

# The Angel and the Book

Revelation 10:1-11, part 1

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-10-23

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## Text

(10:1 I saw a mighty angel descending out of heaven, clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow on his head; his face was like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire; 2 and he had a little book open in his hand. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land, 3 and he cried out with a loud voice, just like a lion roars. And when he cried out the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 Now when the seven thunders spoke I was about to write, but I heard a voice out of heaven saying, "Seal up the things that the seven thunders said," and "You write after these things." 5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to the heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there would be no further delay, 7 but in the days of the blast of the seventh angel, when he is about to trumpet, the mystery of God that He declared to His slaves the prophets would be finished 8 Now the voice that I heard out of heaven was speaking to me again and saying, "Go, take the little book that is 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 said to him, "Give me the little book," And he says to me, "Take and eat it up; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." 10 So I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it up, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. 11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again over many peoples, even over ethnic nations and languages and kings."<sup>1</sup>

Introduction - the term "mystery" (v. 7) is used to describe prophetic revelation (in OT LXX, see Dan. 2:18,19,27,28,29,30,47; for NT see Rom. 17:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4,9; 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; etc.)

We have come to two chapters that are very critical to understand and I don't want to breeze over them too quickly. One of the central themes of these two chapters is the cessation of all prophets and prophecy. Chapter 10 promises that all Scriptural prophecy would soon be ended. Chapter 11 deals with the death of the world's last two inspired prophets. So these two chapters hang together. And both chapters are covered by verse 7. Take a look at verse 7: "...but in the days of the blast of the seventh angel, when he is about to trumpet, the mystery of God that He declared to His slaves the prophets would be finished."

The word "finished" is the same word that Jesus declared on the cross when He said, "It is finished." When He said that with regard to redemption, His

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<sup>1</sup> Translation based on the Greek text of Wilbur Pickering's [The The Greek New Testament According to Family 35](#).

redemption was 100% completed; nothing more needed to be added. And the same meaning can be seen with the word "finished" here.<sup>2</sup> The mystery revealed to all God's prophets would come to an end and be 100% finished in AD 70, with nothing more to be added. And certainly the canon of Scripture would be completed. Moses Stuart says on that verse, "immediately on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the mystery of the seven-sealed book is brought to a close..."<sup>3</sup> Well, what was the seven-sealed book? It was the growing canon. And the canon was clearly closed in AD 70. And I have a book on the Canon of Scripture that goes into that in much more detail.<sup>4</sup>

Now, some futurists who believe in ongoing prophecy have no problem with the idea that all prophetic revelation ceases at the seventh trumpet because they think the seventh trumpet is at the end of history. Their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:8 is that prophecy will cease on the last day of history - what they interpret as the seventh trumpet. So their conclusion is that prophecy must continue until the end of history. Well, that's a logical conclusion if you are a futurist on the trumpets. After all, they say, there will be two more prophets witnessing before the seventh trumpet sounds in chapter 11. It is only after those two die that the seventh trumpet sounds. So they agree with me that the seventh trumpet seems to signal the end of all prophetic activity.<sup>5</sup> Even Gordon Fee, who agrees that the little book is

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2 Though Paige Patterson applies the passage differently, he sees the same meaning of the Greek: "To "complete" or "finish" is a translation of the aorist passive indicative of teleō, the same verb the Lord used from the cross when he cried tetelestai or "it is finished." The aorist tense here is the indication of complete action so that the reader is informed that the mystery known only to God and revealed to man through the revelation given by the apostles and prophets will now be brought to its conclusion." Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 233.

3 Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, vol. 2 (Andover; New York: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell; M. H. Newman, 1845), 209–210.

4 For a more detailed treatment of this, see <http://biblicalblueprints.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CanonOfScriptureVol1.pdf>

5 Some sample quotes. Gordon Fee says, All of this together makes it clear that this is not a signal that the End is immediate. Rather, it is a signal that "the mystery of God is to be accomplished" before that final moment happens; but in the meantime there must be further prophetic activity. Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation*, *New Covenant Commentary Series* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 143–144.

Tony Warren says ...The key to understanding this [cessation of prophecy in 1 Cor. 13:8-13] is in looking at the whole chapter in its proper context, and discerning exactly when "partial knowledge" shall cease. And obviously this can only occur at the consummation or completeness of all things. It occurs when Christ returns on the clouds of Glory. Only then will the mystery of God be complete, and knowledge will no longer be in part. Revelation 10:7 "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Until the second advent, we will always "know in part" or have partial knowledge, because the mystery of God cannot be finished [teleo] or come to the end or completion until that time. While we are on earth looking forward to His second coming, we will always see the things of God indistinctly and imperfectly. In this life we will never know, as we are known of God. Because this verse of Revelation chapter ten tells us that this will not happen until the voice of the seventh Angel

