

Bitter Sweet (10:1-11)

“It will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.” ^{10:1}Then I saw another powerful angel descending from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun and his legs were like pillars of fire. ²He held in his hand a little scroll that was open, and he put his right foot on the sea and his left on the land. ³Then he shouted in a loud voice like a lion roaring, and when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded their voices. ⁴When the seven thunders spoke, I was preparing to write, but just then I heard a voice from heaven say,

“Seal up what the seven thunders spoke and do not write it down.”

⁵Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶and swore by the one who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, and the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it,

“There will be no more delay! ⁷But in the days when the seventh angel is about to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God is completed, just as he has proclaimed to his servants the prophets.”

⁸Then the voice I had heard from heaven began to speak to me again,

“Go and take the open scroll in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”

⁹ So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me,

“Take the scroll and eat it. It will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

¹⁰So I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it, and it did taste as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹Then they told me:

"You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings."

Father,

Sometimes the truths which you have to tell us are sweet music to our ears because we hear that things are going to be fulfilled that we want so badly for ourselves, our family, and for our country. But remind us this week that many truths are bitter medicine that we must absorb even though we don't like them.

Amen

The action of the seven trumpets is paused while John is prepared for the further revelation which he must do (10:11). As such this chapter begins the transition into a perspective on the world that Christians today need just as much as the seven churches of Asia needed it in their day.

We are introduced to "another powerful angel" who is distinguished by what six things (10:1-2)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Add a a short definition for each one after it.

Some commentators have identified this powerful angel as Jesus (10:1 compare 5:1 with 1:13-15).

Do you agree? Why or why not?

Tuesday

What do you think is the content of this *little scroll*?

John points out three times that the angel had one foot on the land and the other on the sea (10:2,5,8).

What do you think is the symbolism of this action?

As the angel roars he is answered by seven thunders.

What do you learn from these passages where thunder occurs (Psalm 77:18; Isaiah 29:6; John 12:29; Revelation 4:5; 6:1; 8:5; 11:19; 14:2; 16:18; 19:6)?

Why do you think John is told to “seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them” (10:4; compare with Daniel 12:4, 9)?

It does not seem likely that the content of the seven thunderous messages is revealed anywhere else in the Revelation. This makes it difficult to fit them into the chronology of events. It does point out that God still has things to say and do that He has not seen fit to tell us about.

Wednesday

Who is the basis for the oath the angel swears (10:5-6)?

What is revealed about Him?

How does knowing that God created the environments and those who occupy them give insight to what is going on?

What is “*the mystery of God*” (10:7; cf. Matthew 13:11; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:9; Daniel 12:7)?

When he says, “*There will be no more delay ...*” what is this telling us about the timing? _

Thursday

Put yourself in John’s place. What kind of courage would you have to have to ask this *powerful angel* for the little scroll?

To understand the significance of eating the little scroll consider other instances where a prophet is commanded to do this:

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.

Jeremiah 15:16 (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.”

Ezekiel 3:1–4 (NKJV)

What do you think eating the little scroll signifies?

Why is the little scroll “sweet” and then “*bitter*” to the prophet (10:10-11)?

Friday

What does verse 11 tell you about what is coming next in the Revelation?

What is coming ahead? Read quickly through chapters 11-19 and record each reference that says something about *peoples, nations, languages (groups) and kings*:

A True Witness (11:1-19)

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” ^{11:1}Then a measuring rod like a staff was given to me, and I was told,

“Get up and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the ones who worship there. ²But do not measure the outer courtyard of the temple; leave it out, because it has been given to the Gentiles, and they will trample on the holy city for forty-two months. ³And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for 1,260 days, dressed in sackcloth.

⁴(These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.) ⁵If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and completely consumes their enemies. If anyone wants to harm them, they must be killed this way. ⁶These two have the power to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the time they are prophesying. They have power to turn the waters to blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague whenever they want.

⁷When they have completed their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will make war on them and conquer them and kill them. ⁸Their corpses will lie in the street of the great city that is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was also crucified. ⁹For three and a half days those from every people, tribe, nation, and language will look at their corpses, because they will not permit them to be placed in a tomb. ¹⁰And those who live

on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate, even sending gifts to each other, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

¹¹But after three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and tremendous fear seized those who were watching them. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them: “Come up here!”

So the two prophets went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies stared at them. ¹³Just then a major earthquake took place and a tenth of the city collapsed; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

^{11:14} The second woe has come and gone; the third is coming quickly.

^{11:15}Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were 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.”*

^{11:16} Then the twenty-four elders who are seated on their thrones before God threw themselves down with their faces to the ground and worshiped God ¹⁷with these words:

*“We give you thanks, Lord God, the All-Powerful,
the one who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.*

¹⁸ *The nations were enraged,
but your wrath has come,
and the time has come for the dead to be judged,
and the time has come to give to your servants, the prophets,
their reward,*

*as well as to the saints
and to those who revere your name, both small and great,
and the time has come to destroy those who destroy the
earth.”*

11:19 Then the temple of God in heaven was opened and the ark of his covenant was visible within his temple. And there were flashes of lightning, roaring, crashes of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

Father

We read this week of a time of tremendous testimony, of terrible defeat, and of the greatest victory. Remind us of our obligation to you and of our purpose here upon this earth. May you be glorified by what happens to us and may our lives serve to bring others to praise You.

