When Faith Must Endure

A Pastoral Journey Through the Revelation of St. John

Volume 4D Part 1

Randy Nielsen

A Note from the Author

This book grew out of a journey through the Revelation of St. John that began simply—with a desire to slow down and listen carefully to what John was saying.

Along the way, that study became something more.

In preparing When Faith Must Endure, I made extensive use of ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence system developed by OpenAI, which I came to call "Atlas." Atlas served as a research, writing, and editorial partner throughout the project. Our work together included exploring the historical and literary context of Revelation, examining Greek words and phrases, developing and testing interpretations, organizing the commentary, and refining the pastoral reflections found throughout these pages.

I believe it is important to acknowledge that contribution openly.

At the same time, the theological judgments, interpretations, editorial decisions, and final form of this work are my own. I reviewed, questioned, revised, accepted, or rejected the material developed through those conversations, just as I would material gathered through other research and study resources.

Artificial intelligence did not replace the study of Scripture. It became one of the tools used in that study.

Just as importantly, our purpose was never to turn these pages into an academic exercise or to give the reader the equivalent of a graduate degree in biblical studies. There are excellent scholarly works written for that purpose, and I am grateful for them.

Our purpose here is different.

We want to help people understand Scripture.

That is one reason these pages sometimes read more like a conversation than a traditional commentary. The shorter paragraphs, pauses, repeated phrases, and occasional sentences standing alone are intentional. They reflect the way we might talk about a passage if we were sitting together with an open Bible, stopping occasionally to say:

“Look at this.”
“Did you notice that?”
“Why would John say it that way?”
“And what might that mean for us?”

The scholarship still matters. Historical context matters. Language matters. Theology matters. Interpretive differences matter. We have tried to take all of those things seriously.

But the scholarship should serve the reader rather than become an obstacle between the reader and the text.

Perhaps the best description of the process is simply this:

There were many occasions when it felt less like a person asking questions of a computer and more like two people standing at a whiteboard, opening the Scriptures together and asking:

“What is Scripture really trying to tell us here?”
That is the experience I hope these pages provide for you as well.
Not simply reading an explanation of Scripture.
But joining the conversation.
Opening the Bible with us.
Stopping where something deserves another look.
Asking questions when something is difficult.
And occasionally sitting quietly with a truth before moving on.
Because ultimately the purpose of studying Scripture is not simply to know more about the Bible.
It is to hear what God is saying through it—
and then to ask what we will do with what we have heard.

Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV). Explanations and paraphrases in the commentary are the author’s own.

Dedication

To my loving wife, Marilyn,
who has always stood by me through good times and bad;
who is always seeking to know more about God and His Word; and whose own desire to understand Scripture has encouraged me along the way.
I dedicate this book to her with love and gratitude,
and with the hope that this commentary may help her—and perhaps others as well—to better understand God's Word and to draw closer to the One who gave it to us.

About the Author

Randy Nielsen began life as a sickly child. His mother prayed that if God would allow her son to survive, she would see that he received a proper Christian education. She kept that promise, making certain that Randy was in church nearly every Sunday and, as he grew, encouraging him to remain close to God.

Later in life, Randy felt God calling him into ministry—a calling he initially resisted. But, as Randy has sometimes observed, God does not take "No" particularly well.

In 2007, Randy finally answered that call. He entered the United Methodist Church's Local Pastor licensing program and became a Licensed Local Pastor. Over the next fifteen years, he served several church appointments, sharing the Gospel, caring for congregations, and helping some of the churches he served experience renewed growth.

During his years in ministry, Randy pursued graduate theological education at Asbury Theological Seminary, completing 54 credit hours toward the 96-hour Master of Divinity degree through online study. Ultimately, he decided that the time and financial commitment required to complete the degree were no longer practical. Content to serve as a vessel for God's Word as a Licensed Local Pastor, Randy continued ministering to the churches entrusted to his care.

Randy retired from pastoral ministry in 2022, but not from his love of Scripture or his desire to understand God's Word more deeply. That continuing journey eventually became *When Faith Becomes a Way of Life: A Pastoral Journey Through the Epistle of James*. Now, that same journey has led him into the Revelation of St. John and *When Faith Must Endure: A Pastoral Journey Through the Revelation of St. John*.

Today, Randy and his family regularly attend a Southern Baptist church, where he continues his lifelong journey of faith, study, and discipleship.

Introduction

When Faith Must Endure

There are books of the Bible that tell us how to live faithfully in the ordinary rhythms of life. The Epistle of James is one of them. James speaks directly and practically. Listen before speaking. Control the tongue. Do not show favoritism. Care for those in need. Do not merely hear the Word—do it. Pray. Be patient. Resist the pull of wealth and selfish ambition. Let the faith you profess become visible in the life you live.

James teaches us what **When Faith Becomes a Way of Life** looks like. Revelation asks a different question.

What happens when living faithfully becomes costly?

What happens when following Christ brings opposition rather than approval? What happens when compromise would make life easier? What happens when evil appears powerful, injustice seems to prosper, faithful people suffer, and God appears strangely silent?

What does the Christian need to know then?

That is where the Revelation of St. John speaks with extraordinary power. Revelation teaches us why faith that works must also become **faith that endures**.

A Book Written for the Church

Few books of the Bible have generated as much fascination, disagreement, fear, speculation, and controversy as Revelation.

Its pages contain extraordinary images: lampstands and thrones, scrolls and seals, trumpets and bowls, angels and demons, a dragon, beasts, Babylon, Armageddon, a millennium, final judgment, a new heaven and a new earth, and a magnificent city in which God dwells with His people.

It is understandable that Christians have wanted to know what all of these things mean.

But somewhere along the way, Revelation has too often become primarily a book about predicting what happens next.

That is not the approach of this commentary.

Revelation is not primarily a timetable. It is not a codebook for identifying today's politicians, nations, wars, technologies, or headlines. It is not intended to frighten Christians into faithfulness. And it is not a puzzle in which the person with the cleverest interpretation wins.

Revelation is **pastoral Scripture addressed to Christians who need to know how to remain faithful when appearances suggest that faithfulness is not winning.**

That distinction matters.

John writes to churches living in the real world. They know pressure, temptation, compromise, suffering, uncertainty, and fear. From their earthly vantage point, the powers surrounding them can appear overwhelming.

Revelation pulls back the curtain.
It allows the Church to see earthly reality from a heavenly perspective.
The Lamb has not lost.
God has not surrendered His throne.
Evil has not escaped His judgment.
The suffering of the faithful has not been forgotten.
And the apparent victories of the powers opposed to God are not the end of the story.
Revelation therefore does more than tell Christians something about what will happen.
It tells Christians what they must know in order to remain faithful when the world around them gives them every reason to wonder whether faithfulness is worth the cost.

The Revelation of St. John

Perhaps the most important thing we can remember as we begin is something Revelation tells us in its opening words.
This is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1, KJV).
Before we encounter the dragon, the beast, Babylon, the mark, the number 666, Armageddon, or the millennium, we encounter Jesus Christ.
That order matters.
The central figure of Revelation is not Satan.
It is not the Antichrist.
It is not the beast.
It is not Babylon.
It is not Rome.
It is not any modern nation, political leader, military alliance, economic system, or technological development.
The central figure is **Jesus Christ**.
He is the faithful witness.
He is the Lamb who was slain.
He is the risen Lord.
He walks among His churches.
He alone is worthy to open the scroll.
He conquers not by becoming like the powers of this world but through His faithful witness, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ultimate victory.
And His people are called to follow Him.
If our reading of Revelation becomes so fascinated with evil that Jesus Christ moves into the background, something has gone wrong with our reading.

First, Hear Revelation as John's Churches Heard It

Revelation was written for us.
But it was not written first to us.

John addressed real Christian communities living in the first-century world.
The seven churches of Asia Minor were not symbols floating somewhere in prophetic history. They were churches filled with real people facing real questions about worship, faithfulness, suffering, accommodation, economic pressure, false teaching, fear, and compromise.
Therefore, throughout this commentary we will follow a simple interpretive principle:
First understand what John showed his original hearers. Then understand what it says to the Church in every generation. Only then consider questions about fulfillment.
This does not eliminate prophecy from Revelation.
It protects prophecy from becoming detached from Scripture.
An interpretation that could have meant absolutely nothing to the Christians who first heard Revelation read aloud in their congregations deserves careful examination before we declare it to be John's intended meaning.
Their world matters.
Their struggles matter.
Their Scriptures matter.
And understanding them will often help us understand John's extraordinary visions.

The World Behind the Vision

For that reason, we will occasionally step into the world in which Revelation was first heard.
We will visit Patmos.
We will consider the cities of Asia Minor.
We will examine Roman imperial culture, emperor worship, economic pressure, social exclusion, persecution, public religion, and the difficult choices confronting Christians attempting to remain faithful to Jesus Christ within that world.
But history will never become the destination.
Historical background is useful only when it helps us hear Scripture more clearly.
Our goal is not merely to reconstruct the first century.
Our goal is to understand why Revelation spoke so powerfully to Christians living there—and why it continues to speak to Christians now.

An Old Testament World

Another principle will guide us throughout this journey.
Revelation may be the final book of the New Testament, but its imagination is saturated with the Old Testament.
Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and other portions of Scripture repeatedly stand behind John's language and imagery.

John often does not stop and tell us that he is drawing upon an earlier biblical passage.
He simply uses its language.
Readers unfamiliar with those echoes can easily encounter Revelation's imagery and search immediately for a modern equivalent.
But before asking what an image might resemble today, we should first ask:
Where have we seen this before in Scripture?
When Scripture provides the background for John's imagery, Scripture should be our starting point for understanding it.
Revelation did not emerge from the twentieth or twenty-first century.
It emerged from the biblical story.

When Faithful Christians Disagree

We should also acknowledge something before beginning.
Christians have disagreed about Revelation for a very long time.
Faithful, serious, Bible-believing Christians have reached different conclusions concerning the seals, trumpets, bowls, Babylon, the beast, the mark of the beast, Revelation's chronology, Israel and the Church, the millennium, the timing of Christ's return, and many other questions.
We will not solve every disagreement.
Nor will we pretend they do not exist.
When substantial disagreement occurs, we will slow down.
We will examine the major interpretations.
We will ask what biblical evidence supports them.
We will consider their strengths and difficulties.
And whenever possible, we will distinguish clearly between:
What Scripture actually says
and
what an interpreter concludes from what Scripture says.
Those are not always the same thing.
There will be places where we reach a conclusion.
There may be places where one interpretation appears considerably stronger than another.
And there will almost certainly be places where the most responsible answer is:
We do not know.
There is no failure of faith in admitting that Scripture has not told us everything we would like to know.
We must never manufacture certainty merely because uncertainty makes us uncomfortable.

Revelation and the Headlines

Every generation seems tempted to believe that it is the generation that has finally discovered the key to Revelation.

Wars begin.
Governments rise and fall.
New technologies appear.
Economic systems change.
Political leaders emerge.
Natural disasters occur.
International tensions increase.
And someone inevitably opens Revelation and announces:
"There it is."
Sometimes contemporary events may illustrate principles Revelation describes. Human empires still demand allegiance. Economic systems can still become instruments of injustice. Political power can still become idolatrous. Christians can still face pressure to compromise.
But resemblance is not proof of prophetic identification.
We will therefore resist the temptation to read the newspaper into Revelation.
Our task is not to make John's visions fit our headlines.
Our task is to allow John's visions to reshape the way Christians understand the world—including its headlines.
That is a very different undertaking.

More Than a Timeline

We will also be cautious about assuming that Revelation unfolds as a simple chronological sequence.
John's visions sometimes appear to revisit events, themes, and conflicts from different perspectives. Heavenly scenes interpret earthly ones. Images expand upon earlier images. The same struggle may be viewed from another vantage point.
Therefore, when we encounter a vision, we will not automatically ask:
"Where does this fit on the timeline?"
Sometimes the better question may be:
"What is John showing us about reality?"
Those are not necessarily the same question.
Revelation gives us glimpses behind the visible world. It shows earthly suffering from heaven's perspective. It reveals the spiritual dimensions of worship, allegiance, evil, witness, judgment, and endurance.
And sometimes the point of a vision may be less about establishing when something happens than about revealing **what it means**.

When the Chips Are Down

This brings us back to the pastoral heart of Revelation.
James teaches Christians how faith should shape ordinary life.
Revelation speaks when ordinary life becomes extraordinarily difficult.
When the chips are down, what should the Christian know?
Know that God is still on the throne.

Know that Jesus Christ is still Lord.
Know that the Lamb who was slain has overcome.
Know that evil may be powerful, but it is not eternal.
Know that suffering does not mean God has abandoned His people.
Know that faithful witness matters even when faithfulness appears unsuccessful.
Know that compromise is not victory simply because it makes life easier.
Know that death itself does not have the final word.
And know where the story is going.
Babylon falls.
Evil is defeated.
Death is destroyed.
Creation is renewed.
God dwells with His people.
And the Lamb reigns.
That is why Revelation can speak hope even while describing terrible things.
Its purpose is not to convince frightened Christians that they should become more frightened.
It is to tell frightened Christians why they can remain faithful.

How Then Should the Church Live?

That will be the question to which we continually return throughout this commentary.
Not merely:
What does this symbol mean?
Not merely:
When will this happen?
Not merely:
Which interpretation is correct?
But eventually:
How then should the Church live?
Revelation repeatedly calls God's people to worship, witness, endurance, holiness, courage, discernment, and faithfulness.
It warns against idolatry and compromise.
It exposes the seductive nature of wealth and power.
It reminds Christians that earthly empires are temporary.
It insists that God alone deserves worship.
And it calls the followers of Jesus to remain faithful to the Lamb even when following Him carries a cost.
If we finish studying Revelation knowing considerably more about prophetic systems but no more committed to following Jesus Christ, we will have missed something essential.

When Faith Must Endure

This will not be a journey in which every question receives a simple answer.
Revelation is too rich, too deeply rooted in Scripture, too filled with imagery, and too historically debated for that.
There will be moments when we stop and examine a Greek word.
There will be moments when we travel backward into Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Exodus, or Genesis.
There will be moments when we enter the first-century Roman world.
There will be moments when we consider several interpretations and acknowledge that faithful Christians understand the passage differently.
There will be moments when we simply stand before the vision and allow its grandeur to speak.
But through all twenty-two chapters, one truth must remain before us:
Jesus Christ is the center of Revelation.
And one pastoral call must continually return:
Remain faithful.
Faithful when obedience is easy.
Faithful when obedience is difficult.
Faithful when the Church is strong.
Faithful when the Church appears weak.
Faithful when we understand.
Faithful when we do not.
Faithful when victory is visible.
Faithful when victory can only be believed.
James teaches us how **When Faith Becomes a Way of Life** looks like.
Revelation calls us to become a people whose **faith must endure**.
And so, before we attempt to understand beasts, bowls, trumpets, dragons, Babylon, or the mysteries of things yet to come, we begin where John begins:
With Jesus Christ.
Because when everything else has passed away, the Lamb will still be standing.

A Word About the Imagery of Revelation

Throughout *When Faith Must Endure*, we have deliberately resisted the temptation to turn the imagery of Revelation into a catalog of modern people, nations, technologies, weapons, or current events.

That is intentional.

When John describes locusts like horses prepared for battle, creatures rising from the sea, a woman clothed with the sun, Babylon, dragons, beasts, bowls, trumpets, and seals, our first question is not:

"What does this resemble in our world?"

Our first question is:

"What was John communicating through this imagery to the people who first heard these words?"

Revelation was written nearly two thousand years before our newspapers, political boundaries, military technologies, and modern institutions existed.

Yet the book was meaningful to the Christians who originally received it.

They were expected to hear it, understand its central message, and respond faithfully to what they heard.

That must matter to the way we interpret it.

So, we begin where they began.

With the Scriptures they knew.

With the symbols they recognized.

With the world in which they lived.

With the pressures they faced.

And above all, with the revelation of Jesus Christ that John was giving them.

This does not make Revelation irrelevant to the modern world.

It makes Revelation **more** relevant.

Because once we understand the enduring truth communicated through the imagery, we no longer have to force the symbols into one particular generation.

Empires still demand allegiance.

Power still tempts.

Deception still misleads.

Idolatry still competes for the human heart.

Evil still destroys.

Faithfulness still costs something.

The Church is still called to endure.

And Jesus Christ is still Lord.

Those truths belonged to John's churches.

They belong to us.

And should the Lord tarry, they will belong to Christians living generations after us.

We are therefore not attempting to make John's imagery predict our world.

We are attempting to allow John's imagery to speak from **his world into ours**.
There is an important difference.
The question is not merely:
"Can we identify the locusts?"
The deeper question is:
"Can we remain faithful to the Lamb?"
Because Revelation was never given merely to satisfy Christian curiosity about the future.
It was given to form faithful Christians in the present.
And that is why our approach throughout this journey will remain the same:
We will first seek to understand the imagery in the manner in which it was originally written—and then allow its enduring truth to speak to the world in which we live.

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The Mighty Angel and the Little Book

Revelation 10:1–6

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:”
— Revelation 10:1–6, KJV

The sixth trumpet has sounded.
But the seventh does not immediately:
Follow.
Once again Revelation:
Pauses.
We have seen this before.
Between the sixth and seventh seals came an interlude.
Now between the sixth and seventh trumpets comes:
Another.
But this is not empty space between two important events.
Something important happens in the:
Waiting.
John sees another mighty angel descending from heaven.
And everything about this angel seems designed to make us:
Look.
A cloud.
A rainbow.
A face like the sun.
Feet like pillars of fire.
A little book.
One foot upon the sea.
The other upon the land.

A voice like the roar of a lion.
Seven thunders answering his cry.
And then something Revelation rarely gives us:
Words John hears—
but we are not allowed to:
Hear.
Before the seventh trumpet sounds, Revelation teaches us something about both:
Revelation
and:
Mystery.
God speaks.
God reveals.
But God also:
Withholds.
And faith must learn to live faithfully with:
Both.

1. Another Mighty Angel

John sees:
Another mighty angel.
We should notice John's word:
Another.
He does not tell us that this is Christ.
The description certainly contains imagery that reminds us of things we have previously associated with divine glory.
The angel is wrapped in a:
Cloud.
There is a rainbow over his:
Head.
His face is like the:
Sun.
His feet are like pillars of:
Fire.
Those images are magnificent.
And because they are magnificent, Christians have sometimes attempted to identify this figure as:
Christ Himself.
But John calls him:
An angel.
More specifically:
Another mighty angel.
That should provide our first:
Guardrail.

We do not have to make the angel less glorious in order to take John's description seriously.
Angels throughout Scripture can appear with extraordinary majesty precisely because they come from the presence of:
God.
The glory surrounding the messenger ultimately tells us something about the One who:
Sent him.

2. Coming Down From Heaven

The direction matters.
The angel comes:
Down.
From:
Heaven.
Chapter 9 repeatedly took our attention toward what came from:
Below.
The abyss opened.
Smoke rose.
Destructive forces emerged.
Now John looks in the opposite:
Direction.
Something is coming from:
Above.
Revelation continues to remind us that the abyss is not the only place from which action enters the story.
Heaven has not become:
Passive.
God has not surrendered history to the forces John has just:
Seen.
The smoke may rise from below.
But the messenger comes from:
Heaven.