John's prophetic revelation,<sup>6</sup> says this: "...the mystery of God is to be accomplished before that final moment happens; but in the meantime there must be further prophetic activity." His interpretation of verse 7 is that prophecy continues until the seventh trumpet sounds. So my interpretation of the seventh trumpet signaling the end of prophetic activity is not at all an odd one. Even charismatics like Gordon Fee have held to that viewpoint. The main question is the timing. And I believe that I have clearly demonstrated over the last several months that the seven seals and the seven

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sounds. And that is at the end of the world. Likewise, 1st Corinthians 13:9-10 tells us that when the perfect [teleios] or completion is come, that which is partial shall be done away with. That happens only with the coming of Christ in the consummation when that seventh trumpet shall sound. Thus it is impossible for these verses to be speaking of anything that occurs before Christ's second advent.

[http://www.mountain-retreat.org/faq/perfect\\_is\\_come.shtml](http://www.mountain-retreat.org/faq/perfect_is_come.shtml)

Beale says, "The mystery of God" extends from the time of Christ's exaltation (or from his ministry) until the consummation of history, which will occur when the seventh trumpet sounds. This means that God's prophetic mystery began to be revealed at Christ's first coming. The striking parallel of 10:6-7, 11 with Rom. 16:25-26 corroborates this conclusion: "Now to him who is able to establish you according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to the nations..." G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 543.

Paige Patterson says, When the seventh angel, who is about to trumpet his message, sounds his instrument, then the mystery of God preached through the prophets will be accomplished or completed. To "complete" or "finish" is a translation of the aorist passive indicative of teleō, the same verb the Lord used from the cross when he cried tetelestai or "it is finished." The aorist tense here is the indication of complete action so that the reader is informed that the mystery known only to God and revealed to man through the revelation given by the apostles and prophets will now be brought to its conclusion. The significance of this statement can scarcely be underestimated. Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 233.

6 He says, "Second, the entire narrative revolves around John "eating" the "little scroll" that is introduced in verse 2 and is finally eaten in verses 9-11, all of which echoes a similar experience of the prophet Ezekiel (3:1-3). ... The final clause is also full of ambiguity for the later reader. Does just as he announced to his servants the prophets refer to the prophets of Israel, whose oracles are written for posterity in the Old Testament? Or, more likely it would seem, is this an application of an Old Testament prophetic announcement to some Christian prophets of his own day, of whom he is one himself, as the final sentence in the present passage (v. 11) affirms? In any case, John stands in the long line of those who understood the prophets to be those to whom God has spoken so that in turn they speak in God's behalf. All of this together makes it clear that this is not a signal that the End is immediate. Rather, it is a signal that "the mystery of God is to be accomplished" before that final moment happens; but in the meantime there must be further prophetic activity. Although one cannot be certain here, the "mystery of God" most likely points directly to the climax in 11:15-18, where God's purposes with creation in general and humanity in particular are brought to completion with the sounding of the seventh trumpet. So why, one might rightly ask, include here still one more anticipatory moment in what itself is only an interlude vision? The most likely answer is precisely because it does occur in the interlude, where John pauses to remind his readers that their own ordeal is not in fact nearly over. John himself has much more prophesying to do, and the church has much more witnessing to do, which is precisely how this middle paragraph leads the reader into the main point of the whole scene—verses 8-11. ... What John must prophesy, beginning in our chapter 12, will on the one hand be "sweet as honey," because it is God's word; on the other hand, it will "turn [his] stomach sour" because the same word will call for suffering on the part of some people (believers) and judgment on others (the Empire). But before that, and in keeping with the preceding interlude visions in chapter 7, John presents

trumpets are first century and the seventh trumpet blows in AD 70.

And that the term "mystery" includes both Scripture and oral prophecies can be seen in many passages. Ephesians 3 applies the word "mystery" to New Testament prophets. It speaks of "the revelation ... [of the] mystery... which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets." So the mystery has now been revealed to apostles and prophets. 1 Corinthians 13 and several other passages do the same thing with that word mystery.

But Romans 16:25-26 says that it is not just oral prophecy that contains this mystery. Romans 16 says that the New Testament Scriptures are God's "revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations..." So the word "mystery" is dealing with the revealed message given to prophets, whether written or oral.<sup>7</sup> Kendell Easley points out that it includes the prophetic contents of the book of Revelation - what the apostle John eats.<sup>8</sup> George Eldon Ladd points out that there is more than one revealed mystery and that the term mystery encompasses all prophetic revelation, whether the dream revealed to Daniel in Daniel 2, or the contents of the Bible.<sup>9</sup> And the second part of the clause makes that clear - John says that the mystery was what was proclaimed to God's prophets. All of that is about to end.

