

Revelation 10 : The Angel and The Little Scroll

The Story So Far ...

- By chapter 9, John has already seen five trumpet judgments unfold, and the sixth has just finished its terrible work.
- **Fifth trumpet (first woe):** A fallen star-angel is given the key to the Abyss.
- Smoke pours out and darkens the sky; monstrous locusts emerge – scorpion-tailed, human-faced, lion-toothed, armored like warhorses.
- The locusts can't harm vegetation, only torment (not kill) people without God's seal, for five months.
- Their king: the angel of the Abyss – Abaddon (Hebrew) / Apollyon (Greek), "Destroyer."
- **Sixth trumpet (second woe):** A voice from the golden altar orders four bound angels released, prepared "for this very hour and day and month and year," to kill a third of humanity.
- A cavalry of 200 million rides out – fiery, hyacinth, and sulfurous armor, lion-headed horses killing by fire, smoke, and sulfur, with snake-like tails that also strike.
- **The gut-punch ending:** even after a third of mankind is killed, the survivors don't repent.
- They keep worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood – "idols that cannot see or hear or walk."
- They keep on with murder, sorcery, sexual immorality, and theft.
- Chapter 9 closes not in resolution but in stubborn, tragic defiance.

- **The tension going into chapter 10:** first woe down (Rev 9:1-11). Past at Rev 9:12. Second woe is in progress (Rev 9:13-21). Past at Rev 11:14. Third woe still to come (the seventh trumpet – Rev 11:15-16:17) – and humanity has proven immune to correction by catastrophe alone.

The Angel Descends

John looks up, and the trumpet sequence pauses. A mighty angel comes down from heaven – not a court messenger this time but something overwhelming. He's wrapped in a cloud, a rainbow arcs over his head, his face shines like the sun, his legs blaze like pillars of fire. This is no ordinary figure, and what he's about to do matters enormously.

In his hand is a small scroll, already open. That detail matters. Back in chapter 5, an entire scene turned on the fact that a sealed scroll in God's right hand could not be opened – until the Lamb, and only the Lamb, was found worthy. Whatever this little scroll is, it belongs to that same unfolding revelation. It's already open. Its contents are already in motion.

The angel plants one foot on the sea and one on the land – claiming, in a single gesture, authority over the entire world, not just a province of it – and shouts, and his voice is answered by seven peals of thunder.

The Words That Aren't for Us

John, ever the faithful scribe, picks up his pen to record what the thunders said. This is what he's done throughout the whole vision – every sight, every sound gets written down for the churches.

But this time, a voice from heaven stops him: *Seal up what the seven thunders have said; do not write it down.*

The Oath: No More Waiting

Then the angel does something dramatic. He raises his right hand toward heaven and swears an oath – not on his own authority, but by God himself, “who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it.”

The content of the oath is the real turning point of the chapter: *there will be no more delay*. When the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be brought to completion – fulfilling what he announced long ago to his servants the prophets.

Think back to the cry that opened this whole stretch of the story, all the way back in chapter 6: the souls under the altar crying out, “How long, Sovereign Lord, until you judge and avenge our blood?” And they were told to wait a little longer. Chapter 9 just showed us the cost of that waiting – plagues that still didn’t produce repentance. Now, finally, a heavenly figure swears with his hand raised to heaven that the waiting itself is coming to an end. Not that suffering stops instantly, but that the delay – the uncertainty of *how much longer* – is over. What was promised will now happen.

Eating the Scroll

The scene shifts back to intimacy. The voice from heaven speaks to John again, telling him to go and take the open scroll from the angel’s hand. John approaches – the angel who was just described in language borrowed from the throne of God itself – and asks for it.

The angel’s instruction is strange and specific: *Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will taste as sweet as honey*.

Any reader steeped in the Hebrew prophets would recognize this immediately – it’s a direct echo of Ezekiel, who centuries earlier was handed a scroll of “lament and mourning and woe” and told to eat it, and found it sweet as honey in his mouth

before going out to prophesy to a rebellious people. John is being placed, quite deliberately, in that same prophetic line.

John eats it. And exactly as promised: sweet on the tongue, bitter in the stomach.

It's a small, physical image carrying a large truth. The word of God – even hard news, even judgment – is sweet to receive, because it is *true*, because it comes from God, because it means his purposes are finally moving toward completion. But swallowing it, living with it, carrying it out into the world – that part is bitter. It costs something. The message John is about to carry involves ongoing suffering, resistance, and cost, not an easy resolution.

Sent Out Again

The chapter doesn't end with John simply digesting what he's received. He's told plainly: *You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.*

This is a recommissioning, not just a vision. Whatever John has seen so far – however overwhelming – his task isn't finished. There's more to say, to a wider audience than before. The scope is expanding: not just the seven churches he originally addressed, but nations, languages, kings – the whole world the angel had just claimed with his feet planted on sea and land alike.

And with that charge, the interlude closes. Chapter 11 will pick up the scroll's implications – two witnesses, more conflict, and eventually, at last, the seventh trumpet itself. But for now, the reader is left exactly where John is: having tasted something both sweet and bitter, and sent back out to speak again.

Why This Pause Matters

Revelation has a rhythm: build tension through judgment, then interrupt it with a vision that reorients the reader before the climax lands. Chapter 7 did this before the seventh seal; chapters 10–11 do it before the seventh trumpet. The interruption isn't padding – it's the point.

Read the passage and cross-references prayerfully a few times over and then answer the questions: [Revelation 10](#)

Question 1:

According to Revelation 10:1–7, what does the mighty angel swear – including that there will be “no more delay” – and by whom does he swear it, and what is John told to do (and not do) regarding what the seven thunders said? [Rev 10:1–7 cf. Daniel 12:5–7; Habakkuk 2:3](#)

Question 2:

According to Revelation 10:8–11, what does the voice from heaven tell John to do with the scroll, what does the angel say it will taste like, and what is John told he must do afterward? [Rev 10:8–11 cf. Ezekiel 2:8–3:3; Psalm 119:103](#)

Application:

Where in your own life have you tasted something “sweet” to learn but “bitter” to carry – watching your walk (Col. 4:5) and training your talk (Col. 4:6) as you kept speaking or living it out, not knowing whether you'd end up being a stepping stone toward the truth for someone, or a stumbling block away from it? Watch this video <https://youtu.be/pz4dvAJ0JMI>

Cross-references: [Col 4:5–6](#)

- Walk worthy in wisdom and be a consistent witness: [Colossians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1–2; 1 Thessalonians 2:11–12; Romans 13:13–14; Ephesians 5:8–10; 1](#)

Thessalonians 4:10b–12

- Train your talk as seasoned with grace and salt: 1 Peter 3:15; Psalm 103:8