the Egyptians in the most public and visible spectacle of divine proportions, did Egypt have a national revival? Did they turn in faith and repentance to the Lord ?
- ✓ When Jesus did wonderful miracles and signs that no one could even question, did everyone turn in faith and repentance to Him as the Lord ? Did the nation of Israel trust, obey and follow Him as Messiah?

- ✓ When the Apostles went out across the world with supernatural power, healing the sick, raising the dead and speaking with the unquestionable authority of God did all the nations they visited turn in faith and repentance to the Lord ?
- ✓ Is it any wonder that the descendents of the Flood, the families of the empire of Egypt, the children of Jesus day and the generations born to those who saw and heard the apostles are any less hard hearted? They see wonders, hear marvelous things, experience the incontrovertible hand of God and turn from it. Oh the mystery of the human will, so blinded by willful sin!

STAND AND READ

It may surprise you to know that in the entire span of time from Creation until now, God has never reigned on earth. Yes, He is the sovereign King over all of the universe, over both heaven and earth. He has ruled, overruled, and intervened on earth. He governs all human events, yet He does so for now in a way that appears remote and incomplete. He has never used His absolute power to bring about an end to demonic evil, human rebellion, and global injustice and suffering. He does not receive the worship and honor that is His due as the sovereign King. He has authority that He chooses for now not to exercise.

God is sovereign and He rules over the universe, but He does not reign on earth. When He finally establishes His reign, all sin and all suffering will cease. That is our eternal hope for which we pray whenever we repeat the words, "Thy Kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The mystery is why does God continue to wait. Why does He warn, offer and watch for a few more sinners to repent? That's it. The MYSTERY OF JESUS is His amazing love for even those who never seem to stop rejecting Him. He waits, and now is the time for the 7th trumpet to sound.

THE VISION OF THE SON OF GOD: FOCUS ON JESUS v. 1-5

After the opening of the six seals of Revelation 6 the 7th seal initiated the 7 trumpets of Revelation 8-9. Now in Revelation 10 John sees what lies ahead with the 7th trumpet. This trumpet holds the longest of the messages of doom. Do you remember what happened to set off this chain of terror? It was the opening of the scroll (5: 7) by the Lamb who was worthy. And what was it that made Him worthy to be the Heir of the Universe (Hebrews 1:2)? He was the Lamb slain for sin. He was now wrestling the Dominion of all

things back from the thief, the liar and the murderer Satan. Jesus is in process of judging all that the usurper to the Throne has caused in the cosmic rebellion. So at this midpoint in the vision John receives of the drama of redemption, we are reintroduced to the hero, our Lord Jesus. John paints a beautiful picture by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of Jesus as the Almighty Redeemer and Absolute Victor.

Thus Revelation 10 is a snapshot capturing all of the work of Christ and the grandeur of God's plan of redemption.

JESUS REFLECTING GOD'S IMAGE (10:1) Jesus was often seen in the Old Testament as a pre-incarnate angel of the Lord. When He appeared in these instances it was as a special and mighty angelic messenger from God. In these instances He would accept and receive worship which no angel would ever accept other than the usurper himself, Satan.

The 4 descriptions of this mighty angel corresponds at each point with previous descriptions of Jesus.

- ✓ **THE CLOUD:** In Revelation 1:7 Jesus comes with the clouds. This mighty angel comes clothed with the clouds. Jesus was clothed in a cloud just like this the last time the apostle John saw Him ascend into heaven in Acts 1:9. And John heard the angels who spoke with the apostles that "in like manner" Jesus would return (Acts 1:11). In the Old Testament Israel was led by a pillar of fire and a cloud (Ex. 13:21), they saw the cloud when God's glory appeared (Ex. 16:10), when the Tabernacle was commissioned by God (Ex. 40:38), over the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:2). Paul tells us that it was Christ in that cloud who led, watered and fed them (I Cor. 10:1-4). Just as the Shekinah or glory cloud hovered over the Holy of Holies when God's presence was there, so the star or glory cloud stood over the manger when God was incarnated. The Cloud is always associated with Deity.
- ✓ **THE FACE:** John also saw the face of Jesus in Revelation 1:16 with a countenance "shining like the sun" so this description in 10:1 matches again. Just like at the Transfiguration (Mt. 17:2) and on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:3) Jesus shines as bright as the Sun. Just like Malachi said when he predicted the coming "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2).
- ✓ **THE FEET:** The Feet of Jesus in Revelation 1:15 were like brass glowing from a furnace, which sounds exactly like this mighty angel with "feet as pillars of fire". What is remarkable is the 4th element of this description – the rainbow crowning His head.
- ✓ **THE CROWN:** We have encountered the rainbow in Revelation 4 as it encircled the Throne reminding us of God's grace from the times of Noah (Gen. 9:13) and the Flood. Ezekiel (1:28) also saw this rainbow around the Throne of God. Because of the article used in Revelation 10:1 "the

rainbow" this seems to be God's special crown for His beloved Son Jesus. It is very interesting to note that the Hebrew word "bow" is the same for a rainbow and a weapon that shoots arrows. So, this rainbow speaks of both God's judgment and His grace which perfectly meet in the person of Jesus (Psalm 85:10). As we have seen so far, the greatest multitude saved in history (7:14) is coming out of the time of earth's greatest judgment. Jesus loves and seeks sinners at all times and in every place.

