

Place: Lurgan Baptist 17:2:2004

Reading: Rev: 10:1-11

EXPLORING THE FUTURE

16. THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

In 1955 an American preacher was in his mid-thirties and just gaining an international reputation as an evangelist. He was in London conducting one of his evangelistic crusades at Wembley Stadium when he received an invitation to No. 10 Downing Street, the residence of the Prime Minister. Upon his arrival, the preacher was introduced to a weary-looking but keen-eyed Sir Winston Churchill. As it later turned out, this was to be Churchill's final year as Prime Minister after a long and illustrious career in public service. Chomping an unlit cigar, Churchill appraised the young preacher with penetrating eye. *"Young man," he said, "I've heard a great deal about these crusades you are having up at Wembley. Now I want to ask you a question. You know the troubled shape the world is in. Personally, I don't think the world has much longer to go."* He paused hesitantly. *"Can you give an old man any hope?"*

It seemed to the preacher that Churchill was seeking hope not merely for a troubled world, but for an aging and troubled man. So he took out the pocket N.T. he always had with him and showed the Prime Minister that the Bible offers not only hope for the world in the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ, but hope for individual human beings in the plan of salvation. If Churchill ever made a decision to commit his life to Jesus Christ, the preacher or no-one else never learned about it. But the question Churchill asked the young preacher is the same question millions struggle with today. Evil is on the increase. The world is becoming an increasingly more perilous place. We are fouling our own nests with toxic pollutants, destroying the delicate ozone layer above our world, building weapons of mass destruction.

Everywhere you go people are wondering, *"With the troubled shape the world is in, do we have much longer to go? Can anyone offer the human race any hope? Why doesn't God intervene in human affairs? Or is the world taking an uncontrolled plunge into destruction?"*

"Is God really in control? Why doesn't God do something?" I heard the story of the Christian farmer who worked hard in his field, which was bordered by his neighbour's field. Out of respect and reverence for the Lord's Day, the old farmer never worked on a Sunday, while his neighbour always did. Although he worked hard

to make up for it, the loss of time cost the farmer. His soil was not ploughed on time, his crops were not planted in time, and in the end his autumn harvest was not as full and profitable as his neighbours. When the neighbouring farmer pointed out the difference, and told the Christian farmer God seemed to have blessed him more, even though he not honoured the Lord's Day, do you know what the old farmer said, "*God does not settle all of His accounts in October.*"

My sometimes life does not make sense. People often wrestle with hard questions.

" Lord, where were you when my child died ?

Lord, where were you when the pastors were imprisoned ?

Lord, why do the bad guys seem to sail through life so easily ?

Lord, where were you when life was so unfair ?

Lord, why do bad things happen to good people ?"

Where is God when heaven seems silent ? This chapter shows us that there is coming a day when the answers will be given. We read in (10:7) "*the mystery of God should be finished.*" Then all of life's enigma's will be adequately explained, but we must await God's time.

Now In (Ch's 8&9) we caught a horrifying glimpse of the future of our world as the six trumpet judgments were sounded. But beginning with (10:1) and continuing to (11:14) we have another parenthetical portion that divides the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments. Now this is a pattern that we find in the three series of events in the Book of Revelation ! Do you recall that between the sixth and seventh seals there was a parenthesis which is (Ch 7) Now between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments there is another parenthesis which takes up (Ch 10 and part of Ch 11) When come to the vials we'll discover that between the sixth and seventh vials there is another parenthesis, but in this case the parenthesis occupies only one verse. (16:15) So in each series of judgments, the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials there is always a break between the sixth and seventh judgments. So now, before the seventh angel blows his trumpet, John the apostle takes a needed rest from detailing the carnage on earth. As I have said, (Ch 10) is parenthetical, but very important as it brings before us, *The Mighty Angel from Heaven*. Notice firstly that John brings before us:

(1) THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS MIGHTY ANGEL

Look at (10:1) Heaven here is not so much a point of departure as a description of His abode. Whoever this angel is, He is heavenly. Now who is this mighty angel ? What is the identity of this mighty angel ? Here's the first mystery in the chapter. Now as with any good mystery, the solution lies in carefully interpreting the clues. Let me give one or two clues. Look at (10:1)

" And His face sun." Do you recall a similar expression being used elsewhere in

this book ? What about (1:16) where we read of our Lord Jesus, " *His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" Look at another clue. (11:3) You see I believe that this Mighty Angel is the Lord Jesus Himself. Now don't be bothered that Christ is described as an Angel. Many times in the O.T. the Lord Jesus is called " *The Angel of the Lord.*" Scholars call these appearances theophanies or Christophanies. They are pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus recorded in the O.T. Let me show you one or two.