3. Wrapped in a Cloud

The angel is wrapped in a:
Cloud.
Throughout Scripture, clouds frequently accompany manifestations of God's presence and:
Glory.
We should be careful not to make every detail into a code requiring:
Deciphering.
John is painting a picture.
And the picture communicates:
Majesty.

Authority.
Heavenly glory.
This is no ordinary messenger arriving with an ordinary:
Message.
Something significant is about to be:
Announced.

4. The Rainbow Is Still There

Over the angel's head John sees a:
Rainbow.
We have seen a rainbow before.
Around the throne in Chapter 4.
And long before Revelation, the rainbow had become associated with God's covenant following the:
Flood.
That does not mean we need to force every appearance of a rainbow into exactly the same:
Meaning.
But after the terror of Chapter 9, its appearance is difficult to:
Ignore.
Judgment has not erased:
Mercy.
Wrath has not erased:
Covenant.
The God whose judgments shake creation remains the God whose faithfulness does not:
Change.
Perhaps that is something Revelation wants suffering Christians to remember.
The storm may be terrible.
But somewhere within the storm—
the rainbow is still:
There.

5. A Little Book—and It Is Open

Then our attention moves from the angel to what he carries.
A:
Little book.
And John gives us an important detail.
It is:
Open.
We remember another scroll.
In Chapter 5, the scroll in the hand of the One seated upon the throne was:
Sealed.
John wept because no one could be found worthy to:

Open it.
Then came the:
Lamb.
Here the situation is different.
The little book is already:
Open.
We should be cautious about claiming more than John tells us concerning the precise relationship between these two scrolls.
But the contrast is worth noticing.
This scroll is not waiting to be:
Opened.
It is ready to be:
Received.
And before this chapter ends, John will discover that receiving God's Word means considerably more than merely:
Reading it.

6. One Foot on the Sea and One on the Land

The angel places his right foot upon the:
Sea.
And his left upon the:
Land.
It is a striking picture of:
Scope.
The angel does not stand timidly at the edge of the world.
He stands astride:
It.
Sea.
Land.
The whole created realm lies beneath the authority of the God whose message he:
Carries.
This becomes even clearer when the angel later swears by the Creator of:
Heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
The world may appear fragmented by chaos.
Kingdoms may rise.
Empires may boast.
The abyss may open.
But the earth and sea still belong to their:
Creator.

7. A Voice Like a Lion

Then the mighty angel:

Shouts.
John says the sound is like:
A lion roaring.
Once again that little word matters:
Like.
John is describing what he:
Hears.
He does not say the angel becomes a lion.
He tells us what the voice sounded:
Like.
Powerful.
Commanding.
Impossible to:
Ignore.
This is not a whisper struggling to be heard above the noise of the world.
Heaven speaks with:
Authority.
And creation answers.

8. The Seven Thunders Speak

When the angel shouts:
Seven thunders sound.
And apparently they do more than merely:
Thunder.
They communicate something John can:
Understand.
We know that because John immediately prepares to:
Write.
That is what John has been doing throughout Revelation.
He sees.
He hears.
He writes.
But this time something:
Changes.
John hears the message.
John understands enough to record it.
John prepares to write.
And heaven says:
No.

9. “Do Not Write It Down”

This may be one of the most important interpretive guardrails anywhere in:
Revelation.
John is told:
“Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.”

Think about what that means.
There is something John:
Knows—
that we do:
Not.
God revealed it to:
John.
God chose not to reveal it to:
Us.
And Scripture leaves the matter:
There.
That is enormously important in a book that has generated centuries of:
Speculation.
Sometimes we approach Revelation as though every mystery must have an:
Answer.
Every symbol must have an exact:
Identification.
Every silence must be:
Filled.
Every unanswered question must somehow be:
Solved.
But Revelation itself tells us:
No.
Some things remain:
Sealed.
Not because God has forgotten to explain them.
But because God has chosen not to:
Reveal them.
Faithfulness therefore requires more than taking revelation seriously.
It also requires taking God's:
Silence seriously.

10. Curiosity Has a Boundary

John does not tell us what the seven thunders:
Said.
He does not give us:
Hints.
He does not provide a secret key hidden elsewhere in the:
Book.
And perhaps most importantly—
John obeys.
Imagine the temptation.
He heard them.
We would certainly like to know what they:

Said.
But John does not satisfy our:
Curiosity.
That gives the Church an important lesson in humility.
There is a difference between studying what God has revealed and speculating about what God has:
Withheld.
Christian curiosity can be healthy.
We should ask questions.
We should study carefully.
We should compare Scripture with Scripture.
We should wrestle honestly with difficult:
Texts.
But there comes a point when faithful interpretation must be willing to say:
We do not know.
And sometimes—
God has not told us.
Those are not failures of:
Faith.
Sometimes they are expressions of:
Faithfulness.

11. The Angel Raises His Hand

The mighty angel now raises his hand toward:
Heaven.
The gesture introduces an:
Oath.
And he swears not by himself—
but by the One who lives:
Forever and ever.
The angel may be mighty.
But the angel is not:
God.
His authority comes from:
Another.
His oath appeals to:
Another.
His message serves:
Another.
Again Revelation directs our attention beyond the messenger to the One whose purposes the messenger:
Serves.

12. The Creator Is Named

The angel swears by the One who created:

Heaven and what is in it.
Earth and what is in it.
Sea and what is in it.
That description reaches:
Everywhere.
Nothing lies outside the Creator's:
Claim.
The sea beneath one foot of the angel?
Created by:
God.
The land beneath the other?
Created by:
God.
The heavens from which the angel descended?
Created by:
God.
The world experiencing judgment remains God's:
World.
The creation may groan.
The nations may rebel.
The powers of evil may rage.
But none of them can claim:
Ownership.
The Creator has not surrendered His:
Creation.

13. “Time No Longer”

Then comes the announcement:
“There should be time no longer.”
In the context of verse 7, these words point toward the end of delay before God’s purpose is fulfilled. They reach backward into Revelation.
We remember the martyrs beneath the altar asking:
“How long?”
How long before God acts?
How long before justice comes?
How long before evil is answered?
How long before God's purposes reach their:
Fulfillment?
Waiting is one of the hardest forms of:
Endurance.
There are moments when suffering itself is terrible.
But sometimes what makes suffering even harder is not knowing:
How long.
How long will this last?

How long will I have to carry this?
How long before something changes?
How long before God answers?
Revelation does not shame that:
Question.
The martyrs asked it.
Faithful people have asked it throughout Scripture.
And faithful people still ask it:
Today.
But Revelation also tells us that the waiting does not continue:
Forever.
There comes a moment when God says:
No more delay.

14. Delay Is Not Absence

That distinction matters.
From our perspective, waiting can feel like:
Absence.
We pray.
Nothing seems to happen.
We wait.
Nothing seems to change.
And eventually we begin to wonder whether God is:
Listening.
Revelation gives us another way to understand the:
Waiting.
Delay does not mean:
Abandonment.
God's timetable is not evidence of God's:
Absence.
The same God who heard the martyrs ask:
“How long?”
is still governing the story when the mighty angel announces:
“Time no longer.”
The prayer was not:
Forgotten.
The promise was not:
Abandoned.
The story was still:
Moving.

15. Faith Lives Between What God Has Revealed and What God Has Promised

Perhaps that is where these opening verses leave us.
John stands between:

Mystery
and:
Promise.
There are words he is forbidden to:
Write.
And there is a promise he is commanded to:
Hear.
Some things remain:
Sealed.
But one thing is declared openly:
God's purposes will not wait:
Forever.
That is a familiar place for:
Faith.
We do not know everything.
We cannot explain everything.
God has not revealed everything.
But we know enough to:
Trust.
And sometimes endurance means refusing to demand knowledge God has not given while holding tightly to the promises He:
Has.
The seven thunders remain:
Sealed.
The little book remains:
Open.
And God's purpose continues moving toward:
Fulfillment.
Faith does not need every mystery opened before it can:
Endure.
Sometimes faith simply needs to know that while we are waiting—
God is not:
Idle.

Pastoral Reflection

Waiting can be one of the hardest places in which to:
Believe.
We are usually better at trusting God when we can see something:
Happening.
A door opens.
A prayer is answered.
A circumstance changes.
A path becomes:
Clear.

But sometimes nothing seems to:
Move.
We pray.
We wait.
And heaven appears:
Quiet.
That silence can tempt us to fill in the blanks ourselves.
We begin trying to explain what God has not:
Explained.
We search for hidden meanings.
We construct answers.
We convince ourselves that if we can simply understand enough, perhaps waiting will become:
Easier.
Revelation 10 offers another kind of faith.
John hears something he is not permitted to:
Share.
He must live with:
Mystery.
But he also hears something he is permitted to:
Share.
There will be no more:
Delay.
Perhaps Christian maturity involves learning to distinguish between those two things.
There are mysteries God has not asked us to:
Solve.
And there are promises God has asked us to:
Trust.
We may not know why the waiting has lasted so long.
We may not know why a prayer has not yet been answered.
We may not know why God has allowed a particular chapter of our lives to continue.
Sometimes heaven simply does not give us the explanation we:
Want.
But silence is not the same as:
Absence.
And delay is not the same as:
Abandonment.
The God who seems silent is still:
God.
The God who asks us to wait is still:
Faithful.

And the God who has not explained everything has already revealed enough for us to know:
Who He is.
Faith does not require every thunder to be interpreted.
Sometimes faith hears God's:
Silence—
and still trusts His:
Promise.

Something Worth Pondering

John heard the seven thunders.
We did:
Not.
That may bother us because we naturally want to:
Know.
But perhaps one of the gifts of Revelation 10 is the reminder that God never promised to satisfy every human:
Curiosity.
He promised something better.
He promised to be:
Faithful.
There are questions we may carry for years.
Some may eventually receive answers.
Others may not.
But our ability to trust God cannot depend upon our ability to explain:
God.
The seven thunders remind us that there are things God knows that we do:
Not.
The open scroll reminds us that there are things God wants us to:
Know.
Wisdom is learning the difference.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I willing to trust God with what He has not explained?
When God's timing feels like delay, do I mistake waiting for abandonment?
And can I remain faithful to what God has revealed without demanding answers to what He has chosen to leave hidden?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:1

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:”
— Revelation 10:1, KJV

John looks again.
And what he sees is:
Magnificent.
Another mighty angel comes down from:
Heaven.
He is wrapped in a:
Cloud.
A rainbow appears over his:
Head.
His face shines like the:
Sun.
His feet resemble pillars of:
Fire.
After the darkness of Chapter 9, the imagery is almost overwhelming in its:
Brightness.
Smoke had risen from the abyss.
The sun and air had been darkened.
Terrifying forces had emerged.
Humanity had experienced judgment and still refused to:
Repent.
Now something comes from the opposite:
Direction.
Not from the abyss.
From:
Heaven.
And before John tells us anything the angel says or does, he wants us to:
See him.

1. “And I Saw”

Those words have become familiar.
John:
Sees.
Revelation repeatedly moves through what John sees and what John:
Hears.
But we should remember that John is not merely watching a sequence of strange images for his own:

Benefit.
He has been commanded to:
Write.
What John sees becomes testimony for the:
Church.
That means we should look carefully at what he describes—
without assuming that every detail must become a puzzle we are required to:
Solve.
John gives us an image.
Our first responsibility is to allow the image to communicate what John actually:
Shows us.

2. “Another Mighty Angel”

John calls the figure:
Another mighty angel.
That word:
Another—
deserves attention.
We have already encountered a mighty angel in Revelation.
And here John does not say:
Christ appeared.
He says he saw:
Another mighty angel.
The description that follows is so glorious that some interpreters have wondered whether this figure might represent Christ.
The question is understandable.
Cloud.
Rainbow.
Sun.
Fire.
The imagery carries unmistakable echoes of divine:
Glory.
But John's own identification gives us an important:
Boundary.
He calls the figure an:
Angel.
We should be cautious about replacing John's identification with one we find more:
Interesting.
Sometimes careful interpretation begins by allowing John to call someone exactly what John:
Calls him.

3. Glory Reflected Is Not Glory Possessed

There is another possibility we should consider.
Perhaps the angel appears glorious not because he is:
God—
but because he has come from the presence of:
God.
A messenger can reflect something of the majesty of the One who:
Sent him.
That distinction matters.
The moon shines brightly in the night sky.
But the moon does not create its own:
Light.
It reflects light received from:
Another.
Something similar may help us think about this angel.
His appearance directs our attention beyond:
Himself.
The glory of the messenger points toward the glory of the One whose message he:
Carries.

4. Coming Down From Heaven

The angel comes:
Down.
That immediately tells us where he has come:
From.
Heaven.
And after Chapter 9, the direction is significant.
Earlier something opened:
Below.
Smoke rose from the:
Abyss.
Darkness spread.
Locust-like creatures emerged.
Then another destructive force was released.
Chapter 9 repeatedly confronted us with terrifying things moving into John's vision.
But now John sees something coming from:
Above.
That contrast does not require us to turn direction into an elaborate symbolic:
System.
The picture itself is enough.
The abyss is not the only source of activity in this:
Story.

Heaven is still:
Acting.

5. Wrapped in a Cloud

The angel is:
Wrapped in a cloud.
Cloud imagery appears throughout Scripture in connection with God's presence, glory, majesty, and:
Activity.
Israel followed the pillar of cloud.
Cloud covered Sinai.
Cloud filled sacred space.
Daniel saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.
Jesus spoke of coming with the clouds.
Revelation itself has already used similar:
Imagery.
We need not conclude from that imagery that the angel therefore must be:
Christ.
Instead, the cloud tells us something about the character of his:
Appearance.
This messenger comes clothed in imagery associated with the heavenly presence of:
God.
He does not emerge from smoke below.
He descends wrapped in cloud from:
Above.
The contrast is difficult to:
Miss.

6. A Rainbow Over His Head

Then John sees a:
Rainbow.
We remember Revelation 4.
Around the throne John saw something resembling a rainbow.
And behind that image lies an even older biblical:
Memory.
After the flood, the rainbow became the sign of God's covenant with:
Creation.
Again we should resist making the image carry more than John gives:
Us.
But neither should we ignore what biblical readers would naturally:
Remember.
The rainbow belongs to the language of:
Promise.
Faithfulness.

Covenant.
And now it appears in a book filled with:
Judgment.
That matters.
Judgment does not mean God has forgotten His:
Character.
The God who judges evil remains the God who remembers His:
Promises.

7. The Rainbow Appears in the Storm

Perhaps there is something pastorally beautiful here.
Rainbows do not appear because there has never been a:
Storm.
They appear in the presence of conditions created by:
One.
Revelation has certainly brought us through a:
Storm.
Seals.
Trumpets.
Earthquake.
Fire.
Smoke.
Death.
The abyss.
And yet John sees:
A rainbow.
The rainbow does not deny the:
Storm.
It tells us the storm does not tell us everything about:
God.
Judgment is real.
But judgment is not the whole story of who God:
Is.
God remains faithful even when the world is shaking.

8. His Face Was Like the Sun

John looks at the angel's face.
It is:
Like the sun.
Again we should honor John's:
Like.
The face is not literally the sun.
John reaches for language capable of communicating overwhelming:
Brightness.
We have encountered similar imagery before.

In Revelation 1, the face of the risen Christ was like the sun shining with full:
Force.
Here similar language describes the angel.
That does not make the angel:
Christ.
Instead, it reinforces what we have already noticed.
This messenger carries reflected:
Glory.
He has come from a realm characterized by the presence of:
God.
And the darkness of Chapter 9 now meets a face shining like the:
Sun.

9. Darkness Does Not Get the Last Image

That contrast deserves a moment.
Chapter 9 began with:
Smoke.
The smoke darkened the:
Sun.
Now Chapter 10 begins with a face:
Like the sun.
Revelation has moved from:
Darkness—
to:
Brightness.
That does not mean the judgments are finished.
They are:
Not.
The seventh trumpet has yet to:
Sound.
More difficult visions remain.
But Revelation refuses to leave the Church staring only into the:
Smoke.
John looks again.
And this time he sees light descending from:
Heaven.
Sometimes endurance requires exactly that.
Not pretending the darkness was never:
Real.
But remembering that darkness is not the only thing there is to:
See.

10. Feet Like Pillars of Fire

Finally John describes the angel's feet as:
Pillars of fire.

The imagery suggests strength.
Stability.
Power.
Fire.
The messenger who is about to place one foot upon the sea and another upon the land does not appear:
Fragile.
He stands.
And he will stand across the created world with remarkable:
Authority.
The image of pillars also suggests something solid and:
Unmoving.
Chapter 9 was filled with forces released into motion.
Smoke rising.
Locusts moving.
Armies advancing.
Humanity suffering.
Now John sees someone who:
Stands.
Perhaps we should not hurry past that contrast.
Chaos moves.
The messenger from heaven:
Stands.

11. Do Not Let the Messenger Eclipse the Sender

The imagery surrounding this angel is so magnificent that we could easily make the angel himself the center of the:
Verse.
John does not.
The angel will speak.
He will stand upon sea and land.
He will raise his hand.
He will swear an oath.
But when he swears, he will swear by:
Another.
By the One who lives forever and ever.
By the:
Creator.
That keeps the angel in his proper:
Place.
Mighty?
Yes.
Glorious?
Certainly.

Authoritative?
Clearly.
But still:
Messenger.
The glory surrounding him points beyond him to:
God.
And perhaps that is true of every faithful messenger.
The purpose of reflected light is never to make us worship the:
Reflection.
It is to turn our eyes toward the source of the:
Light.

12. Look Up

There may be a simple pastoral movement hidden within this spectacular:
Vision.
Chapter 9 gave John every reason to look:
Down.
Toward the abyss.
Toward smoke.
Toward destruction.
Toward suffering.
Toward humanity refusing to repent.
But Chapter 10 begins when John sees something coming from:
Heaven.
That does not erase what came before.
The abyss was real.
The suffering was real.
The judgment was real.
But the abyss was never the whole:
Story.
There was still:
Heaven.
There was still:
Glory.
There was still:
Promise.
There was still a message from:
God.
Sometimes our circumstances train our eyes downward.
Toward the problem.
Toward the fear.
Toward the thing we cannot change.
Toward the darkness we cannot:
Explain.

Revelation does not tell us to pretend those things are not:
There.
It simply reminds us:
Look again.
There is more to reality than the:
Abyss.

Pastoral Reflection

There are seasons when darkness becomes so large in our field of vision that we begin to believe darkness is:
Everything.
One problem consumes our thoughts.
One grief fills our days.
One fear follows us into the night.
One unanswered prayer seems larger than every prayer God has ever:
Answered.
And slowly our world becomes the size of the thing that is hurting:
Us.
John has just looked into an:
Abyss.
He has watched smoke cover the sky.
He has seen suffering.
He has witnessed judgment.
He has watched humanity refuse to:
Repent.
Then he looks again.
And something is coming from:
Heaven.
That may be one of the quiet disciplines of Christian endurance.
Look:
Again.
Not because the darkness was imaginary.
Not because suffering does not matter.
Not because faith requires us to manufacture optimism.
But because what frightens us is never the whole of:
Reality.
There is still a:
Throne.
There is still a:
Lamb.
There is still:
Heaven.
There is still:
Light.