So that is an overview of where we are headed in the next weeks. And I will be digging into the text in much more detail. But today I just want to cover the identity of the angel and the little book and the relationship of these two

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a second interlude vision, in which in this case he plays a merely cameo role at the beginning." Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation, New Covenant Commentary Series* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), pp. 143-145

7 Moses Stuart says, "Μυστήριον means the secret designs of God in respect to the enemies of his church, which only the prophets, i.e. inspired men in the Christian church, had been commissioned to make known." Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, vol. 2 (Andover; New York: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell; M. H. Newman, 1845), 209–210. Ian Boxall says, "This passage is important for understanding the self-presentation of John, whose book is described elsewhere as 'prophecy' (1:3; 22:18–19). He sets himself at the end of a long line of those privileged to know the divine mysteries, as a prophet like them." Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John, Black's New Testament Commentary* (London: Continuum, 2006), 157.

8 Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation*, vol. 12, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 175.

9 He says, "Mystery" is an important biblical word whose primary meaning is not something secret or mysterious but a divine purpose revealed to men. It is used this way in the Greek translation of Daniel 2:29–30, where it designates the eschatological purpose of God revealed first to the king and then to Daniel... The classic passage in the New Testament is Rom. 16:25–26, where "mystery" clearly refers to God's redemptive plan, at first hidden in the mind of God, but then revealed and made public to all who will listen to the prophetic word. This is the meaning in the present passage. George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 145.

chapters to the sixth trumpet.

And actually, on how these chapters fit there is very little controversy. They fit during the time of the sixth trumpet. Most commentaries believe that everything in chapter 10 and the first 14 verses of chapter 11 form an interpretive parenthesis that helps to explain the significance of the sixth and seventh trumpets.<sup>10</sup> In other words, they don't sequentially come after chapter 9. Instead, chapter 9:13-21 gave an overview of the whole sixth trumpet, and these next visions in chapters 10 and 11 occur during that period.

Once the seventh trumpet has finished and chapter 11 is finished, the Old Covenant will also be finished, and chapter 12 will go backwards in time to the birth of Christ and then will move forward to 70 AD again in chapter 19. Then chapter 20 will begin another section that will look at all of New Covenant history from another perspective. So that is a bird's eye view of how these chapters fit together.

## **I. The identity of this "angel" (messenger). Is this a non-divine messenger or is this the divine "Angel of the LORD" (God the Son)?**

But if this chapter anticipates the imminent ending of prophecy and Scriptural revelation, we need to start by looking at who gave the revelation. Verses 1-3 talks about this incredibly huge and mighty angel who gives the little book to John and tells him to write. At least in the Majority Text he is commanded to write down what he hears from the seven thunders after these things. So presumably, what the seven thunders say is recorded in the second half of the book.

But there is debate on who this angel is. Some see this angel as Jesus. Others see this angel as Gabriel. It may seem like an unimportant debate, but like falling dominoes, if you misidentify this angel as Jesus here, it can mess up very important passages elsewhere. It is my view that Jesus is never called an angel in the book of Revelation. Some people identify Jesus as Michael the archangel in chapter 12. And often the same people will see Jesus as

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<sup>10</sup> Beale says, "Just as there was an interpretative parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals (ch. 7), so there is a similar parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Here the parenthesis extends from 10:1 to 11:13." G. K. Beale, [The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), p. 520. See also Mounce, R. H. (1997). [The Book of Revelation](#), (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co), p. 199; 1583930590 Roy E. Gingrich, [The Book of Revelation](#), (Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 2001), pp. 51–52; Leon Morris, [The Revelation of St. John. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries.](#), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 134; etc.

Gabriel. Which is it? Their interpretation is very confusing. I can't get into all the reasons why this would be a dangerous viewpoint that cults have used, but since good people also sometimes hold to it, let me try to take their arguments seriously. And they do have some good arguments - especially here.

***A. Wrong identity: Jesus. Arguments in favor of this being Jesus as the "Angel of the LORD"***

**The preincarnate son of God is called the "Angel of the Lord" or the "Messenger of the Lord." As the "Word of God" this is a possible interpretation. Coupled with this is the assertion that the symbols here are symbols of divinity: clothed with cloud, rainbow on head, face like sun, feet like pillars of fire**

The first argument is that the Son of God was called the "Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament. And I will admit that that does seem to be the case. "Angel" means messenger, and since Jesus is the Word of God, He Himself is God's revelation to man - He is in some sense messaging the Father to us. So it is not odd at all to call the Son of God the Messenger of the Lord or the Angel of Lord. But here is the question: does the apostle John ever call Jesus an angel? I do not think so. But we will go through this exercise anyway, because the arguments they raise actually help us to make an application in a different way (so it won't be wasted time - in fact, it will be imperative that we see these divine symbols, so these interpreters have done us a favor). In your outlines I have introduced the best arguments for that position that people have been able to muster.

