

Taking God at His Word

Revelation 10:1–11 (NKJV) – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]



Visual Source: Charles Swindoll

1. **Respect** God's Messenger (Rev. 10:1-3)

¹ I saw still another mighty angel [the word "another" in the Greek means "one just like the other" meaning like the other angels. This is not Jesus, though the descriptions of this angel are powerful and unique.] coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud [ESV says "wrapped" in a cloud – this symbolizes glory and majesty]. And a rainbow was on his head [the rainbow symbolizes God's covenant faithfulness and mercy], his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. [Angels are mentioned more than 60 times in Revelation, mighty or strong angels three times (5:2; 10:1; 18:21). The angel, coming down from heaven, is described as "mighty," perhaps because he is both majestic (10:1) and mammoth (10:2, 5, 8).¹]

² He had a little book open in his hand [The seven-sealed scroll that is the title deed to the earth (see 5:1) will be fully opened and all the final judgments made visible.²]. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land [this speaks of his size, but also his absolute authority. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."],

³ and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars [similar to Hosea 11:10 and Joel 3:16]. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. [seven representing completeness and these thunders are further judgments]

2. **Rest** in God's Plan (Rev. 10:4-7)

⁴ Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven [This is God, not the angel] saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

⁵ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven [This Greek verb appears often in the technical sense of raising the hand to take an oath or a solemn vow. The hand is raised toward heaven because that is where God dwells. The angel is taking an oath.³]

¹ Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 190.

² John MacArthur, *Revelation: The Christian's Ultimate Victory*, MacArthur Bible Studies (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2001), 61.

³ Ibid.

⁶ and 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**, [This initiates the last plagues of the Day of the Lord (11:15), indicating that the time the disciples anticipated has come. The prayers of the saints will be answered (6:9–11).⁴]

⁷ but 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.

- Verse 4 says “do not write them” – Ray Stedman writes, “In 2 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul tells of a time when he (like John) was caught up into heaven, where he saw and heard ‘things that man is not permitted to tell.’ There are truths which God has revealed to a select few of His faithful followers which He chooses not to disclose to the rest of us. I believe that in the proper season God will reveal these truths to us—but not yet.”⁵
- Deuteronomy 29:29 says, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever.”
- Grant Osborne writes, “John is being told to affirm God’s sovereign control over the judgments proclaimed in the thunders and then is prohibited from revealing the contents to his readers. The major message is one of sovereignty. **God is in control, and the saints do not need to know all the details.**”⁶

3. Receive God’s Word (Rev. 10:8-11)

⁸ Then 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.”

⁹ So I went [showing John’s eager obedience] to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “**Take and eat it** [See Jeremiah 15:16, Matthew 4:4, Ezekiel 3:1-3]; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.” [This act graphically illustrates taking in God’s Word. John’s physical reactions demonstrate what every believer’s proper response to God’s judgment should be—sweet anticipation of God’s glory and our victory, and at the same time, the bitterness of seeing God’s wrath poured out on those who reject His Son.⁷]

¹⁰ Then 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. [1 Corinthians 2:14-17 says believers are an aroma of life and death – life to those who are saved and death to those who are not saved.]

¹¹ And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

Seven Ways to “Eat the Scroll” or “Feed on God’s Word”:

1. **Study** it carefully (2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11)
2. **Search** its meaning (Nehemiah 8:8; Proverbs 2:4-5)
3. **Save** it in writing (Jeremiah 30:2; Deut. 17:18)
4. **Store** it in your heart (Psalm 119:9, 11; Jeremiah 15:16; Job 23:12)
5. **Speak** it to God in prayer (Isaiah 55:11; 1 John 5:14-15)
6. **Show** it in your life (James 1:22; Matthew 7:24-27)
7. **Share** it with others (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 4:2)

Applications for Taking God at His Word:

- 1) **Internalize God’s message as our source of life and spiritual strength.** “Eat the scroll” as a necessity for your daily Christian living.
- 2) **Realize God’s authority backs every word in the Bible.** The impressive, mammoth-sized angel was symbolic of God’s authority and majesty, delivering God’s word.
- 3) **Trust God’s timing to fulfill every word He has promised.** “There will be no more delay” will bring about the ultimate understanding of God’s triumph over evil and our victory in Christ. The mysteries of this life will finally make sense.
- 4) **Share the good news and the bad news;** the sweet and the sour; the blessings for those who trust God’s promises and the judgments for those who reject God’s warnings.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ray Stedman, *God’s Final Word: Understanding Revelation* (p. 283). Discovery House. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Grant Osborne, *Revelation* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) (p. 588). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

⁷ MacArthur, 61.