And sometimes faith does not need the darkness immediately removed.
Sometimes faith needs its field of vision:
Expanded.
The abyss is real.
But so is:
Heaven.
And heaven has not stopped:
Speaking.

Something Worth Pondering

The angel shines with extraordinary glory.
But the glory does not originate with:
Him.
He comes from:
Heaven.
Perhaps there is something here worth remembering about Christian witness.
We are never the source of the:
Light.
We are called to:
Reflect it.
The Church does not need to convince the world how impressive the Church:
Is.
The messenger does not need to become more important than the:
Message.
Faithful witness simply points beyond itself toward the One who sent:
Us.
The moon does not apologize because its light is:
Borrowed.
Neither should we.

Ask Yourself This:

When darkness fills my field of vision, am I willing to look again?
Do the things that frighten me become so large that I forget there is more to reality than what I can presently see?
And when others see Christ's light reflected through my life, does that light direct their attention toward me—or toward the One from whom the light came?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:2

“And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,”
— Revelation 10:2, KJV

John has shown us the:
Messenger.
Now he shows us what the messenger:
Carries.
A little:
Scroll.
And John immediately tells us something important about it.
It is:
Open.
Then the vision becomes enormous.
The angel places one foot upon the:
Sea.
And the other upon the:
Land.
The scroll is little.
The angel is mighty.
And his stance seems to encompass the:
World.
Something is about to be announced.
But before the angel speaks, John allows the picture itself to:
Speak.

1. A Little Book

The KJV calls this a “little book.” In the setting of John’s vision, we may picture a scroll.
Little book.
Naturally, our minds return to the scroll we encountered in:
Chapter 5.
That scroll was held in the right hand of the One seated upon the:
Throne.
It was sealed with:
Seven seals.
And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could be found worthy to:
Open it.
John:
Wept.

Then one appeared who was worthy.
The:
Lamb.
Now another scroll appears.
But John describes this one differently.
It is:
Little.
And unlike the scroll of Chapter 5, it is already:
Open.

2. Is This the Same Scroll?

That question has occupied interpreters for a very long:
Time.
Is the little book of Chapter 10 the same scroll John saw in Chapter:
5?
Or is this a different:
Scroll?
There are reasons people have argued both:
Ways.
But John does not stop to explain the precise relationship between:
Them.
And perhaps we should respect that:
Silence.
We can notice similarities.
We can notice differences.
We can consider possibilities.
But we should be cautious about turning a possibility into something John himself never:
Says.
What John does tell us is enough for the purpose of this:
Scene.
There is a scroll.
It is open.
The angel holds it.
And soon John will be commanded to:
Take it.

3. The Important Word May Be “Open”

In Chapter 5, the great question was:
Who can open the scroll?
Here that question has already been:
Answered.
The scroll is:
Open.
Nothing needs to be:

Broken.
No seal needs to be:
Removed.
No search needs to be conducted for someone worthy to:
Open it.
What John is about to receive is already available to be:
Received.
That creates an important movement within the book.
What had been sealed has been opened.
What was hidden is being:
Revealed.
God's purpose is moving toward:
Fulfillment.
But there is an interesting tension.
The little book is:
Open.
Yet in the next verses, the seven thunders will speak words John is commanded to:
Seal.
Open.
And:
Sealed.
Revealed.
And:
Withheld.
Both appear within the same:
Vision.

4. God Reveals What We Need

That tension matters.
Sometimes Christians speak as though revelation means God has explained:
Everything.
He has:
Not.
The open scroll tells us that God truly:
Reveals.
The sealed thunders will remind us that God also chooses what not to:
Reveal.
Faith lives between those two:
Truths.
We are not left completely in the:
Dark.
Neither are we given complete knowledge of every mystery belonging to:
God.

We are given what God chooses to:
Give.
And what He gives is enough for:
Faithfulness.
That may frustrate curiosity.
But Christianity has never promised:
Omniscience.
We are called to trust the God who knows everything while receiving faithfully what He has chosen to make:
Known.

5. The Scroll Is in His Hand

John does not see the scroll lying somewhere waiting to be:
Discovered.
The angel holds it in his:
Hand.
The message is not lost.
It is not buried.
It has not slipped from anyone's:
Control.
It is being carried intentionally.
Soon the voice from heaven will tell John:
“Go, take the scroll.”
And that will change John's relationship to the message.
For now, however, he simply:
Sees it.
Sometimes revelation begins that way.
First we:
See.
Then we:
Receive.
Then we discover what receiving the Word of God may require of:
Us.

6. From a Little Book to an Enormous Stance

John then shifts our attention.
The scroll may be:
Little.
But the angel's stance is anything but:
Small.
His right foot rests upon the:
Sea.
His left foot upon the:
Land.
The image is almost impossible to picture without sensing:

Scale.
This messenger stands astride the created:
World.
John is not giving us geographical coordinates.
He is giving us a picture of:
Scope.
Sea.
Land.
Together they encompass the earthly realm in which the drama of Revelation is:
Unfolding.

7. The Sea

The angel's right foot stands upon the:
Sea.
The sea carries rich imagery throughout Scripture.
It can represent danger.
Chaos.
Uncertainty.
And later in Revelation, a beast will rise from the:
Sea.
But here the sea is beneath the foot of heaven's:
Messenger.
Whatever turmoil the sea may represent within John's visionary world, it has not escaped the authority of its:
Creator.
The sea may rage.
But it does not:
Rule.

8. The Land

The other foot rests upon the:
Land.
The land may feel more stable than the sea.
It is where people build.
Plant.
Travel.
Live.
Establish kingdoms.
Construct cities.
Raise monuments.
And sometimes imagine that what they have built will last:
Forever.
But the land belongs to God just as surely as the:
Sea.

Stable places and unstable places.
Ordered places and chaotic places.
Familiar places and frightening places.
The angel stands over:
Both.

9. Nothing Lies Outside the Creator's Claim

Soon the angel will swear by the One who created:
Heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
Verse 2 visually prepares us for that:
Declaration.
One foot upon the sea.
One upon the land.
The message he carries concerns a world that belongs to:
God.
This is particularly important after everything we have seen.
The earth has been struck.
The sea has been struck.
Fresh water has been struck.
The heavens have been darkened.
The abyss has been opened.
Armies have marched.
People have died.
Yet none of those things mean creation has slipped from God's:
Possession.
The world under judgment remains the Creator's:
World.

10. The Angel Does Not Sneak Into the World

There is something almost defiant about the angel's:
Posture.
He does not hide.
He does not approach cautiously.
He does not find some quiet corner of creation from which to:
Speak.
He plants one foot upon the sea and another upon the:
Land.
Then in the next verse he:
Roars.
Heaven is not whispering because it fears being overheard.
The message of God enters the world with:
Authority.
Empires may believe they own the earth.

Kings may draw borders.
Armies may claim territory.
Human beings may build kingdoms and place their names upon:
Them.
But Revelation repeatedly asks us to look beyond every temporary claim of:
Ownership.
The earth belongs to:
God.

11. A Little Book Can Carry a Great Word

There is an interesting contrast in the verse.
The scroll is:
Little.
The stance is:
Enormous.
We should not build a theology upon the physical size of the:
Scroll.
But the contrast is difficult not to:
Notice.
Something does not have to appear large in order to carry enormous:
Significance.
Soon John will eat this little book.
And what seems small enough to fit into the angel's hand will become sweet in John's mouth and bitter in his:
Stomach.
Then it will send him back into prophetic:
Witness.
A little book will carry a word concerning:
Peoples.
Nations.
Languages.
Kings.
Never confuse the apparent size of something with the size of what God may do through:
It.

12. The Word Must Eventually Be Taken

For the moment, the scroll remains in the angel's:
Hand.
But not for:
Long.
John will soon hear the command:
Take it.
That is where this chapter will become deeply:
Personal.

It is one thing to see the Word of God.
Another to study the Word of God.
Another to admire the Word of God.
Another to explain the Word of God.
But John will be asked to:
Take it.
Then:
Eat it.
The Word must become part of:
Him.
Revelation 10 will not allow God's servant to remain merely an observer of God's:
Word.
Eventually the message must be:
Received.
And once received—
it must be:
Spoken.

Pastoral Reflection

We live in a world that constantly tells us who owns:
What.
This belongs to this person.
That belongs to that corporation.
This territory belongs to this nation.
That authority belongs to that government.
And within ordinary human life, those distinctions certainly:
Matter.
But Revelation gives us a larger field of:
Vision.
The angel stands upon:
Sea.
And:
Land.
Soon he will appeal to the One who created:
Both.
Behind every temporary human claim stands a deeper:
Truth.
Creation belongs to its:
Creator.
That includes the places that seem:
Stable.
And the places that seem:
Chaotic.

Sometimes our lives feel like:
Land.
Solid.
Predictable.
Familiar.
We know where to place our:
Feet.
Other seasons feel like:
Sea.
Everything moves.
Nothing seems certain.
We struggle to find something firm enough to:
Stand upon.
Revelation 10 reminds us that God is Lord over:
Both.
The stable place belongs to Him.
The uncertain place belongs to Him.
The place where we know exactly what comes next belongs to Him.
And the place where we cannot imagine what tomorrow will bring belongs to:
Him.
We may feel as though we have moved from land into deep:
Water.
But we have not moved beyond God's:
Reach.
His authority does not end at the shoreline.

Something Worth Pondering

The little book is:
Open.
But John has not yet:
Taken it.
There is a difference between a Bible that is open before us and a Word that has been received within:
Us.
We can read Scripture.
Study Scripture.
Discuss Scripture.
Underline Scripture.
Teach Scripture.
And still resist allowing Scripture to:
Change us.
Before Revelation 10 ends, John will have to do more than look at the:
Scroll.

He will have to take it.
Perhaps that is one of the quiet questions this chapter places before every reader.
Not simply:
Is the Word open?
But:
Have I received it?

Ask Yourself This:

When life feels stable and when it feels uncertain, do I remember that both remain under God's authority?
Am I content merely to observe God's Word, or am I willing to receive what it says?
And what part of God's Word is open before me but still waiting to be taken seriously?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:3

“And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”
— Revelation 10:3, KJV

The angel stands with one foot upon the:
Sea.
And the other upon the:
Land.
The little book remains open in his:
Hand.
Then he:
Shouts.
Not quietly.
Not tentatively.
Not as though heaven is uncertain whether anyone will:
Listen.
John describes the sound in the strongest language available to:
Him.
Like a lion:
Roaring.
And then something remarkable happens.
The angel cries out—
and the seven thunders:
Answer.
The vision that began with overwhelming imagery now becomes overwhelming in:
Sound.
Heaven has something to:
Say.

1. He Gave a Great Shout

The mighty angel does not:
Whisper.
He gives a:
Great shout.
That fits everything John has shown us about him.
His appearance is magnificent.
His stance is enormous.
One foot rests upon the sea.
The other upon the land.
And now his voice matches his:

Appearance.
The message he carries does not enter the world apologetically.
It comes with:
Authority.
There are many voices competing to be heard throughout Revelation.
Voices of kings.
Voices of armies.
Voices of empire.
Voices of rebellion.
Voices of suffering.
But heaven has never struggled to make itself:
Heard.

2. Like a Lion Roaring

John says the angel's shout was:
Like—
a lion roaring.
Again we respect John's:
Like.
The angel does not become a:
Lion.
John reaches for an image his readers would immediately:
Understand.
A lion's roar commands:
Attention.
You do not hear it and casually continue whatever you were:
Doing.
It announces:
Presence.
Strength.
Authority.
Something powerful is:
Near.
That is what John wants us to:
Hear.

3. The Lion Has Already Appeared

Of course, the image of a lion cannot pass unnoticed in:
Revelation.
In Chapter 5 John heard the announcement:
“The Lion of the tribe of Judah.”
Then he looked—
and saw a:
Lamb.
That remains one of Revelation's most important:

Images.
So when we hear a voice like a lion roaring here, our minds naturally remember what came:
Before.
But once again we should maintain our:
Guardrails.
John does not say this angel is the Lion of Judah.
He says the angel's shout is:
Like—
a lion roaring.
Similarity does not require:
Identity.
The imagery communicates the power of the:
Sound.
We should allow it to do exactly:
That.

4. Heaven Does Not Speak Timidly

There is something worth noticing about the confidence of this:
Scene.
The angel stands astride sea and land.
Then he:
Roars.
There is no indication that heaven is intimidated by what has happened in Chapter: 9
The abyss opened.
Destructive forces were released.
Human beings suffered.
People still refused to repent.
Yet heaven does not respond with:
Panic.
There is no emergency meeting around the:
Throne.
No suggestion that events have moved beyond God's:
Control.
The angel stands.
The angel shouts.
Heaven speaks with:
Authority.
The darkness of Chapter 9 has not made heaven:
Afraid.

5. And the Seven Thunders Sounded

Then the angel's shout receives an extraordinary:
Response.

Seven:
Thunders.
Not merely thunder.
John gives them a number:
Seven.
Throughout Revelation, seven repeatedly carries the sense of completeness or:
Fullness.
Seven churches.
Seven spirits.
Seven seals.
Seven trumpets.
And now:
Seven thunders.
We should be careful about creating an elaborate system around something John will soon be forbidden to:
Explain.
But the number tells us this is not random background:
Noise.
Something significant has:
Sounded.

6. The Thunders Appear to Speak

Verse 3 simply tells us the seven thunders:
Sounded.
But verse 4 will reveal something important.
John understands that they have:
Said something.
He prepares to:
Write.
That means these are not merely meteorological:
Sounds.
The thunder communicates.
John hears something sufficiently intelligible that he knows what he would:
Record.
That makes what happens next even more:
Striking.
John hears.
John understands.
John prepares to write.
And God says:
Do not.

7. Thunder and the Voice of God

Throughout Scripture, thunder often accompanies the majesty and presence of:
God.
At Sinai there was thunder.
The Psalms can describe the voice of the Lord in the language of:
Thunder.
Revelation itself has already placed thunder around the:
Throne.
The imagery therefore carries an unmistakable sense of divine:
Majesty.
Again, we should not attempt to reconstruct the message of the seven:
Thunders.
John will prevent us from doing:
That.
But we can recognize what the sound communicates.
This is not insignificant noise.
Heaven is:
Speaking.

8. Creation Responds to Heaven

There is an interesting rhythm in the verse.
The angel:
Shouts.
The thunders:
Sound.
One voice produces an answering:
Sound.
The scene feels almost as though creation itself is responding to the authority coming from:
Heaven.
John has already shown us creation being struck by judgment.
Earth.
Sea.
Rivers.
Heavens.
Now the created order becomes part of the announcement itself.
Thunder:
Answers.
Revelation repeatedly refuses to divide God's purposes from God's:
Creation.
The Creator remains Lord of the world He:
Made.

9. We Hear the Thunder but Not the Message

There is something fascinating about our position as readers.
We know the thunders:
Spoke.
But we do not know what they:
Said.
We hear about the:
Sound—
without receiving the:
Message.
That is unusual.
Normally Revelation invites us into John's experience.
John sees—
and tells us what he:
Sees.
John hears—
and tells us what he:
Hears.
But here we are brought to the edge of something and then asked to:
Stop.
Perhaps that boundary is itself part of the:
Revelation.
We are being taught that hearing God faithfully includes accepting when God says:
Enough.

10. Not Every Mystery Is an Invitation

Human curiosity has a remarkable ability to turn silence into an:
Invitation.
If Scripture does not tell us something, we often want to:
Supply it.
What did the seven thunders say?
What judgments did they announce?
What events did they describe?
Were they another series like the seals and trumpets?
Were they something else entirely?
We can ask those:
Questions.
But Revelation 10 will not answer:
Them.
And that should teach us something.
Not every mystery in Scripture is an invitation to:
Speculate.
Sometimes mystery is a boundary we are asked to:

Respect.

11. There Is Humility in Hearing Only What We Are Given

We naturally prefer:
Answers.
We like explanations.
We like knowing how everything fits:
Together.
And Revelation can tempt us into believing that spiritual maturity means decoding every:
Detail.
But perhaps spiritual maturity sometimes looks like something much:
Simpler.
Knowing when to say:
I do not know.
Not because we have failed to study.
Not because Scripture does not matter.
Not because truth cannot be:
Known.
But because God has not chosen to reveal this particular:
Thing.
Humility does not diminish revelation.
Humility receives revelation on God's:
Terms.

12. The Roar Before the Silence

There is a striking movement between verses 3 and 4
Verse 3 is filled with:
Sound.
A great shout.
A lion's roar.
Seven thunders.
Then suddenly John will be told:
Do not write.
Noise gives way to:
Restraint.
That may be one of the beautiful tensions within this passage.
God is perfectly capable of speaking with overwhelming:
Power.
And God is perfectly capable of choosing:
Silence.
Faith must learn to receive:
Both.
When God speaks—

we listen.
When God has not spoken—
we resist pretending that He:
Has.

13. Heaven Still Has a Voice

Perhaps this is the word the suffering Church most needs from this:
Verse.
Chapter 9 was loud.
The sound of wings.
Chariots.
Horses.
Armies.
Destruction.
Human suffering.
The world can become so noisy that we begin to wonder whether heaven has been:
Drowned out.
It has:
Not.
The mighty angel roars.
The seven thunders answer.
Heaven still has a:
Voice.
And no amount of earthly noise can make that voice:
Powerless.
The Church does not endure because the voices of darkness become:
Quiet.
The Church endures because above all those voices—
God still:
Speaks.

Pastoral Reflection

Life can become:
Noisy.
There are voices telling us what to fear.
Voices telling us what we must have.
Voices telling us who we should become.
Voices telling us what success looks like.
Voices telling us what failure means.
And sometimes the loudest voice is the one inside our own:
Head.
What if?
Why?
How long?

What happens:
Next?
In that noise, it can become difficult to remember that heaven still has a:
Voice.
Revelation 10 does not tell us that every competing voice suddenly becomes:
Silent.
It gives us something better.
A voice that cannot be:
Overpowered.
The angel cries like a lion roaring.
The thunders answer.
Heaven has not lost its:
Voice.
But the next verse will remind us of something equally important.
God's voice is not ours to:
Control.
We do not decide what God must explain.
We do not determine what He must reveal.
We listen when He speaks.
And we trust Him when He chooses not to:
Speak.
Faith is not merely learning to hear God.
Sometimes faith is learning to respect His:
Silence.

Something Worth Pondering

We often assume that the answer to spiritual uncertainty is:
More information.
If only God would explain this.
If only we knew what happens next.
If only Scripture answered this particular:
Question.
Then perhaps faith would be:
Easier.
But Revelation 10 presents something unusual.
John receives more information than he is permitted to:
Share.
The problem is not that heaven cannot:
Speak.
The seven thunders prove that it:
Can.
The question is whether we can trust God with the things He chooses not to tell:
Us.

Perhaps faith does not require God to answer every question.
Perhaps faith requires us to trust the One who knows every:
Answer.