I've already given the first argument - that the preincarnate Son of God is called the Angel of the Lord. In Genesis 31 the Angel of the Lord speaks to Jacob and says, "I am the God of Bethel." Hmmm - so there is an angel who is God (or at least speaks for God - there is debate on that). In Exodus 3 the Angel of the Lord appears to Moses and calls Himself Jehovah and says, "I am the God of your father — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And the text goes on to say, "Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." So there is no question about the fact that the Preincarnate Son of God was called the Angel of the Lord - or at the very least, that the angel spoke to Moses in the presence of God. There is still debate on that. But most conservatives do agree that the Angel of the Lord is a divine being.

The second argument is that both this angel and Jesus are described as being

clothed with a cloud. And I have listed the verses that they give that speak of Jesus coming with the clouds, on the clouds, coming in the clouds, or sitting on a cloud. That is a symbol of sovereignty. But before you jump to conclusions, we will see shortly that angels are also associated with clouds. In fact, Meredith Kline's book, *Images of the Spirit*, shows angelic connections with the glory cloud over and over again in the Scripture. So that is not a definitive proof. It just shows that this angel is closely connected to God's presence and His rule. And we've already seen in chapter 4 that this was the case. In fact, four cherubim angels are said to be throne and carry out many of God's providence. In the same way, the Seraphim of God's presence communicate the very Word of God.

The third argument they give is that "the" rainbow (in other words, the rainbow already mentioned in this book and associated with God's throne chapter 4) is on this angel's head. Since a rainbow is associated with God's covenant promise and with God's throne in both Revelation 4 and Ezekiel 1, it is argued that this fits a description of a divine being. But I would argue that it could also fit the description of the beings that represent that throne. They too are very close to that rainbow. But in any case it is a pretty good argument.

The fourth argument is that this angel's face shines like the sun - something explicitly attributed to Jesus elsewhere. For example, Revelation 1:16 says of Jesus, "His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength." That is a pretty close parallel. Likewise, Matthew 17:2 says that on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus "was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light." They will frequently cite Daniel 10:6 as a proof-text, but Daniel 10:6 actually is a description of the angel, Gabriel, whose face also shone like the sun. And I'll speak about that more when we look at that passage. So again, what at first may look like it could be a reference to Jesus, could also show an angel from God's presence.

The fifth argument is that this angel's feet were like pillars of fire, and they use word-association to point back to the fiery pillar of cloud in the wilderness that was a theophany of God. Of course, most scholars also say that that cloud was filled with millions of angels. But in any case, the closest Scriptures that they can come up with are Revelation 1:15-16 and chapter 2:18, which describes Christ's legs as being like fine brass - not quite the same as fire, but close. In any case, it's still not a slam-dunk argument because Daniel 10:6 describes the angel Gabriel as having feet like burnished bronze. You can see why there could be potential confusion on this. But once I explain the reason for these divine symbols you will

probably say, "Of course. It makes perfect sense."

Perhaps the strongest argument is verse 3's reference to this angel roaring just like a lion roars. Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah in Revelation 5:5. Hosea 11:10 says that Jehovah roars like a lion. Amos 3:8 and Joel 3:16 are similar. But does that mean that all beings that roar like a lion are Jehovah? No. Kings are repeatedly likened to a roaring lion (Prov. 19:12; 20:2; 28:15; Zeph. 3:3), prophets are said to roar like lions in Ezekiel 22:25, and Satan is said to be like a roaring lion in 1 Peter 5:8. In fact, one of their proof texts (Amos 3:8) connects the lion's roar to prophesy because prophecy is the very voice of God, and God's voice is like the roar of a lion. So their proof texts are not as definitive as they make them out to be. But as we will see next week, they are important in showing how angels represent God. Each of those symbols is incredibly encouraging. I love the applications. And I wish we had time to deal with it today, but we don't. So the first argument is that this angel has some similar features to Jesus.

### Main Arguments For This Angel Being Jesus

<b>Main Arguments For This Angel Being Jesus</b>	
<b>Angel of Chapter 10</b> called angel	<b>Preincarnate Son of God or Jesus</b> Called "Angel of the Lord" Gen. 16:10; 22:11-18; 24:7; 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-12; etc.
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clothed with cloud	Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9; Rev. 1:7; 14:14-16 See "angel of God" associated with "pillar of cloud" in Exodus 14:19 See Dan. 7:13; Ps. 97:2; 104:3; Ezek. 1:26-28
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"the" rainbow on his head	Ezek. 1:26-28; Rev. 4:3; Dan. 10:6
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his face like the sun	Rev. 1:16; Matt. 17:2; Dan. 10:6
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his feet like pillars of fire	Rev. 1:15-16; 2:18
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voice like a lion	Rev. 5:5; Hos. 11:10; Amos 3:8; Joel 3:16

**Only God holds the big book of revelation out in His hands in chapter 5, so we should assume that this also is a divine being - the angel of the Lord.**

Their second main argument to prove that this angel is Jesus is that in chapter 5, God gives the Old Testament canon and holds it in His own hand. So we should assume that this little book is also being held in the hand of God. But wait a minute - in chapter 5, God holds the book in His hand and then gives it to Jesus. So it appears to be the Father giving it to the Son. That is different from here. And it is a different book. We'll get into that in bit. As we will see when we identify the little book, this is actually much more parallel to Ezekiel 2-3 where a creaturely angel gives a little book to Ezekiel to eat, but that little book is just one part of a growing canon already written.

