

## THE WITNESS OF THE NEW CREATION: Revelation 10

Please remember we are not trying to interpret every symbol or sign in Revelation, but we want to try understand how the first Christians understood Revelation, how that might benefit Christians today, and get the big picture provided by Revelation.

Chapter 10 is a short chapter, but important. We will read it in its entirety, verses 1-11:

And 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 those of fire; and he had in his hand a little book which was open. And 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. And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them." And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there shall be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets (the marginal note is more accurate, 'as He preached **the gospel** to His servants the prophets'). And the voice which I heard from heaven, I *heard* again speaking with me, and saying, 'Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land.' And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.' And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. And they said to me, 'You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and Kings.'"

Before the seventh angel sounds (Rev 11:15), the things involving this "strong angel" in Rev 10:1–Rev 11:14 must take place, which serve as an introduction to the sounding of the seventh (last) trumpet. This lengthy introduction, along with the unique symbolism used to describe this strong angel, suggests the seventh trumpet is important. No other angel in scripture is described using the unique symbolism attributed to this angel.

We will look to scripture to try to identify this uniquely described strong angel. Many times in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, God talks about "My angel" saying "My angel will go before you." In these books of the law, God repeatedly used the expression

"My presence" interchangeably with the phrases "My Angel will go before you, My angel will fight your battles, and My angel will lead you."

Isaiah, chapter 63, is a great prophecy concerning Christ. Verse 9, "In all their affliction, He was afflicted, and **the angel of His presence** saved them." The angel of His presence refers to Christ or to an angel representing Christ

Malachi, chapter 3, is a prophecy concerning Christ and John the Baptist. Verse 1, "Behold, I am going to send My messenger (marginal notes says, angel) and he will clear the way before Me (that is John the Baptist described as an angel). And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger (angel) of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the Lord." Malachi refers to John the Baptist as the angel of God and to the coming of the Lord, the coming Messiah, the Christ, as the "angel of the covenant."

Prophetically speaking, if neither Isaiah nor Malachi had trouble picturing the Messiah, the Christ, as an angel, do not be troubled if John sees Christ pictured in this vision as an angel. Christ is not an angel and never has been . . . we are not saying that. Revelation, chapter 1, describes the glorified and exalted Christ. But in this part of John's vision, John sees this 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 cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars." These descriptions were uniquely applied in scripture to only God or to Christ.

Let's look closer. The strong angel (Christ) is clothed with a cloud. Only God presented Himself in scripture in or with a cloud (e.g., in the temple). When coming in judgment upon Israel or upon a nation, only God came to them in a cloud. The strong angel, clothed in a cloud, can only refer to God or Christ. Since God has never pictured in scripture as an angel, this is a picture of Christ, who is described in the Old Testament as an angel.

The strong angel has the rainbow about his head. A rainbow is always a sign of covenant. This description identifies the strong angel of the (new) covenant as Christ. In Rev 4:3, there was a rainbow around the throne of God signifying covenant.

Ezekiel, chapter 1, is a vision of the glory of God, as God reveals Himself. Begin with verse 4:

"And as I looked, behold, a storm was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like the glowing metal in the midst of the fire . . . verses 22-24, Now over the heads of the living beings *there was* something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, extended over their heads. And under the expanse their wings *were stretched out* straight, one toward the other; each one had two wings covering their bodies on the one side and on the other. I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of a tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings . . .

verses 25-26, And there came a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still they dropped their wings. Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was **a figure with the appearance of a man** (referring to Christ) . . . verses 27-28, Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like a **glowing metal** that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw something like fire, and *there was* a radiance around Him, as **the appearance of the rainbow** in the clouds on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such *was* the appearance of **the likeness of the glory of the Lord**. And when I saw *it*, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking."

The strong angel's face was shining as the brightness of the sun. Rev 1:16 similarly describes Christ, "His face was like the sun shining in its strength."

**Transitioning to pillars as a witness**, John is meticulous in pointing out the strong angel's feet are "like pillars of fire." John is not just filling space; this is significant also. Christ's feet are similarly described in Rev 1:15, "His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace."

God used a pillar of fire and a cloud to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness. We will see the significance of this later. In the Old Testament, the Lord walked before of His people in the pillar of fire by night and in the cloud by day. When God stood still before His people, the cloud, during the day, and the pillar of fire, at night, would stand still. This is an indirect reference to His feet.

Song of Solomon 5:15, the bride describes the bridegroom's legs as pillars. I Kings 7:15, two pillars were incorporated into the temple's architecture. I Kings, chapter 7, describes the pillars at length. **Pillars symbolized a witness in the Old Testament.**

Genesis 31:45, "Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar . . . verse 52, This heap is a witness, and **the pillar is a witness**, that I will not pass by this heap to do harm to you." The pillar was a witness between Laban and Jacob.