Ask Yourself This:

Among all the voices competing for my attention, which voice am I allowing to shape me most?
Can I listen carefully when God speaks without demanding that He explain everything I want to know?
And when heaven leaves a question unanswered, can I trust God's wisdom enough to leave it unanswered too?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:4

“And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.”
— Revelation 10:4, KJV

John heard:
Something.
Not merely thunder.
Not merely noise.
Not merely an impressive heavenly:
Sound.
The seven thunders had:
Spoken.
John understood what they:
Said.
And his response was exactly what we would expect.
He was about to:
Write.
That is what he had been commanded to do.
See.
Hear.
Write.
But before his pen could preserve the words, a voice came from:
Heaven.
And this time the command was:
Different.
Seal it.
Do not write it:
Down.
Perhaps nowhere in Revelation are the boundaries of revelation drawn more clearly.
God reveals.
But God also chooses what remains:
Hidden.
And if God chooses not to tell us—
faithfulness means resisting the temptation to fill the silence for:
Him.

1. John Was About to Write

John's reaction is almost:
Automatic.

The seven thunders speak.
John prepares to:
Write.
That makes perfect sense.
At the beginning of Revelation, John was commanded:
“Write in a book what you see.”
Again and again he has faithfully recorded what has been shown to:
Him.
Visions.
Words.
Songs.
Warnings.
Judgments.
Promises.
John has become both witness and:
Scribe.
So when the seven thunders speak, he does what his calling has trained him to:
Do.
He reaches to:
Write.
But faithful obedience sometimes means writing.
And sometimes faithful obedience means putting down the:
Pen.

2. John Apparently Understood Them

This is easy to overlook.
John does not say:
I heard thunder but could not understand it.
He prepares to record what the seven thunders had:
Said.
That strongly suggests their message was intelligible to:
Him.
John knows something we do:
Not.
And that creates an unusual situation.
The limitation is not John's:
Understanding.
The limitation is God's:
Permission.
John is capable of telling us.
God tells him:
Not to.
That distinction matters.

The information has not been lost.
It has been intentionally:
Withheld.

3. A Voice From Heaven

Then John hears:
A voice from heaven.
He does not identify the:
Speaker.
And once again we should respect what John does and does not:
Tell us.
We do not need to identify the voice more precisely than the text:
Allows.
Its authority is obvious from what:
Happens.
The voice commands.
John:
Obeys.
Sometimes Revelation gives us identity.
Sometimes it gives us only:
Authority.
We do not have to manufacture the first in order to recognize the:
Second.

4. “Seal Up”

The command is:
Seal up—
what the seven thunders have:
Said.
That language is interesting because the little book in the angel's hand is:
Open.
Within only a few verses Revelation gives us both:
Open
and:
Sealed.
Some things are being:
Revealed.
Other things remain:
Hidden.
That tension should keep us humble whenever we approach biblical:
Prophecy.
God has not revealed nothing.
But neither has God revealed:
Everything.

5. “Do Not Write It Down”

Then the command becomes even more:
Explicit.
Do not write it:
Down.
There is almost no room for misunderstanding.
John is not told:
Write it symbolically.
He is not told:
Hide it somewhere else in the book.
He is not told:
Encode it so that future generations can discover it.
He is told:
Do not write it down.
That should make us very cautious whenever someone claims to know precisely what the seven thunders:
Said.
John knew.
We do:
Not.
And God appears to have intended it that:
Way.

6. Scripture Gives Us Permission to Say “We Don't Know”

Those may be three of the most useful words in biblical interpretation:
We don't:
Know.
They are not signs of:
Weakness.
They are not evidence of insufficient:
Faith.
They are not necessarily the result of inadequate:
Study.
Sometimes:
We don't know—
because God has not:
Told us.
That is exactly the situation here.
No amount of Greek study can recover the words John was forbidden to:
Write.
No archaeological discovery can uncover them.
No prophetic chart can reconstruct them.
No mathematical calculation can decode them.

The text itself closes the:
Door.
And faithful interpretation leaves it:
Closed.

7. Mystery Is Not an Empty Space for Speculation

Human beings dislike:
Empty spaces.
When we encounter something unexplained, we naturally want to:
Explain it.
That instinct has produced countless attempts to fill Revelation's mysteries with:
Names.
Dates.
Nations.
Technologies.
Political movements.
Historical events.
Future scenarios.
Sometimes careful historical study can genuinely illuminate the biblical:
Text.
But Revelation 10:4 gives us a necessary:
Warning.
Not every unanswered question is a puzzle God expects us to:
Solve.
Sometimes an unanswered question is simply:
Unanswered.
And sometimes God has intentionally left it that:
Way.

8. There Is a Difference Between Interpretation and Imagination

We need imagination when reading Revelation.
John himself gives us extraordinary:
Images.
Dragons.
Beasts.
Stars.
Trumpets.
Horsemen.
Angels.
Thrones.
But imagination must remain the servant of:
Interpretation.
It cannot become a substitute for:

Revelation.
We can ask:
What might the seven thunders have said?
But we cannot move from:
Might—
to:
Did.
The moment we claim certainty where Scripture gives none, we have crossed an important:
Boundary.
Faithful interpretation does not merely speak carefully where Scripture speaks.
It also remains silent where Scripture remains:
Silent.

9. God Is Not Obligated to Satisfy Our Curiosity

That can be difficult to:
Accept.
We want to:
Know.
What did the thunders say?
Why did God allow John to hear them if we were not going to hear them?
Why preserve the fact that something was spoken while withholding the words themselves?
Perhaps the unanswered question is part of the:
Lesson.
God is not obligated to satisfy every human:
Curiosity.
Revelation is given for the purposes of:
God—
not merely for the curiosity of:
Us.
The purpose of Scripture is not to ensure that no question remains unanswered.
Its purpose is to reveal what God intends His people to:
Know.

10. Revelation Has Limits Because We Have Limits

There is humility in recognizing that we are:
Creatures.
God is:
God.
We do not stand above Him demanding a complete explanation of:
Reality.
We receive what He chooses to:

Reveal.
That does not mean Christians should stop asking difficult:
Questions.
Scripture is filled with faithful people asking:
Why?
How long?
Where are You?
What does this:
Mean?
Questions are not the enemy of:
Faith.
But faith recognizes that God may not answer every question on our:
Terms.
There is a difference between asking God a question and believing God owes us an:
Answer.

11. John Obeys the Silence

Perhaps one of the most impressive things in this verse is what John does:
Not do.
He does not argue.
He does not say:
But Lord, people will want to know.
He does not give us a hint.
He does not tell us:
I cannot tell you exactly what they said, but it had something to do with...
Nothing.
John obeys.
The words disappear from the written:
Record.
That itself is an act of:
Faithfulness.
John's responsibility is not to tell us everything he:
Knows.
His responsibility is to tell us everything God has authorized him to:
Tell.
There is a difference.

12. Restraint Can Be an Act of Faithfulness

We often think faithful proclamation means:
Speaking.
Sometimes it does.
Before this chapter ends, John will be told:
“You must prophesy again.”
There will be something he absolutely must:

Say.
But here faithfulness requires:
Silence.
That balance is worth remembering.
There are times to:
Speak.
There are times to:
Teach.
There are times to:
Proclaim.
And there are times to admit:
God has not told us.
Christian teachers do not honor Scripture by pretending certainty.
Sometimes one of the most faithful sentences a pastor, teacher, scholar, or believer can say is:
I don't:
Know.

13. We Have Enough

Perhaps beneath this strange command lies an important:
Assurance.
God has withheld something.
Yet Revelation continues.
The Church is still called to:
Endure.
John will still prophesy.
The seventh trumpet will still sound.
God's kingdom will still:
Come.
Apparently, whatever the seven thunders said is not something we need in order to remain:
Faithful.
That matters.
God may not have told us everything we would like to:
Know.
But He has told us what we need in order to:
Follow.
We have enough to know who:
God is.
Enough to know who the:
Lamb is.
Enough to know where history is:
Going.
Enough to know what faithfulness:

Requires.
Enough to:
Endure.
And perhaps that is the most important answer to our curiosity.
We may not know everything.
But God has not left us without what we:
Need.

Pastoral Reflection

Most of us have questions we would very much like God to:
Answer.
Why did this happen?
Why did You allow that?
Why did this prayer seem to go unanswered?
Why did that door close?
Why did someone we love have to:
Suffer?
Why did life turn in a direction we never:
Expected?
Sometimes answers come.
Sometimes they:
Do not.
And unanswered questions can become heavy things to:
Carry.
We may begin believing that if we could only understand why, then we could finally:
Trust.
But Revelation 10:4 gives us an unusual picture of faith.
John himself does not receive permission to tell us:
Everything.
There are words he knows but cannot:
Share.
And yet the story continues.
John continues.
The Church continues.
God's purpose continues.
Perhaps faith does not require every question to be:
Answered.
Perhaps some questions can remain unanswered while trust remains:
Intact.
That does not make the questions unimportant.
It simply means our faith rests upon something deeper than our ability to:
Understand.
We know the:

Lamb.
We have seen the:
Throne.
We have heard the:
Promise.
And sometimes that must be enough to carry what we do not:
Know.
There are mysteries God has not asked us to:
Solve.
There are promises God has asked us to:
Trust.
Wisdom is learning the difference.

Something Worth Pondering

John was prepared to write.
God told him:
Stop.
Perhaps one of the great temptations of biblical interpretation is our reluctance to do the:
Same.
We keep writing where Scripture has:
Stopped.
We keep explaining where Scripture has left:
Mystery.
We keep constructing certainty because uncertainty makes us:
Uncomfortable.
But perhaps reverence sometimes means knowing when to put down the:
Pen.
God's silence is not an invitation for us to speak on His:
Behalf.
Sometimes the blank space should remain:
Blank.

Ask Yourself This:

Can I say “I don't know” without feeling that my faith has failed?
Am I willing to trust God with questions He has not chosen to answer?
And when Scripture stops speaking, do I have the humility to stop speaking too?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:5

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,”
— Revelation 10:5, KJV

The seven thunders have spoken.
John has been told not to:
Write.
The mystery remains:
Sealed.
But the vision does not:
Stop.
John's attention returns to the mighty:
Angel.
He is still standing where John last saw:
Him.
One foot upon the:
Sea.
The other upon the:
Land.
But now the angel makes a deliberate:
Gesture.
He raises his hand toward:
Heaven.
He is about to swear an:
Oath.
And the direction of his raised hand tells us something before the oath is even:
Spoken.
As mighty as this angel appears—
his authority comes from:
Above.

1. “Then the Angel”

John brings our attention back to the:
Angel.
For a moment, the seven thunders had occupied the:
Scene.
They spoke.
John prepared to write.
The voice from heaven interrupted.
Now John looks again at the messenger standing before:

Him.
Nothing about his position has:
Changed.
He still stands upon sea and:
Land.
The mighty messenger remains exactly where John saw him:
Before.
The interruption of verse 4 has not disrupted the: Vision.
The story continues.

2. “Whom I Saw”

John reminds us:
I saw him.
Revelation is repeatedly presented as:
Witness.
John tells us what he:
Saw.
What he:
Heard.
What he was commanded to:
Write.
And now even what he was commanded not to:
Write.
There is an important humility in John's role.
He is not the creator of the:
Vision.
He is its:
Witness.
He does not decide what should be revealed.
He receives what is:
Given.
And he records what he is permitted to:
Record.

3. Still Standing on Sea and Land

John repeats the angel's extraordinary:
Position.
Sea.
Land.
We have already considered the enormous scope of that:
Image.
But repetition in Scripture often deserves:
Attention.
John wants us to remember where the angel is standing when he makes the oath that:

Follows.
The oath is not whispered in some hidden heavenly:
Corner.
The messenger stands across the created:
World.
His posture gives the announcement a universal:
Setting.
What he is about to declare concerns more than one city.
One nation.
One empire.
One generation.
The stage is:
Creation.

4. He Is Still Standing

There is another word worth noticing.
Standing.
After everything we have seen, the angel:
Stands.
He does not stagger.
He does not retreat.
He does not appear uncertain.
The world beneath him has experienced tremendous:
Upheaval.
Yet heaven's messenger remains:
Steady.
There is something pastorally reassuring about that image.
The world may:
Shake.
The purposes of God do:
Not.

5. He Raised His Hand

Then the angel raises his:
Hand.
This is not a casual:
Gesture.
He is preparing to make a solemn:
Oath.
The next verse will tell us exactly by whom he:
Swears.
But already the gesture communicates:
Seriousness.
What follows is not speculation.
Not possibility.

Not:
Perhaps.
The angel is preparing to make a declaration backed by the authority of:
Heaven.

6. An Ancient Gesture of Oath

Raising the hand in connection with an oath has deep biblical:
Roots.
It is a gesture of solemn:
Testimony.
The one making the oath appeals beyond:
Himself.
That becomes particularly important here.
The angel is:
Mighty.
His appearance is glorious.
His stance is enormous.
His voice is like the roar of a:
Lion.
Yet when the moment comes to guarantee the truth of what he is about to say, he does not appeal to his own:
Power.
He raises his hand toward:
Heaven.

7. Daniel Is Not Far Away

Readers familiar with Daniel may hear an important:
Echo.
Near the end of Daniel, a heavenly figure raises his hands toward heaven and swears by the One who lives:
Forever.
There too, the setting concerns the question of:
How long?
How long until these things are:
Completed?
Revelation frequently speaks in conversation with the visions of:
Daniel.
And here the echo is especially appropriate.
Once again God's people are living between promise and:
Fulfillment.
Once again the question of timing hangs over the:
Vision.
Once again an oath is made by the One who lives:
Forever.
But Revelation is moving the story toward its:

Completion.

8. The Hand Points Beyond the Angel

Perhaps the simplest meaning of the gesture is also the most:
Important.
The angel points:
Upward.
Not toward:
Himself.
Toward:
Heaven.
That helps us keep the magnificent messenger in his proper:
Place.
The angel may stand over sea and land.
But he does not claim either as his own:
Possession.
He serves the One who:
Created them.
His authority is:
Delegated.
His message is:
Given.
His oath appeals to One greater than:
Himself.
The messenger may be impressive.
But the messenger is never the:
Destination.

9. Mighty Does Not Mean Sovereign

That distinction is important throughout:
Revelation.
We encounter powerful:
Beings.
Angels.
Kings.
Beasts.
Armies.
Spiritual powers.
Some appear terrifying.
Others appear glorious.
But power is not the same thing as:
Sovereignty.
Only One sits upon the:
Throne.
Only One is the:

Creator.
Only One lives forever and ever as the source and Lord of:
All.
The mighty angel is powerful precisely because he stands under the authority of the One who is:
Sovereign.

10. The Angel's Posture Becomes a Sermon

Before he says another word, the angel's posture teaches us something.
Feet upon:
Creation.
Hand toward:
Heaven.
He stands within the world—
but his authority comes from beyond the:
World.
That is not a bad picture of faithful witness.
Christians live with their feet firmly planted in the world God has:
Made.
We work here.
Serve here.
Suffer here.
Love here.
Grieve here.
Worship here.
But our ultimate authority does not arise from:
Here.
Our allegiance reaches:
Higher.
Feet on earth.
Heart toward:
Heaven.

11. The Oath Is Coming

Verse 5 leaves us almost suspended in the:
Gesture.
The hand is raised.
But the oath has not yet been:
Spoken.
John makes us wait until verse: 6
And that slight pause gives weight to what is about to:
Come.
The One by whom the angel swears will be described as the One who lives:
Forever and ever.
The One who created:

Heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
And everything within:
Them.
Then comes the declaration:
There will be no more:
Delay.
The raised hand tells us before we hear those words:
What comes next can be:
Trusted.

12. Heaven Guarantees What Heaven Promises

That may be where this verse ultimately:
Points.
The angel is not about to offer John an:
Opinion.
He is not making his best estimate about where history is:
Going.
Heaven is declaring what God has:
Determined.
That distinction matters when Revelation speaks to suffering:
People.
Human promises fail.
Governments change.
Empires collapse.
Plans unravel.
People mean well and discover they cannot do what they:
Promised.
But the promise about to be made rests upon someone entirely:
Different.
The next verse will take us directly to the eternal:
Creator.
And because the promise rests upon Him, the Church can:
Endure.

Pastoral Reflection

We live among promises.
Some are kept.
Some are:
Broken.
Sometimes people break promises because they were never sincere.
But sometimes promises fail for another:
Reason.
People simply do not have the power to guarantee what they:

Hope.
We promise to be there.
Then circumstances prevent:
Us.
We promise something will work.
Then something unexpected:
Happens.
We promise tomorrow.
But tomorrow has never belonged to:
Us.
That is why the raised hand of Revelation 10:5 matters.
The angel is about to make a promise concerning the purposes of:
God.
And he does not ground that promise in himself.
He points toward:
Heaven.
Our hope ultimately rests in the same:
Direction.
Not in our ability to control tomorrow.
Not in our ability to understand every mystery.
Not in the stability of human institutions.
Not even in our own strength to:
Endure.
Our hope rests in the One who stands beyond every changing circumstance and remains:
Faithful.
The world beneath our feet may shake.
But the One above us does:
Not.

Something Worth Pondering

The angel is mighty.
Yet he raises his hand toward:
Another.
Perhaps genuine authority always knows where its authority comes:
From.
The angel does not confuse being entrusted with power with being the source of:
Power.
That is a lesson worth remembering for anyone entrusted with:
Anything.
A pulpit.
A classroom.
A family.

A ministry.
A position.
A responsibility.
A voice.
Whatever authority we possess is never:
Ultimate.
We stand under:
Another.
The faithful messenger never points finally toward:
Himself.
He points toward the One who:
Sent him.

Ask Yourself This:

When the world beneath me feels uncertain, where does my confidence ultimately rest?
Do I remember that whatever authority or responsibility I have is entrusted rather than owned?
And does the way I live point primarily toward myself—or toward the One above me?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:6

“And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:”
— Revelation 10:6, KJV

The angel's hand is raised toward:
Heaven.
Now John tells us:
Why.
The angel swears an:
Oath.
Not by his own strength.
Not by his own authority.
Not by the magnificence of his:
Appearance.
He swears by the One who lives:
Forever and ever.
The One who created:
Heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
And everything within:
Them.
Then comes the declaration:
“There should be time no longer.”
The KJV says “time no longer.” Verse 7 connects this declaration with the finishing of God’s mystery. The waiting will not continue without limit.
Those words are:
Short.
But Revelation has been moving toward them for a very long:
Time.
The martyrs have asked:
How long?
The Church has waited.
The world has suffered.
Judgment has unfolded.
And now heaven announces:
The waiting will not continue forever.

1. The Angel Swears

The raised hand of verse 5 becomes the oath of verse: 6
The angel:
Swears.
This is solemn language.
What follows is not presented as speculation.
Not prediction based upon circumstances.
Not probability.
The angel appeals to the highest possible:
Authority.
And significantly, that authority is not:
Himself.
The mighty angel is still a:
Messenger.
Heaven's servants may speak with authority.
But the authority behind their words belongs to:
God.