### ***B. Right identity: Gabriel. Arguments in favor of this being the angel Gabriel***

Well, let's look next at the correct identification - that this is the angel Gabriel - the same angel who gave revelation to Daniel and to Ezekiel. Angels are connected with the giving of the Old Testament revelation over and over. Acts 7:53 says that Israel received the Old Testament law by the direction of angels. Galatians 3:19 says that the law "was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator." So let me give you some of the arguments in commentaries as to why this must be a literal angel, not Jesus.

**A minority of manuscripts has "another angel" with the Greek word for "another" meaning "another of the same kind" - this at least shows what early scribes assumed the angel to be**

The most common argument is actually not legitimate. They lean on the word "another" in the New King James, which says, "I saw another mighty angel..." And the point they make is that the Greek of that word is "another of exactly the same kind," which would not be true if this was Jesus. My problem in using that argument is that the word doesn't appear in the majority of manuscripts. But I have included the argument for two reasons: 1) commentaries mention it, 2) and second, because it does at least show that some careless scribe thought that the angel was a creature. So it shows his interpretation. But that is the most that this argument proves.

**The term "mighty angel" elsewhere in this book seems to be a creaturely angel (Rev. 5:2; 18:21)**

But the rest of the arguments are fairly strong. The term "mighty angel" is

used everywhere elsewhere in this book to refer to a creaturely angel. Revelation 5:2 has a "mighty angel" saying with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one was found until they found Jesus, the God-Man. Well, that demonstrates that the mighty angel was not Jesus. I will have more to say about the mighty angel of chapter 18 because that mighty angel is very parallel to this one, and when John tries to worship him, thinking that he is God, the angel stops John and says that he is a mere creature who may not be worshiped. If we allow the book to interpret itself, the mighty angel here should be seen to be the same as the mighty angel everywhere else in the book - and he appears four times.

**Creaturely angels are elsewhere involved in giving revelation (Rev. 1:1; 14:6; 18:1ff; 22:6,8)**

Second, we find creaturely angels are elsewhere in this book connected with the giving of revelation to John. I spent a lot of time on that in Revelation 1:1, where Christ sent His angel to reveal things to John. Again, I will look at two of the Scriptures in your outline in a couple minutes. But it is clear that angels give revelation just as an angel gave the little book to Ezekiel in the Old Testament and this angel gives a book to John.

**This angel swears by Him who lives forever and ever (vv. 5-6), implying that the angel is different than the One he is swearing by.**

Next, look at verses 5-6 and notice who this angel swears by. And before I read it, let me read from Hebrews 6:13, which shows how God swears. Luke says, "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself." That was God the Son speaking to Abraham, and because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself. But this angel swears by another.

5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to the heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there would be no further delay,...

If he is swearing by God that what he says is true, it implies that he is not God.

## **There are two parallel passages in Revelation that are clearly a creaturely angel:**

***The angel of 18:21-19:10 is a "mighty angel" who gives revelation to John (18:21-24; 19:5-9). He is so majestic, that John mistakes him for deity (19:10). But this mighty angel identifies himself as a creature (19:10).***

But if you turn with me to Revelation 18, I want to show how it introduces a very parallel situation to what is happening in this chapter, and yet that angel is clearly not Jesus. Now, I know that this is a little heavier material today, but we need to settle these two controversies before we can start properly applying the verses next week. Revelation 18, beginning at verse 21.

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a huge millstone and threw it into the ocean saying: "The great city Babylon will be thrown down violently, just like that, and will never be found again.

And this angel continues to give prophetic revelation all the way through to the end of this chapter. A multitude respond to that angel in the beginning of chapter 19. Then the Majority Text of verse 3 says that a second angelic voice responds. Then the twenty-four elders. Then in 19:5 the first angel continues to speak. And in verse 9 he says,

"Write: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding banquet of the Lamb"! And he says to me, 'These are the true words of God.'"

Now here is the point. This mighty angel is so awesome, that like many commentators did in chapter 10, John misidentifies him as being divine.

There must have been some pointers to divinity for John to do that. Perhaps like in chapter 10, this angel is accompanied with so many glorious characteristics of God's throne that John assumes he is God himself. So look at verse 10.

And I fell at his feet to worship him, but he says to me, "Don't! I am your fellow slave and among your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Once again we have a creaturely angel who has enough glory to be mistaken for a divine being, but who is not. Yet this angel carefully and faithfully represents Jesus by helping John to be a true prophet who testifies to Jesus because he has the spirit of prophecy. This is so similar to chapter 10, that we should allow it to interpret the kind of angel there. This is the third passage that references a "mighty angel."