This being could well be our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing to John as a kingly angel. Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as "the Angel of the Lord" (Ex. 3:2; Jud. 2:4; 6:11–12, 21–22; 2 Sam. 24:16). This was a temporary manifestation for a special purpose, not a permanent incarnation.

JESUS CLAIMING HIS INHERITANCE (10:2) As Jesus portrayed by this mighty angel descends He plants His feet on the land and sea. This is a picture of laying claim to His own possession. This is an exclusive right of Jesus as the one who purchased this by His blood Colossians 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. In a special sense this may show Jesus sharing the right of our redemption, we are joint heirs with Jesus. Remember Romans 8:17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. And again Hebrews 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Paul also said in 2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

JESUS ROARING HIS VICTORY (10:3) As we learned in Revelation 1 the voice of Jesus is powerful. John describes it in v. 10 as "a loud voice, as of a trumpet" and again in v. 15 "and His voice as the sound of many waters". But now we hear the voice of the Conquering Lamb. Look back at Revelation 5:5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." Here in Revelation 10 the lion roars. Thus we hear the conquering, all mighty voice of Jesus declaring His right to possess His possession. In the Civil War the (rebels or) Confederates had a battle cry that was piercing and nerve rending.

JESUS SHOWING HIS GRACE (10:4) This is a strange verse without looking at it in light of the whole Bible. John hears and records this event because God wants us to see His loving patience. God who is not willing that any should perish halts the annihilation of the human race because there must

still be a few more who will be saved. To the end of the earth's history God is sprinkling His grace. When the seven thunders explode in the decree of final destruction God seals it up for a bit longer. Remember God's mercy in Noah's day (Gen. 7:4) as He waited those extra days. Remember the mercy of God as He listens to Abraham's plea to spare Sodom even for a few righteous. And God sends the angels to drag Lot out of Sodom and try to convert his married children. So the earth is spared a while longer as God deploys one evangelistic team after another in chapters 7-14.

There may be a similar word in Daniel 12. After the revelation of the terrible tribulation coming (12:1-2), Daniel is told to seal up the words (12:4) for 3 ½ years (12:6-7) as an angel swears by the Almighty. This may be the same scene John is now seeing. If so it is a blessed reminder of God's grace in the midst of judgment. Even as the wrath of God intensifies, so He keeps offering salvation even though the implacable hardness of human hearts only seems to increase.

JESUS REVEALING THE IMAGE OF GOD (10:5) When the Ancient of Days, God the Father wants to reveal Himself He always does so through His Son. As John 1:18 says No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. The writer of Hebrews says Hebrews 1:1-3 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

In Revelation we have seen already several wonderful pictures of Jesus:

- ✓ The Son of Man (1:13)
- ✓ The Creator of the Universe (4:2, 11)
- ✓ The Slain Lamb (5:6)
- ✓ The Great High Priest (8:3)

In the Old Testament we find Daniel meeting with a heavenly representative. Lets compare these passages and see if we can identify Daniel's visitor:

Daniel 10:5-6, 18	Revelation 1:13-17
Clothed in linen	Clothed with a garment down to the feet
Girded with fine gold	A golden girdle
Body like beryl	Head and hair white as snow

Face as lightning	Face as the sun
Eyes as lamps of fire	Eyes as a flame of fire
Arms and feet like polished brass	Feet like fine brass
Voice like a multitude	Voice as many waters
At the sight Daniel retained no strength	John fell at His feet as if dead

There can be no doubt about it, Daniel saw the Lord Jesus in His pre-incarnate glory and Jesus sees Him as the Risen and Glorified Son. But both of them are the Image of the Invisible God! And here in Revelation 10: 1-5 we have a vision of Jesus in all His glory. Coming to take back His earth He lays claim, gives the cry of victory.

THE VISION OF THE WORD OF GOD:
FOCUS ON THE WORD
v. 6-11

Revelation 10:6 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, that there should be delay no longer,

JESUS SHARING THE PLAN OF GOD: ISRAEL HAS A FUTURE (10:6) The little book and all the mystery of God's plan are given to John as he represents all of God's servants. Like Daniel who awaited his part and all the faithful of all the ages, it is sweet to know Jesus and it is bitter to see the horrors of locked hearts that cause the vessels who have by their sins fitted themselves for destruction, be destroyed. The amazing fact is that among the most hardened hearts there will be a softening. As Ezekiel predicted in 36:26 God will take the stony hearts of Israel and as Paul said in Romans 11 Israel will turn to their Messiah. It is most tragic that so many of God's servants who have taught His Word have failed to see all that is promised for Israel. It has become popular to attribute all of the promises God made to the Jews and spiritualize them for the church. No, the plan of God focuses on Israel. The apex of that plan is the return of Jesus to save His people as they at last look to Him.