2. “By Him That Liveth for Ever and Ever”

The angel swears by the One who lives:
Forever and ever.
That immediately separates God from everything else within the:
Vision.
Empires rise.
Empires:
Fall.
Kings reign.
Kings:
Die.
Generations come.
Generations:
Go.
Even creation itself is shaken throughout Revelation.
But God:
Lives.
Forever and:
Ever.
The promise about to be made does not depend upon something temporary.
It rests upon the:
Eternal.

3. God Does Not Outlive the Crisis—He Already Stands Beyond It

There is something important in that.

We experience history one moment at a:
Time.
We do not know what tomorrow will:
Bring.
We do not even know with certainty whether we will see:
Tomorrow.
Every crisis feels large because we are living:
Inside it.
But God is not trapped inside time as we:
Are.
The One who lives forever and ever does not wonder whether He will remain faithful long enough to complete what He has:
Begun.
He does not merely hope history will eventually work itself:
Out.
He is Lord over the story from beginning to:
End.
The crisis has a limit.
God does: Not.

4. The Creator of Heaven

Then the oath turns toward:
Creation.
God created:
Heaven.
And everything within:
It.
The realm from which the angel descended belongs to:
God.
The throne.
The heavenly worship.
The angels.
The voices.
The entire heavenly realm exists because God:
Willed it.
The angel himself therefore belongs to the creation of the One by whom he:
Swears.
The messenger is magnificent.
The Creator is:
Greater.

5. The Creator of Earth

God also created the:
Earth.
And everything within:

It.
That includes the world in which human kingdoms rise and:
Fall.
The world where people build cities.
Govern nations.
Make war.
Accumulate wealth.
Exercise power.
And sometimes behave as though the earth belongs entirely to:
Them.
Revelation corrects that illusion.
The earth belongs to its:
Creator.
Human beings may exercise authority within creation.
But they never become its ultimate:
Owner.

6. The Creator of the Sea

And then John names the:
Sea.
The very sea upon which the angel stands.
Throughout Scripture, the sea can carry images of danger, chaos, uncertainty, and forces beyond human:
Control.
But the sea is not beyond God's:
Control.
He made:
It.
The thing human beings cannot master still belongs to the One who:
Created it.
That is an important distinction.
Beyond our control does not mean beyond:
God's.

7. Heaven, Earth, and Sea

John gives us a sweeping picture.
Heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
And what is in each of:
Them.
There is nowhere left:
Out.
The oath encompasses the whole created:
Order.

Everything we have encountered in Revelation exists somewhere within the creation of:
God.
Nothing stands outside His:
Claim.
Nothing has escaped His:
Authority.
Nothing has created a second universe in which God is no longer:
Lord.
Even rebellion takes place on ground belonging to the:
Creator.

8. Creation Has Not Slipped From God's Hands

That truth matters after the first nine chapters of:
Revelation.
Creation has been:
Shaken.
Earthquakes.
Fire.
Blood.
Darkness.
Poisoned waters.
Stricken heavens.
The abyss opened.
Destructive forces released.
It could begin to appear that creation is coming:
Apart.
But Revelation never allows us to confuse a creation under judgment with a creation beyond God's:
Control.
The Creator has not abandoned what He:
Made.
The world remains:
His.
And because it remains His, He will not leave its story permanently unfinished.

9. Then Comes the Declaration

After all of that comes the:
Sentence.
“There should be time no longer.”
The oath tells us how seriously we should take those:
Words.
The eternal Creator Himself stands behind the:
Declaration.

This is not merely:
Soon.
Not merely:
Eventually.
The vision has reached a decisive:
Moment.
God's purpose is moving toward:
Completion.

10. “How Long?”

Those words should take us back to the fifth:
Seal.
The martyrs beneath the altar cried:
“How long?”
How long before justice?
How long before judgment?
How long before the wrong is finally made:
Right?
They were not rebuked for:
Asking.
They were told to rest a little:
Longer.
There was still:
Delay.
Now we hear:
“Time no longer.”
Revelation remembers the prayers of the:
Suffering.
Heaven did not forget the question:
“How long?”
The answer did not come when they wanted it.
But the question was never:
Lost.

11. Delay Was Not Denial

That distinction may be one of the most pastorally important truths in this:
Verse.
The martyrs waited.
The Church waited.
John waited.
Generations of believers have:
Waited.
But waiting did not mean God's promise had been:
Withdrawn.
Delay was not:

Denial.
The purposes of God were still moving even when those purposes seemed:
Slow.
What looked from earth like inactivity was not inactivity in:
Heaven.
God had not forgotten.
God had not changed His mind.
God had not lost control.
The time simply had not yet:
Come.

12. “Time No Longer” and the End of Waiting

The KJV’s wording has sometimes been understood as though the angel were announcing the end of chronological:
Time.
But the vision itself continues.
The seventh trumpet will sound.
Events will still:
Unfold.
John will still receive the little book.
He will still be told to prophesy:
Again.
Revelation still has many chapters:
Ahead.
The point is not that clocks suddenly stop.
The point is that the period of:
Waiting—
is reaching its appointed:
End.
God's purpose is moving decisively toward:
Fulfillment.

13. God's Timing Is Not Our Timing

That may be one of the hardest truths of:
Faith.
We understand:
Now.
God often says:
Wait.
We ask:
How long?
Sometimes the answer seems to be:
Longer.
Waiting can test faith in ways immediate suffering sometimes does:
Not.

At least action gives us something to:
Do.
Waiting requires us to trust while apparently nothing is:
Changing.
But Revelation reminds us that God's delay is never:
Aimless.
There is an appointed movement within His:
Purpose.
And eventually God Himself says:
Enough waiting.

14. The One Who Controls the Timing Is the One Who Created the World

Notice how carefully the verse connects the promise with the:
Promiser.
Who says there will be no more delay?
The Creator of:
Heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
Everything within them.
In other words, the One who controls the timing is not someone struggling to control the:
Circumstances.
He made the stage upon which the circumstances:
Occur.
That is why the promise can be:
Trusted.
God does not merely know where history is going.
History belongs to:
Him.

15. Waiting Has an Expiration Date

We usually do not know what that date:
Is.
That is part of what makes waiting:
Difficult.
The martyrs were told to wait a little:
Longer.
They were not given a calendar.
Neither are:
We.
But Revelation gives suffering believers something more important than a:
Date.
It gives them a:

Promise.
Waiting is not:
Forever.
Evil is not:
Forever.
Injustice is not:
Forever.
Suffering is not:
Forever.
The apparent silence of God is not:
Forever.
There comes a moment when heaven declares: No more delay.

16. The Throne Was Never in a Hurry

There is something else worth:
Remembering.
God's apparent slowness should not be confused with:
Uncertainty.
Human beings hurry when we fear we are running out of:
Time.
We rush because circumstances may escape our:
Control.
We panic because something unexpected has:
Happened.
Nothing in Revelation suggests that heaven:
Panics.
The throne does not:
Rush.
God acts according to His:
Purpose.
And when the appointed moment comes, He acts with:
Authority.
Perhaps faith sometimes mistakes God's patience for God's:
Absence.
But the throne has never been empty.
And the throne has never been:
Late.

17. The Church Lives Between “How Long?” and “No More Delay”

Perhaps that is where many believers find themselves.
Somewhere between:
“How long?”
and:
“Time no longer.”

We know what God has:
Promised.
But we have not yet seen everything God has promised:
Completed.
We know Christ has:
Come.
We wait for Christ to:
Come again.
We know death has been:
Defeated.
Yet we still stand beside:
Graves.
We know God's kingdom has:
Come near.
Yet we still see kingdoms that resist His:
Rule.
We live in the:
Between.
And Revelation was written for people living precisely:
There.

18. Endurance Trusts the Clock to God

We would often prefer a:
Schedule.
God gives us a:
Promise.
We would like to know:
When?
God tells us:
Who.
The One who lives forever and ever.
The One who created heaven.
The One who created earth.
The One who created the sea.
The One who holds the entire story.
That is the foundation of Christian:
Endurance.
Faith does not endure because it knows exactly when the waiting will:
End.
Faith endures because it knows the One who decides when the waiting is:
Over.

Pastoral Reflection

Most of us know what it means to pray:
How long?

How long will this illness last?
How long will this grief hurt?
How long will this uncertainty continue?
How long before the door opens?
How long before the answer comes?
How long before something finally:
Changes?
Waiting can become exhausting.
And after enough time, we may begin wondering whether God's silence means God has:
Forgotten.
Revelation 10:6 says:
No.
The God who asks His people to wait is the God who eventually says:
No more delay.
The same God is present at both:
Moments.
He is God while we wait.
He is God when the waiting:
Ends.
And perhaps the hardest part of endurance is trusting that He remains faithful in the space between:
Them.
We do not always receive the:
Schedule.
We receive the:
Promise.
And the promise rests upon the One who lives forever and ever.
The Creator of heaven.
The Creator of earth.
The Creator of the sea.
The One who was God before our waiting began.
The One who will still be God when our waiting is:
Over.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the:
Circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
But none of that endurance is:
Wasted.

There comes a moment when every faithful wait reaches the hands of the
God who says:
Enough.

Something Worth Pondering

The martyrs asked:
“How long?”
God did not rebuke the:
Question.
That matters.
Faith is allowed to become tired.
Faith is allowed to wonder.
Faith is allowed to ask:
How long?
But faith must also remember that our inability to see the end does not mean there is no:
End.
The clock belongs to:
God.
And the One holding the clock is the One who created:
Everything.
Perhaps the deepest comfort of Revelation 10:6 is not that we finally receive a timetable.
We do:
Not.
It is that we are reminded who controls the:
Time.

Ask Yourself This:

Where in my life am I presently asking God, “How long?”
Have I mistaken God's delay for God's absence?
And can I trust the timing of my life to the One who created heaven, earth, sea—and everything within them?

The Mystery Fulfilled and the Scroll Consumed

Revelation 10:7–11

“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. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”
— Revelation 10:7–11, KJV

There will be no more:
Delay.
But that does not mean everything happens in a single:
Moment.
The seventh angel still has a trumpet to:
Sound.
The mystery of God still moves toward its:
Fulfillment.
And John still has something he must:
Do.
The mighty angel has descended.
The seven thunders have spoken.
Some things have been sealed.
An oath has been sworn.
Now the open scroll must be:
Taken.
And then something unexpected happens.
John is not told merely to:
Read it.
He is told to:
Eat it.
The Word must become part of the:

Messenger.
And when it does, John discovers something every faithful messenger eventually learns.
The Word of God can be wonderfully:
Sweet.
And painfully:
Bitter.
At the same:
Time.

1. The Seventh Trumpet Is Coming

The announcement of “no more delay” immediately directs us toward the:
Seventh trumpet.
The seventh angel has not yet:
Sounded it.
That will come in Chapter: 11
But we are moving toward:
It.
The interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets has not interrupted the story.
It has prepared us to understand what the story:
Means.
The seventh trumpet will not simply be another event in a sequence of:
Events.
It will announce that God's purpose is moving decisively toward:
Fulfillment.

2. “The Mystery of God Will Be Fulfilled”

Then John gives us an extraordinary:
Phrase.
The mystery of God will be:
Fulfilled.
We should be careful with the word:
Mystery.
In Scripture, mystery does not necessarily mean a puzzle that clever people can:
Solve.
It often refers to something belonging to the purposes of God that He has chosen to:
Reveal.
And that distinction matters especially after what we have just:
Seen.
The seven thunders spoke.
Their words remain:
Sealed.

Yet God's mystery moves toward:
Fulfillment.
Apparently we do not have to know everything God knows in order for God's purpose to be:
Completed.

3. Mystery Does Not Mean God Is Uncertain

Something may be mysterious to:
Us—
without being mysterious to:
God.
We see fragments.
God sees the:
Whole.
We experience one moment.
God knows the:
Story.
We ask how all these things can possibly fit:
Together.
God does not share our:
Confusion.
The mystery belongs to our limited understanding, not to a limitation in:
God.
That is an important distinction for:
Faith.
God is not trying to figure out how Revelation:
Ends.

4. God Has Been Speaking Through the Prophets

John says this mystery was announced to God's servants the:
Prophets.
That places what is happening in Revelation within a much larger biblical:
Story.
God has been speaking for a very long:
Time.
Promise.
Warning.
Judgment.
Restoration.
Kingdom.
Salvation.
The prophets spoke into their own times, to real people facing real circumstances.
But through them God also pointed toward purposes larger than any single:
Generation.

Revelation does not appear from nowhere.
It stands within the long testimony of:
Scripture.
The God speaking at the end of the story is the same God who has been speaking throughout the:
Story.

5. Fulfillment Means God Finishes What He Begins

That may be the simplest and most important word in verse: 7
Fulfilled.
God does not merely:
Begin.
He:
Finishes.
Human beings leave unfinished things everywhere.
Unfinished plans.
Unfinished promises.
Unfinished projects.
Unfinished relationships.
Unfinished dreams.
Sometimes because we lose interest.
Sometimes because circumstances change.
Sometimes because we simply cannot finish what we:
Started.
God does not suffer from that:
Limitation.
What He purposes will reach its appointed:
Fulfillment.

6. The Voice Speaks Again

Then John hears the voice from heaven:
Again.
The same voice that told him not to write what the seven thunders had said now gives him another:
Command.
That contrast is important.
Earlier:
Do not write.
Now:
Go and take.
One command restricted:
John.
The other sends him into:
Action.
Faithfulness requires sensitivity to:

Both.
There are things God says:
Leave alone.
And there are things God says:
Go and take.
Wisdom means knowing the:
Difference.

7. “Go, Take the Scroll”

John is not told to wait for the scroll to be:
Delivered.
He is told:
Go.
Take.
There is movement in those:
Words.
John must respond to what God has placed before:
Him.
The scroll is open.
The message is available.
But John still has to:
Take it.
Revelation is moving from seeing to:
Receiving.
The Word cannot remain merely something John observes in another person's:
Hand.
It must become:
His.

8. The Scroll Is Still Open

John again reminds us that the scroll is:
Open.
That detail now carries even greater:
Weight.
The seven thunders have been:
Sealed.
The scroll remains:
Open.
Some things God has withheld.
This He has:
Not.
And perhaps that gives us one of the great interpretive principles of the entire:
Chapter.

We should not become so fascinated with what God has hidden that we
neglect what God has:
Opened.
We can spend enormous energy asking what the seven thunders:
Said—
while ignoring the scroll God has placed before:
Us.
Curiosity can become a distraction from:
Obedience.

9. John Approaches the Angel

John obeys.
He goes to the:
Angel.
There is something almost wonderfully simple about that.
God says:
Go.
John:
Goes.
The angel who seemed almost unimaginably enormous—
one foot on sea and one on land—
is now approached by:
John.
John tells him to give him the little:
Scroll.
The vision is no longer merely something happening around:
John.
John is becoming part of the:
Action.

10. “Take It and Eat”

Then comes the command:
Take it and:
Eat.
Not:
Read it.
Not:
Study it.
Not:
Copy it.
Eat:
It.
The imagery has deep biblical roots, particularly in the prophetic calling of:
Ezekiel.
The prophet does not merely carry God's message externally.

He consumes:
It.
The Word enters the:
Messenger.
That is a powerful image of prophetic:
Ministry.
Before John can proclaim the message, the message must become part of:
John.

11. The Word Must Pass Through the Messenger

There is something here for anyone who teaches or proclaims:
Scripture.
It is possible to handle the Bible as:
Information.
We can analyze vocabulary.
Study historical backgrounds.
Examine grammar.
Compare translations.
Trace themes.
And all of those things can be valuable.
But there is a difference between handling the Word and allowing the Word to handle:
Us.
John must:
Eat.
The message must enter his life before it proceeds from his:
Mouth.
The faithful messenger is not merely a delivery system.
The messenger is also changed by the:
Message.

12. Sweet as Honey

The angel tells John what will:
Happen.
The scroll will taste sweet as:
Honey.
And when John eats it, that is exactly what he:
Experiences.
Sweet.
There is sweetness in receiving the Word of:
God.
The sweetness of hearing truth.
The sweetness of knowing God has:
Spoken.
The sweetness of promise.

The sweetness of grace.
The sweetness of hope.
The sweetness of discovering that history is not meaningless and suffering will not have the final:
Word.
God's Word can indeed be:
Sweet.

13. But Sweetness Is Not the Whole Experience

The same scroll that is sweet in John's mouth becomes bitter in his:
Stomach.
One scroll.
Two:
Experiences.
Sweet.
Bitter.
And perhaps that is one of the most honest descriptions of receiving God's Word anywhere in:
Scripture.
We sometimes want the Bible to give us only:
Comfort.
There is comfort.
Wonderful:
Comfort.
But Scripture also:
Confronts.
Corrects.
Warns.
Convicts.
Calls.
Demands.
Grieves.
The Word that tells us about salvation also tells us about:
Judgment.
The Word that announces grace also exposes:
Sin.
The Word that promises resurrection does not pretend death is:
Pleasant.
Sweetness and bitterness belong to the same:
Scroll.

14. The Bitterness Does Not Mean the Word Is Bad

That distinction matters.
The scroll does not become:
Poison.

Its bitterness does not mean something has gone wrong with God's:
Word.
The bitterness comes from what the message contains and what carrying that message:
Means.
John has seen suffering.
Judgment.
Rebellion.
Death.
And more remains to be:
Seen.
The Word is sweet because it comes from:
God.
The Word can be bitter because it tells the truth about a world that resists:
God.
Truth can hurt without becoming:
Untrue.

15. Some Truths Are Hard to Carry

Anyone who has spent much time in pastoral ministry eventually learns:
This.
Some biblical truths are wonderful to:
Proclaim.
Grace.
Forgiveness.
Resurrection.
Hope.
The love of:
God.
Others are harder to:
Carry.
Sin.
Judgment.
Repentance.
Suffering.
Death.
The cost of:
Discipleship.
A faithful messenger does not get to keep the sweetness and discard the:
Bitterness.
It is the same:
Scroll.

16. John Experiences Exactly What He Was Told

John takes the scroll.

He eats:
It.
It is sweet in his:
Mouth.
Then his stomach becomes:
Bitter.
Exactly as the angel:
Said.
That detail may seem small.
But it continues a pattern throughout this:
Vision.
Heaven's word proves:
Reliable.
What John is told will happen:
Happens.
Even in something as personal as the experience of eating the scroll, the word given to John is:
True.

17. The Word Is Not Finished With John

We might expect the chapter to end with John's experience of:
Bitterness.
It does:
Not.
The bitterness is not the final:
Word.
John is given another:
Commission.
“You must prophesy again.”
That word:
Must—
carries weight.
John's work is not:
Finished.
The scroll was not given merely for his private spiritual:
Experience.
He received the Word because he still had something to:
Say.

18. “You Must Prophesy Again”

Again.
John has already:
Prophesied.
He has already written.
Already witnessed.

Already carried difficult words.
Yet the command comes:
Again.
Sometimes faithfulness means continuing after we thought we had already given everything we:
Had.
John has eaten the scroll.
He has tasted its sweetness.
He has felt its bitterness.
And now:
Speak again.
That may be one of the hardest commands in the:
Chapter.