***The angel of chapter 22 gives Scriptural revelation (22:6) and even talks in the first person as if he is Christ (v. 7). John initially assumes him to be divine, but when John tries to worship him, he is rebuked by the angel, who is self-identified as a creature (vv. 8-9).***

Now look at chapter 22. This is even clearer. This same mighty angel shows

John the river of life in verses 1-5. Then the angel speaks in verse 6:  
6 Then he says to me, "These words are faithful and true. The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent His angel to show to His slaves the things that must shortly take place. 7 Take note, I am coming swiftly! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

8 Now I, John, who heard and saw these things, when I had heard and seen I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things, 9 but he says to me, "Don't! I am your fellow slave and among your brothers the prophets, those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." 10 Then he says to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

The book of the prophets that he is referring to is not the "little book" of Revelation, but the big book - the growing canon of chapter 5 - the βιβλίον.

Again, the refusal of worship shows that this angel is not Jesus. Yet he is so awesome that John is tempted to confuse him with God. So you can understand why commentators might be tempted to attribute divinity to the angel in chapter 10 - even John did. But when comparing Scripture with Scripture, you see that this is a creaturely angel, not Jesus Himself.

**Gabriel of the Old Testament (Daniel 8) was so awesome that Daniel fell to the ground (v. 17,27), but was forced to stand up (v. 18), and gave him revelation (vv. 16-26). Indeed, the parallels of this angel to Gabriel in Daniel 8-12 are strong, and point to his prophecies of the ending of the Old Covenant, temple, Jerusalem, prophet, and prophecy.**

And commentators point out that this is all very deliberate because John is intentionally drawing our attention to the mighty angel that communicates with Daniel in Daniel 8-12 and who helps Daniel prophesy not only the ending of the temple, Jerusalem, and the Old Covenant, but also the ending of all prophet and prophecy. It's identical subject matter. Both angels swear by Him who lives forever and ever, and the subject material of what they swear about is identical. Both angels are so awesome that the prophet falls to the ground. Both angels force the prophet to stand on his feet. Both talk about the sealing up of prophecy. Even those commentaries that take this angel as Jesus admit that the parallels to Gabriel in the book of Daniel are very striking parallels and are somewhat of a black eye to their theory. So the Jesus-theory has for the most part fallen out of popularity.

But there are some who keep falling back on these divine symbols. So they do need to be explained. Why are these amazing symbols that point to the throne of God associated with a creaturely angel? And I believe the answer is rather simple. This angel is one of the angels associated with God's throne and who goes forth as a messenger of the throne. Luke 1:19 says that Gabriel

stands in the very presence of God. How can you stand in the presence of God without having some of His glory rub off? When Moses was in the presence of God for forty days and forty nights, what happened? Exodus 34 says that his face shone brightly - so much so that people couldn't look on his face. He had to cover it. So why would that not happen to an angel? It's no a surprise that his face glows like the sun as well.

In any case, Gabriel speaks as the very mouthpiece of Jesus in Revelation chapters 18-19. In chapter 22:16 Gabriel gives this message from Jesus: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you..." The angel says, "I Jesus," yet everyone recognizes that he is not Jesus there. He represents Christ; he gives the very words of Christ; listening to him is listening to Christ. He has a kind of prophetic function. Just as prophets use the first person singular when they speak in the name of God, so too does this angel. In fact, the angel calls himself a fellow prophet with John in 19:10. Ramsey Michaels summarizes the evidence that this mighty angel is the same mighty angel elsewhere in the book and explains the divine symbols this way:

In short, this mighty angel has an aura of divinity about him that prompted some older commentators to see him as none other than Jesus Christ himself. This is highly unlikely, yet the angel does represent God, or the power of God, in a way that most other angelic figures do not. He stands astride land and sea as one who is sovereign over both... Although he is not Christ in person, he can be viewed as a divine agent acting on behalf of God and the Lamb.<sup>11</sup>

That's why Jesus calls Gabriel "my angel" in Revelation 22:16. He represents Christ and speaks for Christ. Roy Gingrich explains it this way: He as Christ's representative is clothed in Christ's official uniform, a cloud, a rainbow, a shining face, and shining feet.<sup>12</sup>

And I think he has perfectly captured what is going on here. Let me quote him again: "He as Christ's representative is clothed in Christ's official uniform, a cloud, a rainbow, a shining face, and shining feet."

## **II. The Identity of this little book**

But we move next to the identity of the little book - and we will end with that. And people are all over the map on the identity of this book. Some see it as the same book as the scroll in chapter 5. Others show exegetically how that is impossible. Classical Protestants see it as the time of the Reformation when books began to be printed. About the only thing that has going for it is word association. Mounce and Charles see it as the prophecy of chapter 11. Beale and two others see it as the prophecies of chapters 11-16. Morris sees

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<sup>11</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, Revelation, vol. 20, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), Re 10:1.