(Gen 48:15-16) Look at (Gen 32:24-30) compare that with Hosea 12:2-4) So this Mighty Angel in (Ch 10) is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ ! Now why does Christ appear in angelic form ? Well, the reason is simple. You see we are moving into a part of the Book of Revelation which deals largely with Israel, therefore it is but natural that He should take the same position that He occupied toward them in O.T. times. What we have always to remember is, that this book is a Revelation an Unveiling of Jesus Christ and that's exactly what we have here. What we need to do is

" *Turn our eyes upon Jesus.*" My all the troubles in this world stem from the fact that men have lost sight of Christ. At this point in the Book of Revelation, men have ruled out Christ as a factor in world affairs, and the devil has provided them with a more exciting messiah, the anti-christ. The world today is hurrying in this direction. Men are leaving the Lord out of their calculations and the result is that little if anything makes sense. Look at (1) Notice for example,

(a) *HIS GLORIOUS CLOTHING:*

John says this angel is " *clothed with a cloud.*" (10:1) Or " *with the Cloud of Glory.*" Clouds in the Bible are the symbol of the Divine Presence. The Lord directed Israel by day in " *a pillar of cloud.*" (Exod 13:2) When Israel murmured, " *the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.*" (Exod 16:10) At Sinai, God descended in " *a thick cloud.*" (Exod 19:9:16) When the tables of stone were renewed to replace the broken ones, " *The Lord descended in the cloud.*" (Exod 34:4-5) When the tabernacle was completed, " *Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*" (Exod 40:34) God is identified with clouds. God spoke out of a cloud at the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus when He said, " *This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (Matt 17:5)

A cloud received Jesus when He ascended into heaven.

(Acts 1:9) John tells when He returns it will be with clouds. (1:7) Clouds, belong to the attire of Deity, and suggests this Mighty Angel is Christ. (a) But look at:

(b) *HIS GLORIOUS CROWN:*

" *And a rainbow was upon His head.*" (10:1)

We first saw the rainbow around the throne of God

(4:3) but now it sits like a crown on the head of this Mighty Angel. The rainbow was God's sign to mankind that He would never again destroy the world with a flood. (Gen 9:12) You see even in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy. (Hab 3:2) You see, God is a God of faithfulness and all His promises will be fulfilled. The English poet William Wordsworth said,
" My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky. " My do you not think that John felt the same way when he saw this special messenger. The book of Revelation takes us on a roller coaster ride of emotions. We go from heartache and depression to scenes of triumph and joyous celebration. It is the seesaw syndrome so far as the ripening of God's eternal purposes are concerned. But how good to know that He protects His own when conditions in the earth are at their very worst. Look at:

(c) HIS GLORIOUS COUNTENANCE:

" And His face the sun, " (10:1) Does that not remind you of John's initial glimpse of Christ as He stood in the midst of the churches ? (1:16) At the Transfiguration before Peter, James, and John, *" His face did shine as the sun. "* (Matt 17:2) My when Paul was on the road to Damascus, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and was described as *" a light above the brightness of the noonday sun. "* (Acts 9:3)
 Malachi called Him, *" The Sun of Righteousness. "*
 (Mal 4:2) He is the *" bright and morning star. "*
 (22:16) Once that face was marred and spat upon, here it shines in resplendent glory. What a vision of Christ. Look at:

(d) HIS GLORIOUS CONQUEST:

" And His feet " (10:2) The feet of the Saviour aflame speak of Christ going forth both to purify with fire and judge in righteousness. Look at (3:2) *" And He set His right foot "* What does that symbolise ? The Saviour taking possession of the world. What we have here is the formal assertion by Christ of His Right to Reign. This claim has already been Acknowledged in Heaven (Ch 5) but now it is Asserted on Earth. Christ claims dominion over all the world. Do you recall what happened when Joshua was about to enter the Promised Land ? God told him he would possess, *" every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon. "* (Jos 1:3)
 So when Christ puts one foot on the land and the other on the sea, it is a way of saying that everything belongs to Him. That only makes sense. For Paul says: *" By Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. "* (Col 1:16)

The Lamb who has broken the seals is now coming to take possession of the earth,

and as He puts His feet on it, it is as though He is saying, " *From end to end, pole to pole, to the ends of the earth, everything in this world belongs to Me.*" Christ is coming not only to redeem souls, but to redeem Creation. (Rom 8:22)