19. The Bitterness Does Not Cancel the Calling

John's stomach is:
Bitter.
God does not say:
Then perhaps you should stop.
The command is:
Prophesy again.
There is something profoundly pastoral in:
That.
Faithful ministry does not require the messenger to be untouched by the:
Message.
John feels the weight of what he has:
Received.
And he is still called to:
Speak.
Sometimes the very reason a message is difficult to carry is the reason it must be:
Carried faithfully.

20. Peoples, Nations, Languages, and Kings

The scope of John's renewed commission is:
Enormous.
Peoples.
Nations.
Languages.
Kings.
The little book has become a message with worldwide:
Reach.
That fits the angel's posture earlier in the:
Chapter.
One foot upon the sea.

One foot upon the land.
Now the commission reaches across human:
Boundaries.
The message is not confined to one people.
One culture.
One language.
One social class.
And notice:
Kings.
The powerful are not exempt from the Word of:
God.
The same prophetic word that addresses ordinary people also addresses:
Thrones.
Human authority does not place anyone beyond the authority of:
God.

21. From Open Scroll to Spoken Word

Look at the movement of the chapter.
The scroll is:
Open.
John is told to:
Take it.
Then:
Eat it.
Then:
Prophesy.
Open.
Taken.
Consumed.
Spoken.
That is the movement of the:
Word.
It begins with God.
It enters the messenger.
Then it goes back into the:
World.
And perhaps that gives us a beautiful picture of faithful Christian:
Witness.
We receive.
We allow the Word to work within:
Us.
Then we:
Speak.
Not merely what we would prefer to say.

But what God has entrusted to:
Us.

22. Revelation Is Not Everything God Knows

The seven thunders have taught us:
That.
Revelation is not everything God:
Knows.
It is everything God decided we needed to:
Know.
And now verses 7–11 give us the other side of that:
Truth.
What God has chosen to reveal must not be:
Ignored.
We do not need to pry open what God has:
Sealed.
We need to receive what God has:
Opened.
That may be one of the central lessons of Revelation: 10
Do not invent what God has withheld.
Do not neglect what God has:
Revealed.

23. The Church Still Has Something to Say

Chapter 9 could leave us wondering whether proclamation accomplishes:
Anything.
Humanity suffers judgment and still does not:
Repent.
Wouldn't that make a prophet wonder whether speaking is worth the:
Effort?
Then Chapter 10 ends:
“You must prophesy again.”
The response of the world does not determine whether the Church's witness remains:
Necessary.
Faithfulness is not measured only by visible:
Results.
Sometimes the message is welcomed.
Sometimes rejected.
Sometimes sweet.
Sometimes bitter.
But the calling remains:
Speak.

24. The Word Must Be Spoken Anyway

Perhaps this is where the entire chapter finally:

Lands.
God has spoken.
Some things He has chosen to:
Seal.
Other things He has chosen to:
Reveal.
What has been revealed is placed into the hands of His:
Servant.
The servant receives it.
The servant tastes both its sweetness and its:
Bitterness.
Then God says:
Speak again.
That is faithful:
Witness.
Not speaking only when the message is easy.
Not speaking only when people will welcome it.
Not speaking only when the messenger feels:
Comfortable.
The Word of God is sweet enough to:
Receive.
Bitter enough to:
Trouble us.
And important enough that we must speak it:
Anyway.

Pastoral Reflection

Most of us would prefer a faith that tastes only like:
Honey.
Promises fulfilled.
Prayers answered.
Doors opened.
Bodies healed.
Relationships restored.
Grace received.
Hope renewed.
And thank God, there is sweetness in the Christian:
Life.
But anyone who walks with Christ long enough discovers the:
Bitterness too.
There are Scriptures we wish were easier.
Truths that confront us.
Calls that cost us.
Prayers that seem unanswered.

People we cannot rescue.
Suffering we cannot explain.
Graves beside which we still:
Weep.
The same Word that gives us hope refuses to lie to us about the brokenness of the:
World.
Sweet.
And:
Bitter.
But John teaches us something important.
He does not spit out the scroll when it becomes:
Bitter.
He carries the Word within:
Him.
And then he hears:
You must prophesy again.
Perhaps mature faith is not the faith that has somehow eliminated all:
Bitterness.
Perhaps mature faith has learned that bitterness does not cancel:
Calling.
We carry both.
The sweetness of what God has:
Promised.
And the bitterness of a world in which those promises have not yet reached their complete:
Fulfillment.
Then we keep:
Speaking.
Keep serving.
Keep loving.
Keep witnessing.
Keep:
Enduring.
Because the Word remains true even when carrying it:
Hurts.

Something Worth Pondering

John could have become fascinated with the words he was forbidden to:
Write.
Instead, God directs him toward the scroll that is:
Open.
There is wisdom in that.

We can spend enormous amounts of spiritual energy wondering about what God has not:
Told us.
Why did this happen?
What exactly will happen next?
When will Christ return?
What did the seven thunders say?
But perhaps God keeps pointing us toward something much:
Simpler.
Here is the Word I have:
Given you.
Take it.
Receive it.
Let it become part of:
You.
Then live and speak faithfully from what you have:
Received.
There are mysteries God has not asked us to solve.
There are promises God has asked us to trust.
And there is a Word God has asked us to:
Carry.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I more fascinated by what God has not revealed than faithful to what He has?
Am I willing to receive the bitter parts of God's Word along with the sweet?
And after the Word has worked within me, am I willing to carry it faithfully into the world?

A Closer Look — 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."
— Revelation 10:7, KJV

There will be no more:
Delay.
But John is not finished explaining what that:
Means.

The seventh angel still has a trumpet to:
Blow.
And when that moment comes, something that has stretched across the long story of God's dealings with humanity will move toward its appointed:
Fulfillment.
John calls it:
The mystery of God.
Not a mystery because God does not know what He is:
Doing.
Not a puzzle waiting for some clever interpreter to:
Solve.
It is the purpose of God—
announced through His servants the prophets—
now moving toward:
Completion.
What God began—
God will:
Finish.

1. “But in the Days”

John does not say:
At one isolated second.
He says:
In the days.
That is worth noticing.
The fulfillment John anticipates belongs to the period associated with the sounding of the seventh:
Trumpet.
Revelation continues to unfold after that trumpet:
Sounds.
So we should be careful about squeezing everything John describes into a single instant.
God's purpose reaches its fulfillment according to the movement God Himself has:
Established.
The important point is not that John gives us a stopwatch.
He:
Doesn't.
The important point is that the period of delay is reaching its appointed:
End.

2. The Seventh Angel

We have been waiting for this angel since the sixth trumpet sounded in Chapter: 9
Six trumpets have:

Sounded.
The seventh remains.
And as we have seen before in Revelation, the pause between six and seven is not an accidental:
Interruption.
It gives the Church time to:
See.
Understand.
Receive.
And in Chapter 10—
to:
Eat.
Before the seventh trumpet sounds, God prepares His:
Servant.

3. The Trumpet Has Not Sounded Yet

There is an interesting tension here.
Verse 6 declared:
No more delay.
Verse 7 tells us the seventh trumpet is still to:
Sound.
That helps us understand what “no more delay” means.
It does not mean every remaining event happens:
Instantly.
It means God's purpose has entered its decisive movement toward:
Fulfillment.
The waiting has not been meaningless.
And the movement has not:
Stopped.
The appointed moment is:
Coming.

4. “The Mystery of God”

Then comes the phrase:
The mystery of:
God.
The word *mystery* can easily send our imagination in the wrong:
Direction.
We hear mystery and think:
Puzzle.
Secret code.
Hidden clue.
Something that must be deciphered by the person clever enough to:
Solve it.
But biblical mystery is not primarily a riddle for human ingenuity.

It belongs to the purposes of:
God.
Something once hidden can be made:
Known.
Something promised can move toward:
Fulfillment.
The emphasis is not upon our cleverness.
It is upon God's:
Revelation.

5. Mystery Is Not Confusion

This distinction matters.
The mystery is mysterious to:
Us.
It is not mysterious to:
God.
God is not looking at history wondering how all the pieces will:
Fit.
He is not surprised by what happens:
Next.
He is not revising the plan because events have become more complicated than He:
Expected.
Mystery describes the limitation of our:
Vision.
Not the limitation of God's:
Knowledge.
We see pieces.
God sees the:
Whole.

6. We Know Enough—but Not Everything

Verse 7 comes immediately after one of the strongest reminders of human limitation in:
Revelation.
The seven thunders spoke.
John heard them.
God said:
Do not write.
Something remains:
Hidden.
Now John tells us that the mystery of God will be:
Fulfilled.
Those two truths belong beside one:
Another.

We do not know:
Everything.
But God has revealed enough for:
Faithfulness.
Revelation is not everything God:
Knows.
It is everything God decided we needed to:
Know.
And what we do not know cannot prevent God from accomplishing what He has:
Purposed.

7. Mystery Will Become Fulfillment

John does not say the mystery will remain a mystery:
Forever.
He says it will be:
Fulfilled.
That is where the emphasis belongs.
Revelation is moving somewhere.
History is moving:
Somewhere.
God's redemptive purpose is not an endless circle of:
Events.
There is a:
Destination.
There is a:
Completion.
There is a point toward which the entire story is:
Moving.
The mystery has an:
End.
And that end belongs to:
God.

8. God Finishes

Perhaps two of the simplest words in this verse are also among the most:
Comforting.
God:
Finishes.
Human beings do not always:
Finish.
We begin things enthusiastically.
Then life:
Changes.
Strength fails.

Resources disappear.
Circumstances intervene.
Time runs out.
Plans remain unfinished.
God does not leave His redemptive purpose sitting half-completed because history became too:
Difficult.
What God begins—
God:
Finishes.

9. The Prophets Had Already Spoken

John says God had announced this to His servants the:
Prophets.
That reaches backward across the long history of:
Scripture.
Revelation is not God's sudden decision to create a different ending for the:
Story.
The prophets had already spoken of God's purposes.
Judgment.
Restoration.
Justice.
Salvation.
The defeat of evil.
The reign of:
God.
They did not all receive the same details.
They did not all stand at the same point in the:
Story.
But through them God had been announcing that history belonged to:
Him.

10. “His Servants”

There is something beautiful in the way John describes the:
Prophets.
God's:
Servants.
They were not owners of the:
Message.
They were servants entrusted with:
It.
That sounds very much like what John himself is experiencing.
He hears what he is permitted to:
Hear.
Writes what he is commanded to:

Write.
Keeps sealed what he is commanded to:
Seal.
Takes the scroll when commanded to:
Take.
Eats when commanded to:
Eat.
And soon he will prophesy:
Again.
The messenger belongs to the:
Message-Giver.

11. Revelation Belongs to the Same Story

Sometimes Revelation is treated as though it were a strange book detached from the rest of the:
Bible.
Almost a separate prophetic universe requiring an entirely different way of:
Reading.
Verse 7 pushes against that.
The mystery moving toward fulfillment is what God had already announced through His:
Prophets.
Revelation belongs to the same:
Story.
The God of Revelation is the God of:
Genesis.
The God of the prophets.
The God of the Gospels.
The God revealed in:
Christ.
This is not a new God finishing a new story.
It is the faithful God completing the story He has been telling all:
Along.

12. Fulfillment Is Larger Than Judgment

We should notice something else.
The mystery of God is not merely the completion of:
Judgment.
Judgment certainly belongs within Revelation.
But God's purpose is much larger than:
Destruction.
Revelation is moving toward:
Kingdom.
Justice.
Worship.

Resurrection.
New creation.
God dwelling with His:
People.
Tears wiped:
Away.
Death no:
More.
If we read fulfillment only as catastrophe, we have made the ending smaller than Revelation:
Does.
God is not merely ending something.
He is bringing something to:
Completion.

13. The Seventh Trumpet Will Tell Us More

We should also resist getting ahead of:
John.
Verse 7 points toward the seventh:
Trumpet.
Chapter 11 will allow us to:
Hear it.
And when it sounds, heavenly voices will proclaim something extraordinary about the kingdom of the:
World.
For now, John gives us:
Anticipation.
The mystery is approaching fulfillment.
We do not need to drag Chapter 11 backward and force everything into Verse: 7
We can allow Revelation to unfold at its own:
Pace.
The trumpet will sound when John gets:
There.

14. The Church Lives Before Fulfillment

John's first readers lived before everything described in Revelation had reached its:
Completion.
So do:
We.
That means Christians live with an unusual combination of:
Confidence
and:
Waiting.

We know where the story is:
Going.
But we have not yet seen everything brought to:
Completion.
We know Christ has conquered.
Yet evil still:
Wounds.
We know death has been defeated.
Yet people still:
Die.
We know God's kingdom is coming in fullness.
Yet the world still:
Rebels.
We live between promise and:
Fulfillment.

15. Unfinished Does Not Mean Uncertain

That distinction may be the pastoral heart of this:
Verse.
God's work is not yet fully:
Finished.
But that does not mean its outcome is:
Uncertain.
We often confuse those things.
When we cannot see the ending, we begin wondering whether there will:
Be one.
When circumstances remain unresolved, we wonder whether God is still:
Working.
When prayers remain unanswered, we wonder whether the story has somehow:
Stalled.
Revelation says:
No.
Unfinished does not mean:
Abandoned.
Waiting does not mean:
Forgotten.
Mystery does not mean:
Chaos.
God's purpose is still moving toward:
Fulfillment.

16. We Are Not Asked to Solve the Mystery

Notice what John is not commanded to:
Do.

He is not told:
Solve the mystery.
He is not told:
Construct a chart explaining every detail.
He is not told:
Calculate when the seventh trumpet will sound.
He is told something much more:
Important.
The mystery of God will be:
Fulfilled.
Faith is not asked to master the mystery.
Faith is asked to trust the God who will:
Fulfill it.

17. The God Who Promises Is the God Who Completes

Verse 6 told us who stands behind the:
Promise.
The One who lives forever and:
Ever.
The Creator of heaven.
Earth.
Sea.
And everything within:
Them.
Now verse 7 tells us what that God will:
Do.
Fulfill His:
Purpose.
The connection matters.
God can finish the story because the story ultimately belongs to:
Him.
The Creator is also the:
Completer.
The One who spoke creation into being is not going to lose control of creation before its story reaches the destination He has:
Purposed.

18. Faith Can Live With Mystery

Perhaps that is one of the great lessons of this entire:
Chapter.
There are things John knows that we do:
Not.
There are things neither John nor we are invited to:
Control.
There are things God has revealed.

There are things God has:
Sealed.
Yet faith can live in that:
Space.
We do not need complete knowledge in order to have genuine:
Trust.
We need to know the One who holds what we do not:
Know.
Faith does not endure because every mystery has been:
Solved.
Faith endures because it knows the One who holds the:
Mystery.

Pastoral Reflection

Most of our lives contain unfinished:
Stories.
Prayers still being:
Prayed.
Questions still unanswered.
Relationships still unresolved.
Dreams still uncertain.
Grief still healing.
Promises we believe but have not yet seen:
Completed.
And unfinished stories can make us:
Anxious.
We want to know how everything:
Ends.
We want God to show us the next:
Page.
Sometimes we would settle for the next:
Paragraph.
But often He does:
Not.
Instead, God gives us enough light for the step we are presently called to:
Take.
Revelation 10:7 reminds us that what feels unfinished to us is not therefore uncertain to:
God.
The mystery will be:
Fulfilled.
That does not answer every:
Question.
It gives us something deeper than an answer.

It gives us a reason to:
Trust.
The same God who spoke through the prophets is still:
Speaking.
The same God who began His purpose is still:
Working.
The same God who promised fulfillment is still:
Faithful.
We may not know how every thread will come:
Together.
But we know whose hands hold the:
Threads.
And sometimes that is enough for the next step of:
Faith.

Something Worth Pondering

Verse 4 taught us that some things remain:
Sealed.
Verse 7 teaches us that God's purpose will still be:
Fulfilled.
Those truths belong:
Together.
We do not need to know everything God knows for God to accomplish everything God:
Intends.
Perhaps much of our anxiety comes from confusing knowledge with:
Control.
We think that if we understood everything, we could finally:
Rest.
Revelation offers another kind of rest.
Not:
I understand everything.
But:
God knows what He is doing.
There are mysteries God has not asked us to solve.
There are promises God has asked us to trust.
And there is a story God has promised to:
Finish.

Ask Yourself This:

Where am I treating an unfinished story as though it were an uncertain one? Can I trust God's purpose even when I cannot see how all the pieces fit together?

And am I trying to solve mysteries God has asked me simply to entrust to Him?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:8

“And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.”
— Revelation 10:8, KJV

The voice speaks:
Again.
John has heard this voice before.
Only a few verses earlier it told him:
Do not write.
Now the same voice tells him:
Go.
Take.
The first command required:
Restraint.
The second requires:
Action.
And between those two commands lies an important picture of faithful:
Obedience.
John does not decide what he will receive.
He does not decide what he will reveal.
He listens.
Then he:
Obeys.

1. “The Voice...Spoke to Me Again”

John recognizes the:
Voice.
This is the voice from heaven that interrupted him when he was preparing to record the words of the seven:
Thunders.
Earlier it said:
Stop.
Now it says:
Go.
The same heavenly authority gives both:
Commands.
That matters.
We sometimes imagine obedience primarily in terms of:
Doing.
Go.

Speak.
Serve.
Give.
Act.
But sometimes obedience means:
Stopping.
Waiting.
Remaining silent.
Leaving something alone.
John has now been asked to do:
Both.

2. Faithfulness Requires More Than Activity

John was prepared to write in verse: 4
That would normally have been the right thing to:
Do.
But God said:
No.
Now John could remain where he is and simply continue watching.
But God says:
Go.
Faithfulness is not merely doing something because it appears spiritually:
Useful.
Faithfulness means responding to what God has actually:
Asked.
Sometimes that means:
Wait.
Sometimes:
Move.
The important thing is not constant activity.
The important thing is:
Obedience.

3. “Go”

The first word of the command is:
Go.
John must:
Move.
Until now he has largely been an observer of this part of the:
Vision.
He has watched the angel descend.
He has seen him stand upon sea and land.
He has heard the roar.
He has heard the thunders.
He has watched the angel raise his hand.

He has heard the oath.
Now John is drawn into the:
Scene.
Go.
Revelation is no longer something merely happening in front of:
John.
John must participate in what happens:
Next.

4. “Take”

Then comes the second command:
Take.
That word is even more:
Personal.
The scroll is already:
Open.
The angel already holds:
It.
Nothing prevents John from receiving it except John's willingness to:
Take it.
The Word has moved from something John can:
See—
to something he must:
Receive.
That is a significant movement.
It is possible to stand near the Word of God without ever truly:
Taking it.
It is possible to admire it.
Study it.
Discuss it.
Even teach it.
And still keep it safely at:
Arm's length.
John is not permitted to do:
That.
Take the:
Scroll.

5. The Scroll Is Still Open

John again emphasizes that the scroll is:
Open.
That detail has not:
Changed.
And after the seven thunders, the contrast becomes even more:
Important.

The thunders were:
Sealed.
The scroll is:
Open.
One message has been withheld.
Another has been:
Given.
John is not told to spend his time trying to recover what God has:
Sealed.
He is told to take what God has:
Opened.
There is wisdom in that.