A few other passages where an altar of stones or pillars are a witness:

Deuteronomy 27:1-8, ". . . And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law very distinctly".

Joshua 8:30-35, ". . . And **he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses**, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel."

Joshua 22:26-28. "**Let us build an altar . . . it shall be a witness** between us and you and between our generations after us."

Later, we will tie this symbolism to important aspects about this strong angel.

Moving on to Rev 10:2-4, the strong angel had in his hand a little book which was opened. The emphasis is on “little” (a little book or scroll). John mentions this “little book” three times in chapter 10.

Then an interesting event occurs: the strong angel “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. And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken (completed their message), I was about to write (their message); and I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them.’”

What does all that mean? The answer is found in a significant passage from **Deuteronomy 29:29**, "**The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our sons forever, that we may observe the words of this law.**" Moses had just received the law where God revealed Himself in the law. This event is the first great revelation God gave to a nation. Moses informed the nation of Israel they will not know the secret things because they belong to God, and God has not yet revealed the secret things to us either. **They are secrets. We will never know them in this lifetime. But what God has revealed to us, we need to be accurate in our understanding and believe it by faith so we can see it to the point we know it.**

There are many things in the economy of God that He has not revealed to us. In fact, God has revealed only a small amount of Himself, His plan and His purpose. That is signified by this book being a little book. Connected to this is Revelation 22:10, which upsets many people because they do not understand it, " And he said to me, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.’ His reference to “time is near,” involves only a small portion of time, not the entire plan and purpose of God. It is a little book. It is not to be sealed up because it speaks of events that must shortly come to pass.

The things God revealed to John which God did not allow John to reveal to us, we will never know because they belong only to God as a secret thing. God does not want us to speculate what they are and to apply discernment when someone says they know. If God wanted us to know, He would have revealed them. He has withheld certain things from even Jesus (e.g., the time of His Return). Prophecy teachers should take that to heart.

The message to the seven churches in Revelation was contemporary to them and beneficial for all generations. The message provided in the seven peals of the thunder was for the distant future. God told John to seal that up, just as He told Daniel to seal up the things in Daniel chapter 12 because that is for a time to come. God has kept much from us that will be revealed, but not in this life. Similarly, when Paul was called up into the third heaven and saw things he

could not talk about. No man can talk about it and that includes all men throughout all generations. Someday, God will reveal it to us, but not in mans' lifetime.

**Modern authors of all varieties are quick to describe everything they see when they are allegedly caught-up to the same place Paul went. Do not believe it!! The secret things still belong to God. II Timothy 2:14-18, "Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene (it is popular). Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus upset the faith of some."**

**Prophecy speculations about the Middle East, Russia, China, the United States, the antichrist, the last great war, the date Jesus will Return and others only "lead to the ruin of the hearers . . . further ungodliness . . . and upset the faith of many." The seven peals of thunder and the little book tell us we need to be satisfied with what God has revealed to us in His word. He has given us all we need to know and all we can understand. II Peter 1:3, "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."**

**Be careful about speculations. Know when God has not spoken; more importantly, accurately understand and accept by faith what God has revealed to us.**

**By using God's word (scripture) to interpret scripture (Revelation), Revelation reveals Christ is the ruler of this world, prepares God's people for the destruction of the Old Covenant system and its unbelieving people, reveals the mystery that gentiles are immediately included in the Kingdom of God when the seventh and final trumpet sounds, inaugurates His New Covenant with Christ for the benefit of God's new creation, His new man, the church, Christ's body, reveals the characteristics of His new creation, the church, described as a city in Rev 21 and 22, blesses those who read this book (implying accurate understanding), and excludes 90% of the claims made by prophesy speculators (which do not qualify as scriptural preaching or teaching).**

God reveals as much new information in the last two chapters of Revelation (describing the bride the wife of the Lamb, His new creation, the church) as He did in the first 20 chapters combined. Just like the Old Unbelieving Jews, the Modern Church rejects the new truths in last two chapters of Revelation because of unbelief. Typical of today's church leadership, I will quote a recent statement made to me, and witnessed by his wife over lunch at Logan's Steakhouse after church one Sunday, by an alleged leading PhD expert theologian on Revelation, "The church can't be a city!!!"

Rev 10:5-6, “And the Angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven (the proper stance for a witness: Deut 32:40 and Dan 12:7, right hand raised toward heaven whenever taking an oath; both Rev 1:5 and Rev 3:14 picture Christ as the faithful witness and now Christ takes the proper stance as a witness before He swears His oath), and swore by Him who lives for ever and ever . . .”