(e) *HIS GLORIOUS CRY:*

" And cried with a loud voice, " (10:3-5)

As far as I understand the Book of the Revelation, the seven thunders are the only part of the Book which has been Sealed. (22:10) But look at this cry which John likens to the roar of a lion. Satan roars like a lion to frighten his prey, (1 Pet 5:8) but the Lion of the Tribe of Judah roars to announce victory. (Ps 95:3-5) My can you see your Saviour here ? Listen: He is

" The Angel of the Covenant, " He's " The Sun of righteousness risen with healing in His wings. " He's

" The Heir of all things. " He's " The Lion of the tribe of Judah. " " Yea He's " The Altogether lovely One. "

Can you imagine what an encouragement this scene must have been to John on the lonely isle of Patmos ? Is it not an encouragement to us also in this Laodicean age ? Does it not enable us to see that all the events that have their stirrings in our own time and their culmination in the last days are firmly controlled by the Angel of God. History is His story. And our blessed Lord is working out history's events according to His own inescapable timetable. (1)

(2) THE DECLARATION OF THIS MIGHTY ANGEL

For after the sound of the seven thunders, the Mighty Angel lifted His hand toward Heaven and swore or uttered an oath. Look at (10:5-7) When He lived on earth, the Lord Jesus said, " *Swear not at all, neither by heaven: for it is God's throne: nor by earth for it is His footstool.*" (Matt 5:34-35) But there is One whose right it is to sit upon that throne and whose right it is to rule the earth. He can swear and so He does. He takes a solemn vow that matters will now be hastened to their full and final end. There shall be delay no longer ! Now notice that:

(a) *THIS DECLARATION IS SURE:*

For in (10:5) the Lord lifts His Hand to heaven, indicating that these things will take place. The Lord takes an oath that these events will certainly happen. Now is this gesture not familiar to you ? Isn't this part of the ritual that is observed whenever a witness takes an oath in court to tell " *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*" But if this angel is our Lord Jesus Christ why would He take an oath ? In order to affirm the solemnity and certainty of the words spoken !

My God put himself " *under oath,*" when He made His covenant with Abraham. "

For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself." (Heb 6:13) When God made a promise to Abraham He pledged Himself to carry it out. It is as though He were saying, " *I will cease to be God if I fail to keep my promise.* " This is what the Lord Jesus, in the form of this Mighty Angel is doing here. He is swearing by the triune God Father: Son: and Holy Spirit that the long delay is at last over and the mystery of God is about to be revealed. He is simply communicating that what He says will surely happen. If it does not happen, He would fail to be God. This declaration is sure.

(b) *THIS DECLARATION IS SOLEMN:*

For what does this Mighty Angel say ? ? He announces there would be no further delay before earth felt the total and terrifying hammer of God's angry judgment. Look at the last phrase in (10:6) " *That no longer.* "

A.T. " *That there should be no longer delay.* " We have noted that various judgments have been felt by the heavens: the earth: and the sea: and more judgments are to come. But even the judgments of God cannot bring people to turn from their evil ways. They gnash their teeth against God, the very God who has been delaying His judgments so that lost sinners will have time to repent. Do you know what my Bible tells me, " *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness: but is LONGSUFFERING to us-ward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* " My unsaved how patient God has been with you ! Are you taking His patience for granted ? One thing is sure there's a day coming when there will be no further delay, and God will accomplish His purposes and accelerate His judgments in relation to this earth. " *That there should be no longer delay,* " You see, for decades, for centuries, for all of time man has been frustrated asking, why the apparent delay ? Why doesn't God step into the situation ? Why doesn't God do something about it ? My no matter where we look, Satan is on the rampage. It appears that wrong is on the throne and right is on the scaffold. It appears that sin has run unchecked and evil has been unbridled. Do you recall the souls under the altar ? They asked about God's timetable in (Ch 6) ! Do you remember the disciples ? They came to the Saviour privately and said, " *what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world ?* " (Matt 24:3) Oh, scoffers have taunted, saints have pleaded, the cry has ascended, " *How long O Lord ?* " My the waiting is just about over. It is down the home straight. The end is in sight. The mystery of God will be accomplished. (a) (b) But:

(c) *THIS DECLARATION IS SIGNIFICANT:*

Look at (10:7) Now what is the " *Mystery of God ?* " Well, the Bible talks about " *the mystery of godliness,* " God manifest in the flesh. (1 Tim 3:16) It talks about " *the mystery of iniquity.* " (2 Thes 2:7) That is the devil manifesting himself through the anti-christ. But this is

