

Chapter Nineteen

The Little Book

(Revelation 10:1-9)

I. The Little Book. (10:1-7)

This chapter is considered by scholars as an “**interlude**” and it stretches to chapter 11:14. This chapter by itself does not make the narrative of the other chapters any clearer but it does present some facts.

One question that has troubled God’s people throughout history is why has God allowed evil in the world. Why didn’t he just do away with it? Sin seems to be running wild and it is not being kept in check. Why does He allow his children to suffer?

Look at what Job says:

Job 12:6(NKJV) ⁶The tents of robbers prosper, And those who provoke God are secure—
In what God provides by His hand.

Job 21:7(NKJV) ⁷ Why do the wicked live *and* become old, Yes, become mighty in
power?

Psalms 10:1-5(NKJV) ¹Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? *Why* do You hide in times
of trouble? ² The wicked in *his* pride persecutes the poor; Let them be caught in the plots
which they have devised. ³ For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire; He blesses the
greedy *and* renounces the Lord. ⁴ The wicked in his proud countenance does not
seek *God*; *God is* in none of his thoughts. ⁵ His ways are always prospering; Your
judgments *are* far above, out of his sight; *As for* all his enemies, he sneers at them.

Solomon the wisest man in the known world then, pondered this same question. He didn’t have an answer, look at what he sees and notice the frustration in his words.

Ecclesiastes 8:10-14(NKJV) ¹⁰Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone
from the place of holiness, and they were forgotten[£] in the city where they had so done.
This also *is* vanity. ¹¹**Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed
speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.**

¹²**Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his *days* are prolonged,** yet I surely
know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. ¹³But it will not
be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow, because he

does not fear before God. ¹⁴**There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous.** I said that this also *is* vanity.

The Psalmist say's this as far as the wicked are concerned;

Psalms 73:1-17(NKJV) ¹ Truly God *is* good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. ³ **For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.** ⁴ **For *there are* no pangs in their death, But their strength *is* firm.** ⁵ **They *are* not in trouble as *other* men, Nor are they plagued like *other* men.** ⁶ **Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them *like* a garment.** ⁷ **Their ^εeyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish.** ⁸ **They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression; They speak loftily.** ⁹ **They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth.** ¹⁰ Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them. ¹¹ And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” ¹² Behold, these *are* the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase *in* riches. ¹³ Surely I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, And washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. ¹⁵ If I had said, “I will speak thus,” Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. ¹⁶ When I thought *how* to understand this, It *was* too painful for me— ¹⁷Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end.

All the pain, sorrow, suffering, and evil in the world, cause the godly to long for God to intervene. A day is coming when He will break His silence, a day when all the purposes of God concerning men and the world will be consummated. At that time, the Lord Jesus Christ will return and establish His earthly kingdom. But before the seventh trumpet sounds there will be an interlude, which stretches from 10:1 to 11:14, allowing John (and present-day readers) to pause and assimilate the startling truths that have just been revealed to him.

I. The Angel, The Book And The Seven Thunders. (10:1-4)

A. John sees another mighty angel coming down from heaven. (10:1-2)

Revelation 10:1-2(NKJV) ¹I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ²He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land,

1) Once again many scholars say this is Christ because of the similarities in their description; note the following scripture.

Revelation 1:12-17(NKJV) ¹²Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying [£]to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

2) I personally do not feel this is Christ but an angel of high rank in the heavenly realm.

B. When the angel cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. (10:3-4)

Revelation 10:3-4(NKJV) ³and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. ⁴Now when the seven thunders [£]uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying [£]to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

1) John was getting ready to write down what he heard but he was stopped by a voice from heaven that told him to seal what he heard.

II. THE ANGEL MAKES AN OATH. (10:5-7)

A. As John is looking he sees the angel, lift his hand to heaven. (10:5)

Revelation 10:5 (NKJV) ⁵The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his [£]hand to heaven.

B. The Angel swears by God. (10:6-7)

Revelation 10:6-7(NKJV) ⁶and 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,⁷but 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.**

1) There will be no more delay in God avenging himself and punishing sin.

2) What is this mystery? I'm not sure anyone knows the specific answer; but whatever it is has to be revealed by God we would never be able to come up with the answer.

Romans 16:25-27(NKJV) ²⁵Now 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** ²⁶but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— ²⁷to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

3) 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.¹

II. JOHN EATS THE LITTLE BOOK. (10:8-11)

I. John Is Instructed To Eat The Book. (10:8-9)

Revelation 10:8-9(NKJV) ⁸Then 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." ⁹So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little

¹ (MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Revelation 1-11 Copyright © 1999 by John MacArthur Jr. All rights reserved.)

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.”

A. The same voice that told him not to write down what he heard is telling him to take the book and eat it.

B. He is told that when he eats the book it will be sweet in his mouth but it will turn bitter in his stomach.

II. JOHN EATS THE BOOK. (10:10-11)

Revelation 10:10-11(NKJV) ¹⁰Then 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. ¹¹And ^{he} said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

A. The act of eating the book could symbolize the absorbing and assimilating the word of God as referenced in the following verses noted above. When John took the word and it became part of him and he realized that God had a plan of taking possession of the universe it was sweet to him because Christians worldwide have been waiting for this day.

Psalms 19:9-10(NKJV) ⁹The fear of the Lord *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord *are* true *and* righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. **(Ref.)**

Jeremiah 15:16(NKJV) 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. **(Ref.)**

Ezekiel 3:1-4(NKJV) ¹Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” ²So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. ³And 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. ⁴Then He said to me: “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. **(Ref.)**

B. The earth was rightfully His and he should be honored and exalted by His creations but this sweetness soon turned to bitterness when he realized the destruction that waited for those who refused to serve Christ.

C. John is told that he must prophecy again, no matter how horrible or terrifying he must continue to proclaim.