Go back and notice, the cloud and the fire, the rainbow, the pillars that stood as a witness, the oath and swearing are all scriptural descriptions and language of covenant. Covenant has to do with creation and recreation. When God creates and when He recreates, He does it by covenant entering into agreements with men. God uses covenant language in chapter 10. The Adamic or Old Covenant was given by God in the very beginning when he created man. The Old Covenant goes back to Adam. Then God made a covenant with Noah, the rainbow, with Abraham, with Israel in the wilderness . . . all these signified a new beginning.

**When God gave Adam His first covenant the beginning, that was The Beginning, The First Creation.** When He made a covenant with Noah, He was recreating the population, a new race of people through Noah went out upon a new earth: an earth cleansed by the flood, a new beginning.

When He made a covenant with Abraham, He created the beginning of the Jewish nation. He brought into existence a new nation, a new beginning, a recreation.

When He gave the covenant to Israel on the mountain, He formed a nation, gave them the Law, a new revelation, and a new beginning. Every time God did something new, He made a covenant with man. All of this: The cloud and fire, the rainbow, the pillar as a witness, now an oath, it is all about covenant pointing to a new beginning before the seventh trumpet sounds . . . **making what the witness has to say important.**

**Rev 10:6, what did the angel swear would happen?** “and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT (the angel swore by the creator of heaven and earth), **that there shall be delay no longer.**”

The King James scholars, as good as they were on many things, made a drastic mistake by not properly translating that word as “delay.” Instead, they inaccurately translated that word “time” and changed the phrase to “time shall be no longer.” Prophecy speculators fail to correct this inaccurate King James translation because they want to use (abuse) your misguided belief in the infallible accuracy of the King James version to support their false teaching that this verse means “the end of time” to corroborate their second false teaching “the world will be destroyed.”

Scripture never even talks about an end of the time, and that word “destroyed” (referring to the world) is the same word God used in the days of Noah when He “destroyed” the world by water (without annihilating it where it ceases to exist in any form) as prophecy speculators falsely

assert. The correct translation is, “there shall be delay no longer,” meaning there will be no delay from the time these words are spoken by the witness until God completes the event the angel swears will happen. From a purely practical view, if the world were to actually end at this point, it would prevent a great deal of time with a great many future events that must occur after this point (e.g., the seven bowls have not yet been poured out).

Up to this point, God has delayed, but this verse tells us God will “delay no longer” in finishing the “mystery of God,” which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, will soon be finished.

Note lesser important point consistent with Revelation, chapter 1, where Christ is described as “the Ruler of this world.” This strong angel, coming down out of heaven standing with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, signifies this angel is the one in charge and the Lord of the totality of everything terrestrial. Some assert the sea symbolizes the Gentiles and the land symbolizes Israel. Most agree this is a message to the entire earth.

Rev 10:7, “but in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached the gospel to His servants the prophets.” The strong angel, which is the witness, Christ’s message is: when the seventh angel sounds “there shall be delay no longer,” the mystery of God will be finished (completed).

Most believers have been taught this means God is wrapping things up because His mystery is finished, the world is over, time is abolished, and we pass into eternity. Those speculations are not practical. This is only the 10th of 22 chapters. God is just getting started revealing His ultimate plan and purpose for mankind. When scripture interprets scripture, we finally learn the truths in Revelation.

**The “mystery of God” is identified in Eph 3:3-6 as, “the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”**

**Ephesians 3:3-6, Paul describes the revelation made known to him, “that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; *to be specific* that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” This does not mean much to us today, but it was epic to Paul and the early church.**

The “mystery of God” is kingdom of God will not be exclusive to the Jews. It will include believing Gentiles. The second passage confirming this (let everything be confirmed with two passages of scripture), **Colossians 1:25-27**, “*Of this church* I was made a minister according to

the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery* which has been hidden from *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.” Paul again says **the mystery is: the gospel has gone to the Gentiles**. That is not news to us, but it was a revelation to the early church.

**When the seventh angel sounds the seventh trumpet (seven being the number for perfection in scripture), the “mystery of God” is Kingdom of God is available to the entire world, all people and all nations, not just the Jews. The seventh sounding is the irrefutable sign that the promised new creation, the new covenant, the new beginning, is an accomplished fact.**

**The great mystery of God is the completion and the filling-up of His new and His final temple will have been revealed to the world. That is foreign to most scholars, especially when we are wrongfully taught our entire life the temple is going to have to be rebuilt in Jerusalem before certain prophesies can come to pass. Do not believe it!!**

They may rebuild the temple in Jerusalem out of a purely misguided understanding of scripture; but if they do, it will not have any Spiritual connection to the Bible, to the Kingdom of God, to His prophets, His plan, or His purpose. God completed His temple. It is the only temple that He will ever build. He will never build another.