Amen

Monday

As John continues this revelation, he draws upon imagery which has been previously revealed in the Hebrew scriptures. Today our study will rely heavily upon those passages to help us understand what is being indicated here. First, some perspective.

Where is “the temple of God?” (see 11:19)

Why is John told not to measure “the court” (11:2; compare Daniel 12:11; 9:27)?

Why do you think John was given a “*measuring rod*” to make various measurements including counting the people worshipping there? (11:1; compare Ezekiel 40:1-3; Zechariah 2:1-13)?

What is the connection between the *forty-two months* that the Gentiles trample the outer courtyard of the temple and the *1,260 days* that the two witnesses have authority to testify?

Why are the Lord’s “*two witnesses*” mentioned at this point (11:3; compare Deuteronomy 19:15)?

These witnesses are “*dressed in sackcloth*” which is a sign of mourning (*Jeremiah 4:8; 6:26*) that was often worn by prophets when they delivered a message of impending judgment (*Isaiah 20:2*). Their clothing emphasized the urgency of their word and reminded all who heard them that calamity was coming upon this world.

Tuesday

The phrase “the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth” comes from Zechariah 4:2-3 and 4:11-14.

What is their meaning there and here (Zechariah 4:6)?

Who are these two witnesses like (11:5-6; 2 Kings 1:10-12; 1 Kings 17:1; Exodus 4:9)?

Why would anyone want to “harm” these two witnesses (11:5)?

Do you think the “fire” that “comes out of their mouths and completely consumes their enemies” is literal or figurative (11:5; compare Genesis 19:24; Numbers 31:21-24; Luke 9:54; 12:49; and Isaiah 30:27, 30; Jeremiah 5:14)?

They are as unanswerable as Stephen was (Acts 6:10, 7:54-58), but these two are able to protect their lives for the prescribed period of time.

Why do you think what they do is called *testimony* instead of prophesying or preaching?

Wednesday

Who is “the beast that comes out of the abyss” (11:7; 17:8)?

How can the beast kill such powerful witnesses?

God permits the dead bodies of His witnesses to “lie in the street” (11:8). Does it bother you when those who witness for God are disrespected, even after their death?

The “great city” is identified by what three terms?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This city, *Jerusalem*, is not to be identified as the destroyed city of *Sodom* or with the country of *Egypt*, but is related to them *symbolically* (*spiritually*). Previous prophets had identified the city with the wicked deeds of Sodom including Moses (Deuteronomy 32:32), Isaiah (1:10; 3:9) and Jeremiah (23:14) and Ezekiel (16:46).

The association with Egypt is never specifically spelled out by the prophets, but it was the “house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2). It represents the world and the idolatry that drives the world (Ezekiel 30:13).

Since this was true of Jerusalem, where the temple was located, how is it a warning to Christians who have the Spirit of God in them (1 Corinthians 3:16)?

Why do the earth-dwellers have a Christmas-like celebration (11:10)?

Thursday

What does God do that brings the celebration on earth to an abrupt end (11:11-12)?

What effect is produced then upon the people who see this?

The other major feature associated with their resurrection is a “great earthquake” (11:13).

What do earthquakes represent in the book of Revelation (6:12; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18; Isaiah 29:6; Ezekiel 28:19)?

What does the fact that only 7,000 people perish tell us about God’s character?

The rest of the Jews in Jerusalem were terrified and gave glory to God (11:13).

What were they doing?

Does it indicate that they ‘got saved?’

Giving God the glory to God means to see that He is credited alone with causing something to come about (Joshua 7:19; 1 Samuel 6:5; John 9:24).

Friday

The three “woes” are connected to the last three trumpets used previously (11:14; cf. 8:13; 9:12). This serves to link them together as great judgments by God against the people of earth.

What woe does “the seventh angel” bring about (11:15)?

Doesn't Christ presently reign over "*the kingdom of the world?*"
 What then is significant about this verse?

What comfort do you find in the eternal reign of Christ as opposed to His coming reign?

The "*twenty-four elders*" are worshipping God in this moment (11:16; cf. 4:4).

What is their response to the seventh trumpet (11:17-18)?

The elders seem to respond joyfully to this event and the rewards and destruction associated with the coming judgment (11:18).

When this day comes will it be good or bad for you? Why?

In the last verse of this chapter, John draws our attention back to "*the temple of God*" and to one key feature in it, *the ark of His covenant* (11:19). The original ark was made of acacia wood and had the mercy seat (Exodus 26:34), the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 10:2), and the Law of Moses (31:26).

Why do you think he mentions this?

The lightning, thunder, earthquakes, and hailstorms were accompaniments of the presence of God and remind us of His coming to Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19). It is a fearful thing to encounter God. That fear should be true for those who have met Him so as to keep us living according to His ways. It will be an awful thing to meet God as a rebel who has rejected His Son, lived in sin, and worshipped idols!