" the mystery of God. " Whatever this *" mystery, "* is its closely connected with the seventh angel. Look at

(11:15) My this mystery has to do with the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. *" The mystery of God, "* is the long delay of our Lord in taking the Kingdom unto Himself and establishing righteousness on the earth. (Ezek 36:26 Is 35:1)

My 2,000 years have passed and the Lord has still not come. For these years God has allowed Satan to wrap his slimy, filthy, tentacles around human life and around this earth. Does God know it ? Is He indifferent to it ? Is He not able to cope with it ? Oh, the mystery of the delay of God. Do you remember the story of Robinson Crusoe, the lonely castaway on a cannibal island ? He had rescued a man-eating savage and having taught him English for conversation, Robinson Crusoe began to teach Friday the knowledge of the one true God. He impressed upon him the fact that God was all-powerful and he found the savage was able to understand that, but he found it difficult to understand the facts about the devil. One day Friday came out with this question, *" But if God, much strong, much might as the devil, why God not kill the devil ? "* Robinson Crusoe pretended not to hear the question and found some excuse to send Friday to the other end of the island. My that mystery has puzzled more than Robinson Crusoe.

But when Christ comes to Reign there will be no longer Mystery but Manifestation. (Is 11:9) Are you often troubled by questions as to God's purpose's, His apparently strange dealings with you and with the world ? There is much suffering and heartache in our world. People ask, *" Why doesn't God do something about it ? "* But they fail to understand the mystery of God. Its natural when things go badly in your life to ask the Lord, *" Why ? "* A better question to ask is *" How ? How should I react to this, since I am sure it is the plan of God ? "* My one day everything will be made plain and we must wait in patience until that day when the mystery will be made known. So we've looked at (1) (2)

(3) THE DIRECTIONS FROM THIS ANGEL

You see if you have been very observant you'll have noticed three mysteries in this chapter. There is THE Mystery of the Mighty Angel, the Mystery of God and the Mystery of the little book. Menelik the Second was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1889 until his death in 1913. Historians credit him with bringing Ethiopia into the 20th century. However this forward thinking monarch had one rather strange habit. He believed that whenever he felt ill, all he needed to do feel better was to eat a few pages from the Bible. He did this for years, and then in 1913 he had a stroke which left him very weak. He asked his aides to tear the entire book of 1 Kings out of the Bible and feed it to him, page by page. It was later reported that he died about the time he was consuming the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

In the last few verses of (Ch 10) the angel gives John a book to eat. What is this book ? My this is the same book that we saw in (Ch 5) This is the title deed to the earth. In this book are the final end time judgments that will fall on earth during the Great Tribulation. As you can see, that deed has now been opened. It is no longer sealed. The Lamb has broken open the seals and is about to take possession of the earth. The angel now gives the little book to John and says to him to take it and eat it up. How are we understand this ? Well, the directions of this Mighty Angel surely indicates to us our responsibility to assimilate the Word of God and make it a part of the inner man.

(a) *THE TRUTH MUST BE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED:*

Look at (10:9-10) It was not enough for John to see the book, or know contents. He had to receive it into his inner being. My God's Word is compared to food: bread, (Matt 4:4) milk, (1 Pet 2:2) meat, (1 Cor 3:1-2) honey, (Ps 119:103) The prophets Jeremiah (Jer 15:16) and Ezekiel (Ezek 2:9) knew what it was to " eat, " the Word before they could share it with others. Do you know what the " *Prophetic Word,* " will do for us ? It will bring Sweetness ! Is'nt it sweet to know that Satan will not hold sway over this world forever ? Is'nt it sweet to know that " *Jesus shall reign where're the sun,* " But this " *Prophetic Word,* " will bring Bitterness ! For prophecy both Gladdens and Saddens. Someone said to me how sad it will be for this old world when these terrible judgments fall. (a)

(b) *THE TRUTH MUST BE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED:*

(10:11) John's work was not yet completed. He must declare God's prophetic truth concerning many people's (10:11) Tell me, having personally experienced the truth do you publicly express the truth ? Do you pass it on to others ? Look at what the angel says. " *Thou,* " that is *SINGULARITY,* " *Must,* " that is *NECESSITY,* " *Again,* " that is *CONTINUITY.* My in light of the Lord's Return is the Lord saying to you this " *Preach again, pray again, give again, testify again and again, do it again and again until I come.* " What will be your response ?