- ✓ Romans 11:25-27 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness

from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

Revelation 10: 7
but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

JESUS EXPLAINING THE MYSTERY OF GOD (10: 7) It is hard to believe this fact, but from the Fall of Man to the present, God has never reigned on planet earth! Yes He is Sovereign of the Universe; He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But, God has never exercised His omnipotence and put an end to the blight of sin and the horrors of death, the presence of demonic evil and the murderous devil, evil and suffering, decay and disorder, human rebellion, disease, misery and social injustice. God has never received the worship, adoration and glory He deserves and the honor of His creatures made in His image. The Mystery of God is all of the revelation of the Word of God put together. It is God's waiting and watching while all the ravages of sin have run seemingly unhindered throughout all of history. As we saw in chapter 8, the time has come for the petition, "Thy Kingdom come" to at last occur. So now with this 7th trumpet, the delay of God is ended and the time for the end is seen in its final 3 ½ years of marching. In Revelation 11: 17 we see the declaration of the reign of God commencing.

Revelation 10: 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."

JESUS SHOWING THE WAY OF GOD: EAT THE WORD OF GOD v. 8-11

History records an eccentric monarch who ruled Ethiopia from 1889-1913 by the name of Menelik II. This monarch brought Ethiopia out of the dark ages by introducing communication (telephone and telegraph), transportation (railroads) and public education. But he held to a superstition inherited from the ignorance of the past. He believed in a form of self-medication that called for the literal eating of pages from the Bible. Over the years of his reign it seemed to work quite well. If he felt ill he ate a page or two. However at the end of his life he was failing in spite of eating page after page. King Menelik finally ordered the entire book of I Kings to be torn out and he began to eat it page after page. His historians record he died as he was chewing somewhere around the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon.

Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah (Jer. 15:16) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9–3:4) knew what it was to “eat” the Word before they could share it with others. As Jesus the perfect Word “become flesh” (John 1:14), so we who are His living epistles need to incarnate the written Word by our lives before we can give it to those who need it. Woe to any Christian who merely echoes God’s Word and does not incarnate it, making it a living part of his very being.

The directions that the angel gave to John (Rev. 10:8–11) should stir us the fulfil our responsibility of assimilating God's Word. He wants us to make it a part of our inner person. It was not enough for John to look at the book. It was not sufficient to even know its contents and purpose. John had to assimilate it into his inner being. We often find God’s Word is compared to food:

- ✓ bread (Matt. 4:4),
- ✓ milk (1 Peter 2:2),
- ✓ meat (1 Cor. 3:1–2), and
- ✓ wheat (Psalm 81:10)
- ✓ honey (Ps. 119:103).

God does not force feed us His Word. God has sent it to us and we must take it. John also shows how much we can never change the effects the Word will have in our lives: there will be both sorrow and joy, bitterness and sweetness. God’s Word contains sweet promises and assurances, but it also contains bitter warnings and prophecies of judgment. The Christian bears witness of both life and death (2 Cor. 2:14–17).

The Word of God is a two edged sword. It cuts open our hearts to the message of salvation. .But the gospel also cuts off all who reject J and declares they are facing damnation. Listen to Jesus John 3:18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is

condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

When John is told to eat the scroll unlike the silliness of Menelik II, the imagery is for all of our lives. The Word of God gives such sweetness: ultimate victory on the winning team, enjoying the presence of God forever in heaven, endless life, God's grace and love, Jesus as our friend and brother. But as it gets into us there is such bitterness. We find out that before we can fully enjoy that bright and glorious future God has promised, He must reshape our lives from the inside out! He demands: self denial is needed, personal change is expected, cross taking is to be daily, suffering is to be expected and persecution is our ultimate destiny on earth. If we eat and assimilate the Word of God we will be sweetened, soured and then useful. As John we will then, with a transformed like be ready to share the message with the world around us. Are you eating? Is the Word of God sweet? Have you felt the bitterness of self-denial? Good, keep eating and go in that power to tell the world of Jesus and His great love!

APPLICATION:

1. God wants our Focus on His Son –
 - ✓ Do you live like He's in control?
 - ✓ Do you live like He has plan?
 - ✓ Do you live like He's all powerful?
2. God wants our Focus on His Son
 - ✓ DO YOU EAT THE WORD? Jeremiah 15: 16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.
 - ✓ ARE YOU INTERNALIZING IT DAILY ? Hebrews 5: 11-14 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. What you had for supper Sat. P.M. Becomes part of flesh and bones this afternoon. Is Christ metabolizing His perfect plan into your life?
 - ✓ IS THE TRUTH METABOLIZING INTO A CHANGED LIFE? 2 Corinthians 3: 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

#390! May mind Christ as Savior