<sup>12</sup> Roy E. Gingrich, The Book of Revelation (Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 2001), 52.

it as the whole of God's Word. Some see it as the New Testament. Bahnsen and Stuart see it as God's covenant lawsuit against Rome. But I fail to see how chapters 11-19 are smaller than chapters 6-9 or how God's judgment on Rome was a smaller judgment than His judgment on Israel. None of these interpretations are satisfactory. I won't even deal with the various cult-claims, which usually claim that one of their cult books is this little book - people like Apostle Gerald Flurry of the cult, Philadelphia Church of God. My view (and it is shared by many commentators) is the traditional view that the little book is the book of Revelation. And this ties in beautifully with the theme of these two chapters - the cessation of all prophetic activity in AD 70.

**A. Note the quite different words for the scroll of Revelation 5 (βιβλίον) and the "little scroll" of Revelation 10 (βιβλιδάριον). In chapter 5:1 we identified the *Biblion* (or *big book*) as the *Old Testament canon that was opened and that began to be added to for the next forty years. This is deliberately distinguished from John's revelation in chapter 10, which is called a "little scroll" (βιβλιδάριον - cf. Rev. 10:8,9,10 in MT and 10:9,10 in USB).***

I've preached on this when I was in Revelation chapter 5, so I won't harp on it too much today. But I will point out how the language used by John would have instantly helped first century Jewish readers to know exactly what John was talking about. And I hope to demonstrate that.

First of all, the word for scroll or book in Revelation 5 is quite different from the word for scroll or book in this chapter. The distinction pops out at you in the Greek. The word in Revelation 5 is βιβλίον and refers to a big book, whereas the word in chapter 10 is βιβλιδάριον, which refers to a very small volume in a set of volumes. We already saw that the big book of chapter 5 was the Old Testament canon that was opened and that began to be added to for the next forty years. Well, the seventh trumpet is at the end of that forty year period, and Revelation is the last book to have been written for the Bible. So this contrast between big book and little book is very deliberate. And I have not seen any other theory that adequately explains the contrast.

**B. *Parallels between the little book of Ezekiel 2-3 and the little book of Revelation 10***

Secondly, that contrast parallels the little book in Ezekiel 2-3, which everyone recognizes was Ezekiel's prophecy. If that little book was one

volume in a canon of volumes, this one should be seen that way too. So let me list the parallels between both passages.

### **Both John's little book and Ezekiel's little book was delivered by an angel.**

Both Ezekiel's little book and John's little book was delivered by an angel.

### **The angel commands both to eat the book**

Second, both prophets are commanded to eat the little book that is given to them. That is not a coincidence. That is a deliberate allusion so that the readers will know what kind of book is being talked about. This book is similar to the book given to Ezekiel.

### **Both books taste sweet and yet produce bitterness of judgments**

Third, both books taste sweet and yet afterwards produce bitterness of judgments. Let me read Ezekiel 3:1-4.

Ezek. 3:1 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. 3 And 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. 4 Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. And the words that are in his belly become bitter judgments against God's enemies. How so many commentaries can miss these allusions I don't know. They are very striking.

### **Both books are connected with a commission to prophesy judgments**

Both books are connected with a commission to prophesy judgments to many nations. If you look at Revelation 10:11, you will see John's commission:

And he said to me, "You must prophesy again over many peoples, even over ethnic nations and languages and kings."

Well, John does continue to prophesy over many nations in the rest of this book. Point by point John is hammering home the message that he wants us to see his little book as being the same kind of book as Ezekiel's little book.

**The size of the book is parallel to Ezekiel 2-3 where Ezekiel is given a smaller "scroll of a book" (2:9). The "book" is the developing canon and the "scroll of the book" is Ezekiel's prophecies. Ezekiel's prophetic revelation is one scroll within a "book" (or collection) of scrolls (migilath sepher - מגילת ספר). Thus, the term "little book" (βιβλιδάριον) refers to an individual book within the canon and is parallel to Ezekiel's book of prophecy being "a scroll of a book" (Ezek. 2:9. LXX translation has "a volume of a book" - κεφαλὶς βιβλίου)**

Even the size and character of the two books is the same. In Ezekiel 2:9 the prophet is given what is called the "scroll of a book." In other words, the whole book is not handed to Ezekiel, but only one scroll of that book. And this was the way the Jewish translators of the Greek Septuagint understood the Hebrew. They were Jews and they knew the Hebrew. Here is how they translated it: "a volume of a book" (κεφαλὶς βιβλίου). So Ezekiel's prophecies comprise one of the volumes of a much larger book - the canon. And all through the Old Testament, the growing canon is called the Book of the Law or simply the book. And in my book on canon I give numerous Scriptures that show the gradual growth of that book of the canon. Each little book that was added to it would be a volume-scroll. And in Ezekiel 3:1-3 Ezekiel is told to eat his smaller scroll (in other words, his volume) and then to prophesy its contents to the nations. So that is clearly talking about the book of Ezekiel. There is no controversy on that. It's got to go into Ezekiel and then it goes out. Well, the same is true with John. John's kind of prophecy is identical to Ezekiel's kind of prophecy - something Grudem gets completely wrong. The prophetic content must go into John before it can be prophesied out. The very words that God writes in the book are taken by the angel, put into John, and word-for-word they come out of John as he writes them on paper. That is prophecy.