6. Do Not Become Preoccupied With the Sealed

Human curiosity naturally moves toward the thing we cannot:
Have.
Tell us what the seven thunders:
Said.
Explain the hidden mystery.
Show us what God chose not to:
Reveal.
But heaven redirects John's attention.
Not toward the sealed:
Thunders.
Toward the open:
Scroll.
Perhaps we need that redirection as:
Well.
There will always be questions Scripture does not:
Answer.
But there is already more in what God has revealed than we could exhaust in a:
Lifetime.
The problem is often not that God has told us too:
Little.
It is that we have not fully received what He has already:
Given.

7. The Scroll Is in the Angel's Hand

John knows exactly where the scroll:
Is.
In the hand of the mighty:
Angel.
The message is not:
Lost.

It does not need to be discovered through secret knowledge.
It is not hidden somewhere waiting for a special class of people to:
Find it.
It is:
Open.
Visible.
Available.
And John receives a direct command to:
Take it.
God's revealed Word does not require us to invent another:
Word.
It requires us to receive the one He has:
Given.

8. John Must Approach What Looks Overwhelming

Think again about the angel John must:
Approach.
Wrapped in a cloud.
Rainbow above his head.
Face like the sun.
Feet like pillars of fire.
One foot upon the sea.
One upon the land.
Voice like a roaring:
Lion.
And John is told:
Go.
That must have been quite a:
Walk.
The command does not become impossible simply because the scene is:
Intimidating.
John moves toward what God has commanded him to:
Receive.
Sometimes obedience requires approaching something that appears larger than:
Us.
We do not go because we feel adequate.
We go because God has:
Sent us.

9. From Revelation to Participation

Something important is happening to John.
He has been receiving Revelation primarily through:
Seeing.
And:

Hearing.
Now revelation becomes:
Participation.
Go.
Take.
Soon:
Eat.
Then:
Prophesy.
The movement becomes increasingly:
Personal.
God's Word is not intended merely to pass before John's:
Eyes.
It will enter his:
Life.
And after it enters his life, it will come from his:
Mouth.

10. Before the Word Is Spoken, It Must Be Received

That order matters.
John will eventually be told:
Prophesy again.
But first:
Take.
Then:
Eat.
Only afterward:
Speak.
There is something deeply important there for anyone who handles:
Scripture.
Before we speak God's Word to someone else, we should allow God's Word to speak to:
Us.
Before we ask:
What does this say to them?
Perhaps we should first ask:
What does this say to me?
The faithful messenger is never merely a:
Courier.
The message must pass through the life of the:
Messenger.

11. Obedience Often Comes One Command at a Time

John does not yet receive the entire explanation.
At this moment he is simply told:

Go.
Take.
The command to eat will come:
Next.
The bitterness will be experienced:
Later.
The renewed commission to prophesy will come after:
That.
God gives John the next act of obedience before revealing everything that act will:
Involve.
That sounds remarkably like ordinary:
Faith.
We often want the whole:
Plan.
God frequently gives us the next:
Step.
And faith takes it.

12. The Same Voice That Says “No” Also Says “Go”

There may be something pastorally important in that:
Contrast.
In verse 4 the voice said:
No.
Do not write.
In verse 8 the voice says:
Go.
Take.
Sometimes we experience God's:
No—
and assume the story has:
Stopped.
A door closes.
A plan changes.
Something we wanted does not:
Happen.
We can become so focused upon what God has not allowed that we fail to hear what He is calling us to do:
Next.
John does not remain standing beside the sealed thunders wondering why he could not write:
Them.
The voice speaks again.
And John:

Moves.
A closed door is not always the end of the:
Journey.
Sometimes it simply redirects us toward the door God has: Opened.

Pastoral Reflection

There are moments when faith means:
Stopping.
And there are moments when faith means:
Going.
Both can be:
Difficult.
Sometimes we desperately want to move, and God seems to say:
Wait.
Other times we would prefer to remain comfortable, and God says:
Go.
John experiences both within only a few:
Verses.
Do not write.
Then:
Go and take.
Perhaps part of spiritual maturity is learning not to confuse our preferred direction with God's:
Direction.
We may spend years asking God to explain what He has:
Closed.
Why not this?
Why didn't that happen?
Why did this opportunity disappear?
Why didn't You answer the way I:
Expected?
Those are honest:
Questions.
But eventually the voice may call our attention somewhere:
Else.
There is still an open scroll.
There is still something to:
Receive.
There is still somewhere to:
Go.
There is still something God is calling us to:
Do.
Faithfulness does not require us to understand every closed:
Door.

Sometimes faithfulness simply hears the next command and:
Moves.

Something Worth Pondering

John could have become fascinated with what he was forbidden to:
Write.
Instead, heaven points him toward what is:
Open.
That may be one of the quiet lessons of Revelation: 10
Do not spend so much time trying to open what God has sealed that you neglect what God has already:
Opened.
The seven thunders are sealed.
The little book is:
Open.
And the command is not:
Speculate.
It is:
Take.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I spending more energy on what God has not explained than on what He has already revealed?
Is there a closed door I need to stop staring at so I can hear what God is asking me to do next?
And when God gives me the next step without showing me the entire journey, am I willing to take it?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:9

“And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.”
— Revelation 10:9, KJV

John was told:
Go.
So John:
Went.
He was told:
Take.
So John asks for the:
Scroll.
There is something beautifully uncomplicated about his:
Obedience.
But then the angel adds something John may not have:
Expected.
Taking the scroll is not enough.
John must:
Eat it.
And before he does, the angel tells him exactly what the experience will:
Bring.
Sweetness.
And:
Bitterness.
The Word John receives will not remain safely outside of:
Him.
It will enter him.
And once it does—
John will feel the weight of what he has:
Received.

1. “So I Went”

We should not move too quickly past those simple:
Words.
God said:
Go.
John:
Went.
There is no recorded argument.
No negotiation.

No request for additional:
Instructions.
John does not ask where this obedience will eventually:
Lead.
He simply responds to the command he has already:
Received.
Sometimes faithfulness is that:
Simple.
Not necessarily easy.
But:
Simple.
Hear.
Then:
Obey.

2. John Approaches the Mighty Angel

Think again about whom John approaches.
This is the angel whose face is like the:
Sun.
Whose feet are like pillars of:
Fire.
Who stands with one foot upon the sea and the other upon the:
Land.
Whose shout sounded like a lion:
Roaring.
And John walks toward:
Him.
Why?
Because heaven told him:
Go.
John's courage does not come from believing the angel is:
Small.
It comes from knowing the command is:
God's.
Faith does not always make the thing before us less:
Intimidating.
Sometimes faith simply gives us enough courage to take the next:
Step.

3. “Give Me the Little Book”

John asks the angel to give him the:
Scroll.
The scroll is open.
It is available.
But John still must:

Receive it.
There is a difference between something being available and something being personally:
Possessed.
Food can sit upon the table.
That does not mean we have:
Eaten.
A Bible can sit open before us.
That does not mean its Word has entered our:
Lives.
John has seen the scroll.
Now he reaches for:
It.

4. “Take It”

The angel responds:
Take it.
The command from heaven is confirmed by the:
Angel.
John is not forced to receive the scroll.
It is placed before him to be:
Taken.
There is personal response in that:
Movement.
God reveals.
God calls.
God gives.
But John must:
Take.
Revelation is becoming increasingly personal for the one who has been recording:
It.

5. “And Eat”

Then comes the surprising:
Command.
Eat.
The scroll is not merely something John is to:
Carry.
It is not merely something he is to:
Read.
It must become part of:
Him.
The image deliberately takes us beyond intellectual:
Understanding.

What John receives must move from outside to:
Inside.
The Word must pass into the life of the:
Messenger.

6. Ezekiel Stands Behind the Image

John's readers familiar with the prophets would recognize an important:
Echo.
Ezekiel also received a scroll and was commanded to:
Eat.
The prophetic message had to become part of the prophet before the prophet carried that message to:
Others.
John now stands in that same prophetic:
Tradition.
The connection fits what this chapter is preparing him to:
Do.
He will soon be told:
You must prophesy again.
But before the prophet speaks—
the prophet must:
Eat.

7. The Word Must Enter Before It Comes Out

There is a lesson here for anyone who handles:
Scripture.
It is possible to prepare a sermon without allowing the sermon to preach to:
Us.
It is possible to teach a passage without allowing the passage to teach:
Us.
It is possible to explain grace while remaining unwilling to:
Give it.
To teach forgiveness while holding tightly to:
Resentment.
To proclaim trust while living entirely by:
Fear.
To speak about endurance while quietly preparing to:
Quit.
John is not allowed merely to transport the:
Message.
He must consume:
It.
Before the Word comes from his mouth, it must pass through his:
Life.

8. The Angel Warns John

The angel does not hide what will:
Happen.
The scroll will be bitter to John's:
Stomach.
And sweet as honey in his:
Mouth.
John receives no false:
Advertising.
He is not told:
Take this and everything will become easy.
He is told in advance that receiving this Word will involve both:
Delight
and:
Pain.
That honesty matters.
God does not need to deceive people into:
Faithfulness.

9. Sweet as Honey

The scroll will taste:
Sweet.
That image has deep roots in Scripture.
God's words are repeatedly associated with something precious and:
Delightful.
There is genuine sweetness in hearing God:
Speak.
We are not abandoned to silence.
We are not left to invent meaning for:
Ourselves.
God has:
Revealed.
God has:
Promised.
God has made Himself:
Known.
There is sweetness in:
That.

10. Truth Can Be Sweet

Some truths are sweet the moment we hear:
Them.
God is:
Faithful.
Grace is:

Real.
Sin can be:
Forgiven.
Death will not have the final:
Word.
Christ has:
Conquered.
God will dwell with His:
People.
Every tear will be wiped:
Away.
There is no need to apologize for delighting in those:
Promises.
The Word really is:
Sweet.
But that is not all the angel tells:
John.

11. Bitter to the Stomach

The same scroll will become:
Bitter.
Not another scroll.
Not a corrupted scroll.
Not an inferior:
Message.
The same Word that tastes sweet will produce bitterness within:
John.
Why?
Because the truth John carries includes things that are painful to:
Carry.
Judgment is:
Real.
Human rebellion is:
Real.
Suffering is:
Real.
The consequences of evil are:
Real.
The Word comforts.
But the Word also:
Confronts.

12. Truth Does Not Become Less True Because It Hurts

We sometimes judge a message by how it makes us:
Feel.

If it comforts us, we welcome:
It.
If it troubles us, we may be tempted to:
Resist it.
But the bitterness of the scroll does not mean the scroll is:
Bad.
Sometimes truth:
Hurts.
A diagnosis may be painful to hear and still be:
True.
A correction may sting and still be:
Necessary.
A call to repentance may disturb us and still be an act of:
Grace.
God's Word does not promise always to make us:
Comfortable.
It promises to tell us the:
Truth.

13. The Messenger Must Carry Both

John does not receive permission to select only the sweet portions of the:
Scroll.
He must eat the:
Whole.
That is part of the burden of faithful:
Witness.
We would naturally prefer to speak only words people enjoy:
Hearing.
Hope.
Grace.
Blessing.
Promise.
And those belong to the Christian:
Message.
But so do:
Repentance.
Judgment.
Sacrifice.
Discipleship.
Holiness.
The cost of following:
Christ.
The faithful messenger does not remove the bitter portions in order to make the scroll easier to:

Swallow.

14. Sweetness Without Bitterness Would Be Incomplete

Neither should we make the opposite:
Mistake.
Some proclamation seems almost to enjoy the:
Bitterness.
Judgment becomes the center.
Condemnation becomes the tone.
Fear becomes the:
Method.
But John's scroll is not merely:
Bitter.
It is also sweet as:
Honey.
Faithful proclamation holds both:
Together.
Grace without truth becomes sentimentality.
Truth without grace can become:
Cruelty.
The gospel tells the truth about our sin precisely because God intends to tell us the greater truth about His:
Grace.

15. The Word Changes the One Who Carries It

John cannot eat the scroll and remain:
Unaffected.
It tastes sweet.
It becomes bitter.
The message works upon the:
Messenger.
That may be one of the clearest marks of faithful ministry.
The Word we proclaim should still be capable of:
Moving us.
Comforting us.
Convicting us.
Troubling us.
Correcting us.
Encouraging us.
If Scripture becomes something we only use upon:
Others—
we have stopped eating the:
Scroll.

16. Receiving the Word Has a Cost

John asked for the scroll.

He receives exactly what he:
Requested.
But receiving it carries a:
Cost.
That is worth remembering.
We often pray:
Lord, speak to me.
And that is a good:
Prayer.
But we should understand what we are:
Asking.
God may speak a word of:
Comfort.
He may also speak a word of:
Correction.
He may reassure us.
He may challenge:
Us.
He may confirm the road we are walking.
He may tell us to:
Turn around.
If we genuinely want God's Word, we must be willing to receive the Word God actually:
Gives.

17. John Is Being Prepared to Speak Again

The command to eat the scroll is not the end of John's:
Calling.
It is preparation for what comes:
Next.
“You must prophesy again.”
That means the sweetness and bitterness are not merely private spiritual:
Experiences.
They prepare John for faithful:
Witness.
The messenger who has tasted the sweetness can speak of hope.
The messenger who has carried the bitterness can speak honestly about:
Judgment.
John will speak from a Word that has already passed through:
Him.

18. The Word Is Sweet Enough to Receive and Bitter Enough to Trouble Us

Perhaps that is where Verse 9 finally:
Lands.

God's Word is not bland.
It is not harmless.
It does not leave us exactly as it found:
Us.
It comforts.
And:
Confronts.
It heals.
And:
Exposes.
It gives hope.
And calls us to:
Repentance.
It tells us what we long to:
Hear.
And sometimes what we would rather not:
Hear.
The Word of God is sweet enough to:
Receive.
Bitter enough to:
Trouble us.
And, as John will soon discover—
important enough that we must speak it:
Anyway.

Pastoral Reflection

Anyone who has loved Scripture for very long knows both:
Tastes.
There are passages we return to because they feel like:
Honey.
"The Lord is my shepherd."
"Nothing can separate us from the love of God."
"I am with you always."
Words we have carried through hospitals.
Funerals.
Lonely nights.
Uncertain mornings.
Words that have held us when we could barely hold onto:
Them.
Sweet.
But then Scripture turns the page.
Forgive.
Repent.
Love your enemy.

Take up your cross.
Give.
Serve.
Confess.
Follow.
And suddenly the same book tastes:
Different.
Bitter does not mean:
Bad.
Sometimes bitterness is the taste of truth reaching a place within us we would rather leave:
Untouched.
John does not receive two scrolls.
One sweet.
One bitter.
He receives:
One.
And so do:
We.
The Word that comforts us is the Word that corrects us.
The Word that assures us of grace is the Word that calls us to holiness.
The Word that tells us we are loved is the Word that refuses to leave us unchanged.
Perhaps we have not truly received the Word until we are willing to receive:
Both.

Something Worth Pondering

John asks for the scroll.
Then he learns what receiving it will:
Cost.
There is something wonderfully honest about:
That.
God does not promise that His Word will always tell us what we want to:
Hear.
He promises something far more valuable.
It will tell us the:
Truth.
And truth can taste like honey in the mouth while becoming heavy in the:
Heart.
The goal is not to search Scripture only for sweetness.
Nor is it to make Christianity unnecessarily:
Bitter.
The goal is to receive the whole:
Scroll.

Because the whole Word comes from the same faithful:
God.

Ask Yourself This:

Do I welcome God's Word only when it comforts me, or also when it corrects me?
Have I allowed Scripture to become something I apply primarily to others rather than something that first works within me?
And am I willing to receive the whole Word—both the sweetness I cherish and the bitterness that may change me?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:10

“And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.”
— Revelation 10:10, KJV

John has been:
Warned.
He knows what will:
Happen.
The scroll will be:
Sweet.
And it will become:
Bitter.
Yet John reaches out.
Takes the scroll.
And:
Eats.
The angel's words prove:
True.
Sweet in the mouth.
Bitter in the:
Stomach.
The Word John receives delights him.
Then it troubles:
Him.
And perhaps nowhere in this chapter do we see more clearly what it means not merely to hear the Word—
but to let the Word become part of:
Us.

1. “So I Took”

John:
Takes.
The command becomes:
Obedience.
There is a difference between agreeing with God's command and actually:
Doing it.
John could have acknowledged that the scroll was important.
He could have admired it.
He could have discussed what taking it might:
Mean.

Instead:
“I took.”
Faith eventually has to move beyond:
Agreement.
There comes a moment when obedience requires:
Action.

2. From the Hand of the Angel

The scroll passes from the angel's hand into:
John's.
That movement matters.
Until now, the scroll has belonged to the scene John was:
Watching.
Now it becomes something personally entrusted to:
Him.
The message has moved from:
There—
to:
Here.
From the messenger standing over sea and land—
to the prophet who must soon speak to peoples, nations, languages, and:
Kings.
What John receives will not remain:
Private.
But first it must become:
Personal.

3. “And Ate It”

John does exactly what he was:
Told.
He eats the:
Scroll.
The image is strange if we insist upon reading it merely:
Literally.
But as prophetic imagery, its meaning is powerful.
The Word is being:
Internalized.
John does not merely possess the message.
The message possesses:
Him.
It enters his life.
It becomes part of his:
Experience.
The prophet cannot keep the Word at a safe:
Distance.

4. There Is a Difference Between Reading and Receiving

We can read Scripture without allowing Scripture to reach very far into:
Us.
Words can pass before our eyes.
Ideas can enter our minds.
Information can accumulate.
And still the Word may never reach the places where we:
Live.
John's experience points toward something:
Deeper.
The Word must be:
Received.
Taken seriously.
Allowed to confront us.
Allowed to comfort us.
Allowed to:
Change us.
There is a difference between knowing what a passage says and allowing what it says to become part of who we:
Are.

5. The Scroll Is Sweet

The angel had said:
Sweet as honey.
John eats.
And it is:
Sweet as honey.
There is genuine delight in the Word of:
God.
John has heard terrifying things throughout Revelation.
But God's Word itself remains:
Good.
The message comes from the God who is:
Faithful.
The God whose purposes will be:
Fulfilled.
The God whose kingdom will:
Come.
There is sweetness in knowing that the world is not abandoned to:
Chaos.

6. Sweetness Is Not Naivety

John's delight in the Word does not mean he has forgotten what he has:
Seen.
He has seen persecution.

Martyrdom.
Judgment.
War.
Famine.
Death.
Darkness.
The abyss.
And still the scroll tastes:
Sweet.
Why?
Because Christian hope does not require us to pretend the darkness is not:
Dark.
Hope knows something darkness does not:
Know.
The story belongs to:
God.
The sweetness comes not from denying what is wrong with the world—
but from knowing that what is wrong will not have the final:
Word.

7. “But”

Then comes one small word:
But.
The scroll was sweet as honey in John's mouth:
But—
when he had eaten it, his stomach was made:
Bitter.
Sweetness is real.
But sweetness is not the whole:
Story.
John cannot keep the Word only in his:
Mouth.
Once swallowed, it goes:
Deeper.
And there the experience:
Changes.

