



YES, NO AND MAYBE

1. It REALLY irritates me when somebody starts to say something, and then says, "Never mind. I can't tell you all the juicy details that I know."
2. If God offered to show me all of the details of my future until I die, I would say, "Yes! Show me everything!"
3. Jesus will come back when his patience is exhausted.
4. God swears.
5. The Good News of God will give us Christians heartburn.

THE ANGEL & THE LITTLE SCROLL

➤ READ Revelation 10 (NIV)

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. 2 He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. 4 And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

5 Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. 6 And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! 7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open 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 it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.'" 10 I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. 11 Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

« Why do you think the Second Coming has not happened yet?

» **Vs. 1: Another mighty angel** - The seventh trumpet does not sound till 11:15. This angel is not one of the seven or of the four, but like the other strong angel in 5:2 and 18:21 or the other angel in 14:6, 15. The sixth trumpet of 9:13 ends in 9:21. The opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (chapter 7) and so here the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15) is preceded by a new series of visions (10:1 to 11:14).

- **Robed in a cloud** - The word robed carries the image of putting on a garment (Ps. 109:19) and certainly means that the heavenly being was surrounded by the glory of God's protective presence (see Luke 19:43; Wis. Sol. 19:17).

- **A rainbow above his head** - The rainbow represents the mercy of God. It surrounded God's throne both in John's vision of heaven (4:3) and in Ezekiel's throne vision (Ezek. 1:28). The rainbow, as in chapter 4, connotes the mercy that coexists with divine glory.

- **His face was like the sun** - This symbol alludes to the glory of God, which seems clearly to be the meaning in the shining face of Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod. 34:29-35) and Jesus on the mountain of his transfiguration, where the cloud of God's glory is also present (Matt. 17:1-8).

- **His legs were like fiery pillars** - In their wilderness journey, the Israelites were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. So, like the cloud, the pillars of fire connote the presence and especially the guidance and protection of God. Just as Israel was guided from Egypt by



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

God's presence (Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19-24), so the faithful are protected by the angel in their suffering.

« What do the visible characteristics of this mighty angel tell you about God's kingdom?

» **Vs. 4: Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.** - The sealing up of the seven thunders seems best interpreted as indicating that when the tribulations of the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls have been communicated by God to John and ultimately to the reader, there are still more judgments which are not, and perhaps cannot, be communicated to humanity. A corollary of this principle is that Christians should be humble when specifying what is in store for the future because all the information is not available; God has not revealed everything.

« How do you think people would live if they knew exactly when and how God was going to accomplish His final judgment

» **Vs. 5-6: Raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore** - This is the gesture of one who makes a vow, or a promise, before God, as specified in the next verse (see Dan 12:7; Deut 32:40). The name of God is used in order to show that what the angel is about to say is absolutely true. In this context the angel is taking an oath, making a solemn statement, with God as witness, that something is true.

His gesture of raising his right hand toward heaven (v. 5) recalls the "man clothed in linen" in one of Daniel's visions. He announced an interval of "a time, times, and half a time" before the prophecies would be fulfilled (Dan 12:7). The mighty angel, by contrast, swears that there will be no more delay (v. 6). Like the figure in Daniel, he swears by him who lives for ever and ever. But adds to this oath an elaborate reference to God's sovereignty as creator over the sky and earth and sea and everything in them (v. 6). The purpose of the mighty angel's oath is to assure John that the "bad news" of the first six trumpets is not God's last word.

« What does it say about God that the members of his kingdom will take oaths to be truthful to you?

» **Vs. 6: There will be no more delay!** - It reminds us that there is a limit to the patience of God. Six trumpet blasts represent every possible chance for repentance which he can offer to man. Even then it is not his patience, but man's ability to respond, which is exhausted. The stage is reached at which there is no point in offering further opportunities, for man has hardened himself beyond the possibility of repenting. It is then that the angel swears that Trumpet 7 shall be no longer delayed.

« What does this phrase mean to you emotionally?

» **Vs. 7: The mystery of God will be accomplished** - [to *mustērion tou theou*]. This same phrase is used by Paul in 1 Cor. 2:1; Col. 2:2. Here apparently the whole purpose of God in human history is meant. Mystery does not imply a deep, dark secret. On the contrary, it is an open secret, or divine plan, that God announced to his servants the prophets (v. 7).

« How would you define the "mystery of God"?

» **Vs. 10: It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.** - "Turned sour" in English this condition is normally called "a heartburn." The mouth is associated with physical life and the intake of food, whereas the stomach is the location of the heart, the seat of spiritual life (John 7:38). The message of salvation makes the scroll sweet to the mouth, but when the message is digested in the stomach, it is bitter because of the realization that the plan of God includes not only the sweet ultimate protection of the faithful but also the destruction of those who refuse His love.

« By realizing the "heartburn" of eternally losing so many people to Satan's deceptions, how does this help you understand why God has delayed the Second Coming this long?

» **Vs. 11: Prophecy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings** - This phrase refutes the idea that Revelation is for the Jewish people at the end of time. Indeed, the message is for all times and places, not just for a specific group of persons at a particular time.

« How does this demonstrate God's love and grace for all mankind, regardless of religion?

MY PRAYER...

1. How am I sharing the sweet news with those around me?
2. How will I feel when I finally experience God's final pronouncement of "no more delay"?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?



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