**This all supports the traditional view that John's scroll of Revelation (10:8,9,10) is one volume being added to the canon of Scripture (chapter 5). In chapter 5:1 we identified "the scroll" (βιβλίον) or the big book as the Old Testament canon that was opened and that began to be added to for the next forty years.**

And this all supports the traditional view that John's little scroll (and the word is mentioned in 10:8,9,10 in the Majority Text) is the last volume being added to the canon of Scripture. Once this little book is finished, the big book will be finished, and Revelation 22:18-19 says that no one may add to the big book - to the βιβλίον - the canon of Scripture. The command at the

end of chapter 22 is not a prohibition of adding to the last book of the Bible, or he would have used the term βιβλιδάριον. No, in terms of the whole flow of the book of Revelation, that last chapter forbids adding anything to the words of the prophecy of the canon.

So that is the identity of the mighty angel and the identity of the little book. Next week we are going to dig into the passage and see what else it teaches. And there are some really cool things in this passage.

## Conclusion

But let me end with three applications that we can make so far. First, it appears that God goes to great lengths to reveal the Scriptures to man, and we should take those Scriptures seriously. To involve this huge angel whose legs are so massive that they straddle land and sea (and the picture in your outline does not remotely do justice to it), shows the importance of the revelation God is giving. And all the other symbols of divinity show the divine character of revelation. It is God Himself speaking through His angel, and through His prophet John. When the angel speaks revelation he roars like a lion because He represents God's very voice. When a prophet is said to roar like a lion it because his words are not man's words, but God's words, which are powerful and mighty. All of the symbols connected with this angel show the divinity of the revelation he is communicating. We must value the prophetic word as being the Word of God Himself. The full sum of the prophetic mystery is contained in this book.

Second, to say that prophecy has ceased is not in any way a disparagement of prophecy or a despising of prophecy. I cherish every word of prophecy that God has preserved in for us in this book. Let me use an analogy. Roman Catholics say that our interpretation of Christ's words on the cross, "It is finished," disparages the work and merits of Christians today. And we would say, "No, it does not." Indeed, it is only when we fully understand that Christ's finished work of redemption cannot be added to that we have the faith to stand on that finished work of Christ with security. And once secure, it frees us up to live out the work of Christ boldly. Well, the same is true when John says that the mystery of God's prophetic revelation was finished in AD 70. There is no "I think so" about prophecy. Prophecy is the very voice of God speaking to His people. 1 Peter 1:21 says, "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Agabus doesn't say "I think the Spirit is saying," as Grudem wants so-called prophets to say today. He said, "Thus says the Spirit" and then he dogmatically speaks for God. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul said,

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

He is saying that even his oral prophecies were the very Word of God which powerfully worked in the church the same way his Scriptures worked in the church.

So if prophecy has ceased, it means that by AD 70 God had given everything that the church needs for life and godliness. We need nothing more. It means that the Scriptures are sufficient to thoroughly equip us for every good work. Nothing more is needed. Can God guide us? Yes. Can God illumine us? Yes. But there is no more prophecy. The Scriptures provide a sure foundation for all of life. John's statement that the prophetic mystery is 100% finished at the seventh trumpet no more disparages the amazing sufficiency of the prophecies preserved for us than the Gospel of Joh 19:30's statement, "It is finished," disparages the work of Christ's atonement. Rather, both are a sure foundation that gives us confidence.

The third application is that once you see the massive size of this mighty angel - whose feet straddle land and sea, whose head is in the clouds, and who is two other times in this book mistaken for God because he is so glorious, it gives a little perspective on the awesomeness of our God. If this angel manifested himself to our American military, I doubt our military would shoot at him. They would be too terrified. Yet this angel is nothing in comparison to God; nothing. God made him in one moment of time on day one of creation. In fact, the Creator-creature distinction is so vast according to the Scriptures, that there is no comparison between the two. Yet, just as the Grand Canyon makes me stand in awe of God, an angel like this makes me stand in awe of God who is so much greater. Yet how many times do we doubt that God can handle America, or that God's angels can handle America? It's really silly when you think about it. As Michael W. Smith says, Our God is an awesome God He reigns from heaven above With wisdom, power, and love Our God is an awesome God  
Let's pray.