

**Intro.** Have you ever experienced a bittersweet moment? Maybe you had a loved one & faithful believer pass after a long, fruitful life & while you were sad to see them go, you were thankful they were now in the presence of the Lord. Or maybe your son or daughter got married & you hated to see them go, but you were thrilled for their happiness. Or maybe you got a great career move you had always longed for but you had to leave a people you loved, a church family. Any of those can be bittersweet moments. As we look today at our series on the “Battle Trumpets” of Revelation 8-11, we look at chapter 10 & the message of “Bittersweet Hope.”

Theme: Tribulation/judgment of God

Background: The Apostle John received this revelation from Jesus Christ toward the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century while in exile on the island of Patmos for his faith & testimony. Christ gave John the responsibility to write to the 7 churches of Asia Minor & instruct them on various matters in their settings while also giving warnings about the end-times.

➤ Let me walk through the text by way of explanation before moving to application:

**I. The angel is probably an archangel sent to announce Christ’s coming (10:1-3, 5-7)**

- The fact he is an angel means he is one of God’s messengers, carrying a special announcement
- While some scholars believe this is talking about Christ, I don’t because He isn’t mentioned as an angel elsewhere in the NT

Illus: I’ve asked before, but has anyone ever seen an angel? I married one. But some of you don’t think so.

Recently, Anthea used this picture as her profile picture on Facebook (show pic) & someone out there commented, “Beauty & the beast.” And that offended me. You say “Why?” How would you like it if I called YOUR wife a “beast?!”

- That he is a “mighty” angel refers to his strength
- “coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud”—clouds symbolized the doorway from heaven to earth (Jesus Himself will come on the clouds, Matthew 24:30)—the angel is coming to roll out the red carpet for the coming of Christ
- The “rainbow” points to God’s faithfulness—He upholds His promises, like He did with the first rainbow at the Flood (see Genesis 9:12-17)
- “face was like the sun”—brilliant, glorious, beautiful—the angel represents the beauty of God
- “legs like pillars of fire”—strong & pure/holy
- Little scroll (10:2)—a message; the angel is announcing Christ’s coming
- Standing on land & sea—he brings a universal message
- Voice like a lion’s roar—strong & authoritative
- The angel comes under the authority of the Lord (10:6)
- The announcement has to do with God’s fulfilling His mystery (10:7)—“there would be no more delay” (10:6)—literally, no more time (chronological time—this is the end)

**II. The seven thunders stand for the perfect storm before Christ’s return (10:3b-4)**

- It’s probably related to the 7<sup>th</sup> seal (8:1—the calm before the storm), the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet (the last one about to sound the end with a great storm, 11:15-19) & the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl (the final bowl with a great storm, 16:17-21)
- Jesus spoke of His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming like lightning flashing in the east is seen in the west (Matthew 24:27)—He may also be referencing a great storm at the end
- Jesus likened His return to the days of Noah, when people weren’t expecting the flood, but He may also be referencing a great storm at His return (see Matthew 24:38-39)
- The angel says “there would be no more delay” (10:6) & the sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet would fulfill the mystery of God (10:7; cf. 11:15-19)—the natural understanding of these phrases is talking about Christ’s return & the consummation of His kingdom on earth

Illus: You may have seen the 2000 movie “The Perfect Storm,” based on real events from 1991, where a group of fishermen go out for one big catch after a series of poor results. They dismiss warnings from others & get

trapped in the perfect storm, losing their lives. If you are waiting for the end to surrender your life to Jesus, you will get caught in the perfect storm

### **III. God foretold the end & Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming through His prophets (10:7)**

- Jesus Himself distinguished between His 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> comings in Luke 4:18-19 when He read Isaiah 61:1-2a, stopping before 61:2b (for other prophecies referring to Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming & things associated with it, see Ezekiel 40-48; Joel 2; Zephaniah 1; Zechariah 8-14; etc.)

Illus: I teach a high school Worldviews class through our Grace Homeschool co-op which meets 3 Fridays of the month on our South Campus. A couple of weeks before our winter break, I warned the students about a mid-term & gave them topics to focus on, but some still failed to heed the warnings & didn't study & they bombed miserably—we must heed warnings in life

### **IV. The little scroll is a message from God which includes salvation & judgment (10:8-10)**

- The background for eating a scroll is Ezekiel 2:10-3:3—the prophet does not announce his own message but simply carries what he has been given to say
- John had to consume the whole scroll & so must preachers—we don't get to pick & choose what to preach & what to skip over but are called to deliver the whole counsel of God—if you find a church where hell & judgment are not preached, it isn't a true church (just like if you find a church which only speaks of hell & judgment & never encouraging, then it isn't doing what God has called it to do)
- It is sweet like honey, because the preaching of the cross is the power of God & beautiful to those who are being saved
- It is bitter because the preaching of Christ is foolishness to those who are perishing & will result in their judgment
- This scroll is the final announcement of Christ's coming—an announcement which is sweet to His followers (because it means salvation) & bitter for unbelievers (because it means judgment)

Illus: We've probably all read stories of a hold up where someone comes into a bank or place of business to steal money. Sometimes before they get away, the police arrive & it means salvation & deliverance for the people but judgment & arrest for the criminal—that's like the coming of Christ

### **V. The prophecy of many peoples & nations & languages & kings is the last announcement of hope (10:11)**

- This message relates to those who will be represented in heaven (see 7:9) as the final call in extending the gospel to the nations—because the message in this chapter has dealt with both salvation (sweet) & judgment (bitter), this final prophesy probably deals with both the redemption of these people & kings & their judgment (see chapters 17-18)

#### **Application of the Text:**

#### **I. Seek to know more of God's Word, even though He hides some things from us (10:4)—cf. Deuteronomy 29:29**

- What God hides from us is for our good—details of the judgment may be too great to share in full

Illus: Annthea & I have told our children before that they are too young to watch certain shows or for us to answer some of their questions fully, but as they get older, we will—God simply says there are some things we are not to know in this life, but that shouldn't stop us from getting to know God & His Word as much as we can

#### **II. Play a part in the final surge of worldwide missions in the plan of God (10:11)**

- Because Christ has called us to “make disciples of all nations,” you should look for ways to help carry the good news around the world through prayers, financial support & service—getting involved in missions will change your life & help you see more of the big picture of what God is calling us to do

**Conc.** Recently I heard one of our new member's testimonies of being married 20 years & then losing her husband & one day she was really depressed & trying to fix a plumbing issue & began yelling at God, “You said you would be a husband to the husbandless, You said You would take care of the widows, You said...” & then she felt something rush over her & she got her Bible & read the words, “I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you & not harm you, plans to give you hope & a future.” God impressed on her heart how He would be a husband to her but she had to be a faithful & submissive wife to Him & her bitterness turned to sweetness because of the hope she has in Christ & she has served Him faithfully for nearly 25 years. What about you? Would you trust the Lord & experience His sweet salvation?