**Eph 1:23 identifies the only temple God is going to ever build. It is “the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” A second confirming scripture is I Cor 3:16, “You are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you.” The New Covenant brought God’s new temple into being. He created a new people. That completes the mystery of God hidden in past ages.**

**So, the time has now come for Revelation to deal with the Old Covenant. Everything that has anything to do with the Old Covenant system has to be destroyed before the New Covenant can be fully realized by believers in the Kingdom of God.**

**Skip down to Revelation 11:15 when the seventh angel actually sounds, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign for ever and ever.” The kingdoms of this world are the kingdoms of the Gentiles. God brought the kingdom of the Gentiles into His kingdom. It is not a Jewish kingdom. It is the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. He is going to reign for ever and ever. Rev 11:16, because of this, “And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God.”**

**As a result, verse 18, “And the nations were enraged” because His wrath had come, the time had come for the dead to be judged, to give their rewards to Thy bond-servants the**

prophets and to the saints and to all those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.” God revealed His mystery. It is no longer a mystery. Along with this revelation comes God's wrath against Jerusalem and the old covenant system. Both are completely and utterly destroyed.

Next, verse 19, when that happened, “And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened.” John sees all of this in a vision, remember this is a vision. Then John sees “the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and great hailstorm.”

God's new temple is open, it is a heavenly kingdom, not an earthly kingdom and not of this world. It is a spiritual heavenly kingdom having within it the arc of the covenant, which is the place of forgiveness. This temple has in it forgiveness for His people.

**The witness is saying: When the seventh angel sounds, God will usher in His new covenant temple which will be for all nations fulfilling the mystery that was spoken of in ages past but not understood. To do that He must destroy the Old Covenant System. Jerusalem is going to be destroyed in 70 AD. God's new covenant people will then, and only then, be firmly established on the earth. The witness affirms God will do exactly what He said will do.**

Throughout the outpouring of God’s wrath against Jerusalem and the old system, the witness assures the early believers God would provide a way for them, just as He has done for all believers throughout history. We may lose our life at any time, but that is of no consequence.

God said He would forgive our sins. He forgave our sins. God said He would justify us as His sons and daughters. He justified us in Christ. God said He would make us to be Kings and Priests. He did exactly that. God completed everything exactly the way He said He would.

**Why would we ever reject God’s word by pushing over-yonder all He has done for us in the category of “exceedingly abundantly beyond anything we can ask or think?” Unbelief from false teaching is the only reason believers reject God’s word on these glorious accomplishments available to us at our new birth for our immediate benefit, use, and enjoyment and continuing through our entire life.**

In this regard, the modern church is exactly like the old and modern-day Jews! Modern Jews wrongfully waits for the Messiah to arrive, while the modern church wrongfully waits Jesus Return to enter heaven. **As a church, we must repent of our unbelief in God’s word on all things past baptism, believe by faith, see and live life “more abundantly” by entering heaven itself at our new birth as God intends.** Believe the exceedingly abundantly beyond anything we can ask or think category of things God tells us He has already made available to us in Christ!!

Rev 10:7-11, **John takes and eats the little book.** It is sweet as honey in his mouth, but bitter in his stomach. John accepts both the sweetness and bitterness of his calling. Whenever he preaches the gospel, just like whenever we preach the word, there is a sweetness and a bitterness. **Our power as christians is an eating the little book.**

**Take close look at this. God wants us to take the scriptures into ourselves making God's word a part of our life. It is accepting the sweetness and bitterness of our calling to walk according to the word of God. Preaching the word of God is not all sweetness. There is a bitterness to it. He is not only a God of love; He is also a God of wrath.**

Thomas Torin's book, *The Apocalypse Today*, says, "If there is no wormwood there is no bitterness. Are we really in touch with the word of God? If our message is not disturbing and even sometimes tormenting may we not wonder whether we have really eaten God's holy word. Why do Christians live such comfortable and even undisturbed lives in this evil and disturbed world? Surely it is because we have not truly found the word of God. We have not truly eaten the word of God."

Jesus is the witness who testified to a truth which the Jews absolutely and unequivocally rejected. Jesus said it was going to happen and it did. God fulfilled His mystery, He opened His temple, He opened His kingdom to all people, and the offer is still available today. Jesus is the faithful witness who will also do exactly what He says He will do.