Only a Little Time Left (12:1-17)

... woe to the earth and the sea because the devil
has come down to you!

He is filled with terrible anger, for he knows that he only has a little time!" ^{12:1}Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars. ²She was pregnant and was screaming in labor pains, struggling to give birth.

³Then another sign appeared in heaven: a huge red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadem crowns. ⁴Now the dragon's tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. ⁵So the woman gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule over all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was suddenly caught up to God and to his throne, ⁶and she fled into the wilderness where a place had been prepared for her by God, so she could be taken care of for 1,260 days.

^{12:7}Then war broke out in heaven:

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But the dragon was not strong enough to prevail, so there was no longer any place left in heaven for him and his angels. ⁹So that huge dragon – the ancient serpent,

the one called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world – was thrown down to the earth, and his angels along with him.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying,

“The salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the ruling authority of his Christ, have now come,
because the accuser of our brothers and sisters,
the one who accuses them day and night before our God,
has been thrown down.

¹¹But they overcame him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their lives so much
that they were afraid to die.

¹²Therefore you heavens rejoice, and all who reside in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea
because the devil has come down to you!
He is filled with terrible anger,
for he knows that he only has a little time!”

^{12:13}Now when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of a giant eagle so that she could fly out into the wilderness, to the place God prepared for her, where she is taken care of – away from the presence of the serpent – for a time, times, and half a time. ¹⁵Then the serpent spouted water like a river out of his mouth after the woman in an attempt to sweep her away by a flood, ¹⁶but the earth came to her rescue; the ground opened up and swallowed the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. ¹⁷So the dragon became enraged at the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep God’s commandments and hold to the testimony about Jesus.

Father

You are graciously revealing to us the spiritual battle that is going on in our world for the hearts and minds of people. As we study this week, Lord help us to base our thoughts on your word. Guide us through Your Holy Spirit to have insight into what is really going on. Prepare our hearts and minds to use this truth in the battles ahead

Amen

Monday

In chapters 12 and 13 we will be introduced to seven main characters as we were told in 10:11. It would be helpful for you to look at the references below and give each character a name and a preliminary identification. It is ok to change this later:

- | | |
|----|------------|
| 1. | (12:1-2) |
| 2. | (12:3-4,9) |
| 3. | (12:5) |
| 4. | (12:7) |
| 5. | (12:17) |
| 6. | (13:1-7) |
| 7. | (13:11-12) |

This week we will concentrate our attention on the five characters introduced in chapter 12. John records that he is sees a “*great sign*” appear in heaven: *a woman*.

What key things do you note about her in this chapter?

Who or what do you think the woman represents? Why?

Some of the imagery described about this woman is very familiar from previous prophetic images. Consider Joseph's dream:

Then he had another dream, and told it to his brothers. "Look," he said. "I had another dream. The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

Genesis 37:9 (NET)

To whom does this woman give birth (12:5)?

Does this change your opinion as to the identity of the woman?
How?

What happens to her after her Child ascends to God and His throne and when do these things occur (12:6, 13-16)?

Does this change your opinion as to the identity of the woman?

Tuesday

The second great character in the end-time drama is a “*great red dragon*.”

What three significant features do you note about his appearance and what do you think they represent?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The word translated *diadem crowns* (*diadema*) is different from the type of victor’s *crown* (*stephanos*) that the woman wore. The picture here is of ruling authority over the nations. Notice the similarity with the description in 13:1 of a different, but similar character.

Who is this dragon (12:9)?

What do the “*third of the stars in heaven*” represent” (12:4,7-9)?

What happens to them?

Why do you think the dragon sought to “*devour*” the woman’s child?

What is Satan’s “*bread and butter*” skill (12:10b)?

How has he adversely affected you and your family with this?

How would you counsel a believer who had an overwhelming sense of condemnation by God because of sin and failure in their life?

Wednesday

What does a “*war in heaven*” describe (12:7)?

Who is Michael (Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9)?

What encouragement do you find in reading that the dragon and his angels “*were not strong enough*” to overcome Michael and his angels (12:8)?

Has the war already taken place or is it still to come? Why?

If the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of God, then why the warnings in 12:11-12?

Thursday

Who are the “*they*” who “*overcame*” Satan (12:11) and how did they do it?

Knowing this, what should we learn to do when the accuser makes war on us?

Why does Satan know that he only has “*a short time?*”

According to this passage, how long does he have (12:6, 14)?

Who or what does “*the great eagle*” represent (12:14; Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:10-12)?

What is significant about the period “*a time and times and half a time* (12:14; Daniel 12:1-3, 7)?”

Whether literal or not, the flood is a picture of persecution sent against the nation of Israel during the end-time tribulation (Matthew 24:16). Satan has continually tried to destroy the Jews throughout history, but they always survive as a people in ‘wilderness’ areas.

Friday

Who do you think are “*the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus?*”

Looking back over this chapter, how would what is written here encourage first-century Christians who are enduring the kind of persecution described in chapters 1-3?

How might that encouragement be different for those living during the end-times?

What application of this lesson would you make for Christians living today?

What about for those who are not yet Christians?