8. The Bitterness Comes After the Sweetness

That order is interesting.
First:
Sweet.
Then:
Bitter.
Perhaps there is something recognizable in:
That.

We may first encounter God's Word through its:
Beauty.
Grace.
Promise.
Hope.
Love.
Then, as that Word works more deeply within us, we begin discovering what following it may:
Cost.
Forgiveness sounds beautiful—
until we must forgive someone who hurt:
Us.
Trust sounds beautiful—
until we must trust when we cannot see the:
Outcome.
Endurance sounds beautiful—
until we must:
Endure.
The Word does not become less beautiful.
But it becomes more:
Personal.

9. The Bitterness Is Inside John

Notice where the bitterness:
Occurs.
Not in the scroll.
In John's:
Stomach.
The Word has entered:
Him.
The bitterness is now something he:
Feels.
The prophet is not detached from the message he:
Carries.
John cannot speak about judgment as though judgment were merely an interesting theological:
Subject.
He feels the weight of:
It.
Perhaps that is exactly how a faithful messenger should carry difficult:
Truth.
Not with delight in another person's condemnation.
Not with cold:
Detachment.

But with a heart that understands the seriousness of what is being:
Said.

10. Truth Should Sometimes Trouble the Messenger

There would be something wrong if John could proclaim judgment without being:
Troubled.
There would be something wrong if suffering became merely material for an interesting:
Sermon.
There would be something wrong if human rebellion and its consequences produced no grief within the:
Messenger.
The bitterness reminds us that truth is not merely something we:
Deliver.
Sometimes truth is something we:
Carry.
And carrying it can:
Hurt.

11. The Bitter Word Is Still God's Word

John does not discover that the angel gave him the wrong:
Scroll.
The bitterness does not invalidate the:
Message.
That is important.
We sometimes assume that anything from God should always make us feel immediately:
Better.
But Scripture does not make that:
Promise.
Sometimes God's Word comforts.
Sometimes it:
Convicts.
Sometimes it reassures.
Sometimes it:
Disturbs.
Sometimes it lifts a burden.
Sometimes it shows us a burden we had refused to:
See.
The bitter Word is still God's:
Word.

12. We Need the Whole Scroll

It would be easy to build a faith around only the:
Sweet.

Promise without repentance.
Grace without discipleship.
Resurrection without the cross.
Comfort without correction.
But that would not be the whole:
Scroll.
It would be equally mistaken to build faith only around the:
Bitter.
Judgment without grace.
Sin without forgiveness.
Suffering without hope.
The cross without resurrection.
That would not be the whole scroll:
Either.
John eats:
One scroll.
Sweet.
And:
Bitter.
Faith receives:
Both.

13. The Word Does Not Leave John Unchanged

Before John ate the scroll, he was carrying a:
Message.
Afterward, he was carrying an:
Experience.
He now knows what the Word tastes:
Like.
He knows what it feels like within:
Him.
That changes the character of his:
Witness.
The Word he will proclaim is no longer merely something he has:
Heard.
It is something he has:
Consumed.
Something he has:
Felt.
Something that has worked within:
Him.

14. The Messenger Is Under the Word Too

That may be one of the most important lessons here for anyone who teaches:
Scripture.

The preacher does not stand:
Above the Word.
The teacher does not stand:
Above the Word.
The commentator does not stand:
Above the Word.
The messenger stands:
Under it.
Before we apply Scripture to someone:
Else—
it applies to:
Us.
Before we ask what the congregation needs to:
Hear—
we should ask what we need to:
Hear.
The messenger who never eats the scroll may eventually speak about Scripture without being shaped by:
Scripture.

15. Bitterness Does Not Mean Stop

John's stomach becomes:
Bitter.
But his calling is not:
Cancelled.
That becomes especially important when we reach the next:
Verse.
John will be told:
You must prophesy again.
The bitterness does not disqualify:
Him.
It prepares:
Him.
Sometimes we assume difficulty means we have taken a wrong:
Turn.
Sometimes it does.
But not:
Always.
John is exactly where obedience has brought:
Him.
And obedience has become:
Bitter.
Faithfulness is not measured by the absence of:
Difficulty.

16. The Word Is Preparing John for What Comes Next

Chapter 10 does not end with John's stomach:
Bitter.
That is not the destination.
The scroll has entered John because John still has something to:
Do.
He will:
Speak again.
The Word is preparing the messenger for the:
Mission.
Sweetness gives him hope.
Bitterness gives him:
Weight.
Together they prepare him to speak faithfully about the God whose purposes are moving toward:
Fulfillment.

17. Faith Must Sometimes Carry What It Cannot Celebrate

There are truths Christians celebrate:
Joyfully.
Grace.
Resurrection.
Forgiveness.
Eternal life.
The victory of:
Christ.
There are other truths we proclaim with:
Tears.
Judgment.
Human rebellion.
The consequences of sin.
The suffering of the:
World.
Faithfulness does not require us to enjoy the:
Bitterness.
It requires us not to pretend it is not part of the:
Scroll.
There are truths we sing.
And there are truths we:
Weep over.
Both may belong to faithful:
Witness.

18. Sweet Enough to Receive, Bitter Enough to Trouble

John's experience confirms what the angel had:
Said.
The Word is:
Sweet.
The Word is:
Bitter.
And neither experience cancels the:
Other.
Perhaps mature faith learns to resist the temptation to choose between:
Them.
We do not have to pretend the bitterness is sweet.
And we do not have to allow the bitterness to convince us there is no:
Sweetness.
We receive the whole:
Scroll.
Because the whole scroll comes from:
God.

Pastoral Reflection

There are Scriptures that have carried us through the darkest nights of our:
Lives.
Words we have whispered beside hospital:
Beds.
Words we have repeated beside:
Graves.
Words we have held onto when everything else seemed to be slipping from our:
Hands.
Sweet as:
Honey.
But the same Bible has confronted us with things we would rather not:
Hear.
Forgive.
Repent.
Confess.
Change.
Wait.
Endure.
Love the person who has hurt:
You.
Take up your:
Cross.
Those words can become:

Bitter.
Not because they are wrong.
Because they reach places within us that would rather remain:
Untouched.
John teaches us not to choose between the two.
He eats the:
Scroll.
All of:
It.
Perhaps that is part of what it means to love the Word of God.
Not merely loving the passages that reassure:
Us.
But trusting the God who speaks even when His Word:
Corrects us.
Challenges us.
Troubles us.
Or asks something difficult of:
Us.
The Word is sweet enough to:
Receive.
Bitter enough to:
Trouble us.
And faithful enough to be trusted in:
Both.

Something Worth Pondering

John knew the bitterness was coming.
And he ate the scroll:
Anyway.
That may be the quiet courage of this:
Verse.
Obedience does not always ask:
Will this be pleasant?
Sometimes obedience asks:
Is this what God has given me to do?
The answer may lead through sweetness.
The answer may lead through bitterness.
Often it leads through:
Both.
But neither changes the identity of the One who gave the:
Word.
And neither changes the faithfulness of the God whose purposes will be:
Fulfilled.

Ask Yourself This:

Have I been willing to receive only the parts of God's Word that taste sweet to me?
When Scripture troubles or corrects me, do I reject the bitterness—or allow the Word to work more deeply within me?
And can I trust that the same God is speaking in both the comfort that strengthens me and the truth that changes me?

A Closer Look — Revelation 10:11

“And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”
— Revelation 10:11, KJV

John has eaten the:
Scroll.
He has tasted its:
Sweetness.
He has felt its:
Bitterness.
Now comes the reason.
“Thou must prophesy:
Again.”
The Word has entered:
John.
Now the Word must go back into the:
World.
The prophet has not been given revelation merely for his own:
Understanding.
He has been given revelation because he still has a:
Calling.
The commission places him before a world far larger than:
John.
Peoples.
Nations.
Languages.
Kings.
The scroll may be:
Little.
The mission is:
Not.

1. “And He Said unto Me”

The KJV uses a singular speaker here.
Earlier John heard a voice from:
Heaven.
He spoke with the:
Angel.
Now:
“And he said unto me.”
The command is addressed to:

John.
And it directs his attention beyond:
Himself.
Questions about the speaker should not distract us from the commission.
But we have already learned something important in this:
Chapter.
When Scripture stops speaking—
we stop speaking:
Too.
The speaker's identity is not the central:
Emphasis.
The command is.

2. "Thou Must"

The language is:
Strong.
Not:
You might.
Not:
You could.
Not:
If you feel like it.
You:
Must.
John's calling carries divine:
Necessity.
He has received the Word.
Now responsibility follows:
Revelation.
What God has entrusted to John cannot simply remain within:
Him.
He must:
Speak.

3. Revelation Creates Responsibility

That principle reaches beyond:
John.
Receiving truth carries:
Responsibility.
If God reveals something merely to satisfy our curiosity, then knowledge might end with:
Us.
But biblical revelation repeatedly moves toward:
Faithfulness.
God speaks.

His servants:
Receive.
Then His servants are called to:
Respond.
John has not eaten the scroll so that he can become the most knowledgeable man on:
Patmos.
He has eaten because he has been entrusted with a:
Message.

4. “Prophesy”

John is told to:
Prophesy.
That does not mean he is being invited to indulge in:
Speculation.
Quite the:
Opposite.
The prophet speaks what God has:
Given.
That is especially important after the seven:
Thunders.
John knows something he has been forbidden to:
Reveal.
And he knows something he has been commanded to:
Proclaim.
Faithful prophecy requires knowing the difference.
The prophet does not speak everything he:
Knows.
He speaks what God has given him to:
Speak.

5. “Again”

Perhaps the most encouraging word in the verse is:
Again.
John has already been:
Faithful.
Already witnessed.
Already suffered.
Already been exiled to:
Patmos.
Already received extraordinary:
Visions.
Already written difficult:
Words.
And still:

Again.
God is not finished with:
John.
His previous faithfulness does not eliminate his present:
Calling.
There is still work to:
Do.

6. Again Can Be a Difficult Word

Sometimes:
Again—
is not the word we want to:
Hear.
Try:
Again.
Serve:
Again.
Trust:
Again.
Speak:
Again.
Love:
Again.
After disappointment.
After exhaustion.
After suffering.
After bitterness.
Again can feel:
Heavy.
John has just experienced the bitterness of the:
Scroll.
And then comes:
Again.
The bitterness does not end his:
Calling.

7. Bitterness Does Not Mean the Mission Has Failed

This matters.
John's stomach has become:
Bitter.
God does not interpret that bitterness as evidence that John should:
Stop.
Instead:
Prophesy again.
We sometimes assume that difficulty means something has gone:

Wrong.
If obedience hurts, perhaps we misunderstood.
If ministry becomes difficult, perhaps the calling has:
Ended.
If people reject the message, perhaps speaking was:
Useless.
Revelation does not allow that conclusion so:
Quickly.
Sometimes bitterness is encountered precisely because we are faithfully carrying the:
Scroll.

8. The Messenger Speaks From What He Has Consumed

John is now different from the man who first saw the little book in the angel's:
Hand.
Then he observed:
It.
Now he has:
Consumed it.
The message he will proclaim has already worked within:
Him.
That matters.
There is a difference between speaking about something we have merely studied and speaking from truth that has shaped our:
Lives.
John knows the sweetness.
John knows the bitterness.
Now John can:
Speak.

9. “About Many Peoples”

The message extends to many:
Peoples.
The word of God is not confined to one:
Community.
John may be physically confined to:
Patmos.
The Word is:
Not.
That contrast is remarkable.
Rome can restrict the:
Messenger.
Rome cannot restrict the:
Message.

John's geographical circumstances do not determine the reach of God's:
Word.
The prophet may be on an island.
The prophecy will travel far beyond:
It.

10. “Nations”

The message also concerns:
Nations.
Revelation repeatedly reminds us that God's purposes are larger than any one political or national:
Boundary.
Nations may possess armies.
Borders.
Governments.
Power.
Influence.
But no nation stands outside the authority of:
God.
The angel has already stood with one foot upon the sea and one upon the:
Land.
Now John's commission reflects that same universal:
Scope.
The Creator's Word addresses the Creator's:
World.

11. “Tongues”

The KJV says “tongues,” referring to:
Languages.
Humanity speaks with many:
Voices.
Different cultures.
Different histories.
Different ways of understanding the:
World.
Yet the message of God crosses those:
Boundaries.
The gospel is not the private possession of one language or one:
Culture.
The Word moves outward.
Across borders.
Across cultures.
Across generations.
Across:
Languages.

The message John carries is larger than the language in which John first:
Heard it.

12. “And Kings”

Then comes:
Kings.
That word matters in:
Revelation.
Kings represent:
Power.
Authority.
Government.
Influence.
The people who may imagine themselves beyond correction are still addressed by the Word of:
God.
The prophetic message does not stop at the palace:
Door.
Kings may rule over:
People.
But kings remain under:
God.
No crown raises a human being above the authority of the:
Creator.

13. The Word Speaks to the Powerful and the Powerless

Look at the scope:
Peoples.
Nations.
Languages.
Kings.
Ordinary people.
Cultures.
Societies.
Rulers.
The Word reaches:
All.
God's message is not merely comfort for the powerless.
Nor is it merely warning for the:
Powerful.
It speaks truth to every level of human:
Life.
Grace has universal:
Reach.
So does the call to:

Repentance.
So does the claim of God's:
Kingdom.

14. The Little Book Has a Large Mission

There is something almost ironic in the:
Image.
John has eaten a:
Little book.
But the commission attached to it is:
Enormous.
Many peoples.
Nations.
Languages.
Kings.
Never confuse the apparent size of something God gives us with the potential reach of what God may do through:
It.
A little book.
A faithful prophet.
An island of exile.
And a message that will cross:
Centuries.
What looks small in human hands may become enormous in the purposes of:
God.

15. Faithfulness Is Not Measured Only by Response

John is told to:
Prophesy.
He is not promised that everyone will:
Listen.
Chapter 9 has already shown us how stubborn human hearts can:
Be.
People experienced devastating judgment and still did not:
Repent.
Yet John is told:
Speak again.
That teaches us something important about:
Witness.
Faithfulness cannot be measured entirely by visible:
Results.
The messenger is responsible for faithful:
Witness.
The response belongs to those who:
Hear.

16. We Do Not Control the Response

That can be difficult for anyone who has ever preached, taught, witnessed, counseled, parented, or tried to help someone they:
Love.
We want people to:
Respond.
We want the sermon to change:
Someone.
We want the conversation to make a:
Difference.
We want the person we love to finally:
Understand.
Sometimes they:
Do.
Sometimes they do:
Not.
John's commission is not:
Make everyone respond.
It is:
Prophesy again.
Faithfulness means speaking the truth in love and leaving the response in hands larger than:
Ours.

17. The Word Moves From God to the World

Chapter 10 has given us a remarkable:
Movement.
The scroll is:
Open.
John is told to:
Take it.
John is told to:
Eat it.
The scroll becomes part of:
Him.
Then John is told to:
Speak.
Open.
Take.
Eat.
Speak.
The Word moves from God—
into the messenger—
and through the messenger—

toward the:
World.
That is not merely a pattern for:
John.
It is a picture of faithful:
Witness.

18. The Messenger Must Never Become the Message

There is another danger worth:
Remembering.
John has received extraordinary:
Revelation.
He has seen things few human beings have:
Seen.
He has heard things he is not even permitted to:
Repeat.
That could make a person feel rather:
Important.
But John remains the:
Messenger.
The scroll does not originate with:
Him.
The mystery does not belong to:
Him.
The authority does not come from:
Him.
The message is God's.
John's calling is to carry it:
Faithfully.
The messenger matters.
But the message matters:
More.

19. The Church Still Hears “Again”

There is something in this verse for every generation of the:
Church.
Proclaim Christ:
Again.
Tell the story:
Again.
Teach the Scriptures:
Again.
Serve:
Again.
Love:

Again.
Bear witness:
Again.
Not because the previous generation failed.
But because another generation now needs to:
Hear.
The gospel does not become unnecessary because it has already been:
Preached.
Every generation stands in need of the same:
Good News.

20. Endurance Eventually Becomes Witness

We have talked throughout Revelation about:
Endurance.
Here endurance becomes:
Witness.
John has endured exile.
He has endured frightening visions.
He has carried the bitterness of the:
Word.
But endurance is not merely surviving until everything is:
Over.
Christian endurance continues to:
Serve.
Continues to:
Love.
Continues to:
Speak.
Continues to bear witness to:
Christ.
The enduring Church is still a:
Speaking Church.

21. Chapter 10 Ends With a Commission

That is important.
The chapter began with a mighty angel descending from:
Heaven.
It could have ended with spectacle.
It does:
Not.
It ends with:
Mission.
John has seen glory.
Heard thunder.
Encountered mystery.

Witnessed an oath.
Received an open scroll.
Tasted sweetness.
Experienced bitterness.
And where does all of that lead?
Go:
Speak.
Revelation is not given merely so the Church can know more about the:
Future.
Revelation is given so the Church can live faithfully in the:
Present.

22. The Word Must Go Out Again

Perhaps that is the final word of Chapter: 10
Again.
The world is still:
Broken.
Again.
People still need:
Hope.
Again.
Human power still needs to be reminded that it is not:
Ultimate.
Again.
Suffering believers still need to know that God has not:
Forgotten.
Again.
The Church still needs to proclaim that Jesus Christ is:
Lord.
Again.
Until the mystery of God reaches its fulfillment—
the Word must continue to:
Go.

Pastoral Reflection

There comes a point when every encounter with Scripture must move beyond:
Study.
We read.
We reflect.
We learn.
We receive.
We allow the Word to work within:
Us.
But eventually the question becomes:

What will we do with what we have:
Received?
John cannot remain forever beside the mighty:
Angel.
He cannot spend the rest of his life wondering what the seven thunders:
Said.
He cannot simply enjoy the sweetness of the:
Scroll.
Nor can he allow its bitterness to silence:
Him.
He must:
Speak again.
That does not mean every Christian is called to stand behind a:
Pulpit.
But every Christian is called to bear faithful witness to:
Christ.
Sometimes with words.
Sometimes through service.
Sometimes through forgiveness.
Sometimes through compassion.
Sometimes through quiet endurance when the world expects us to:
Quit.
The form may differ.
The calling remains.
We receive the Word.
The Word works within us.
Then the Word becomes visible through the lives we:
Live.
And when yesterday's faithfulness is finished, sometimes God simply says:
Again.

Something Worth Pondering

John is on:
Patmos.
Exiled.
Restricted.
Apparently removed from the places where his ministry might have seemed most:
Useful.
Yet God gives him a commission reaching:
Peoples.
Nations.
Languages.
Kings.

That should make us careful about deciding that our present circumstances determine our usefulness to:
God.
John's location looked:
Small.
His calling was:
Enormous.
The world may limit where a faithful servant can:
Stand.
It cannot determine how far God may carry faithful:
Witness.
The little book entered one man on one island.
And the Word kept:
Going.

Ask Yourself This:

Has something difficult or bitter made me assume that my usefulness to God is over?
What has God placed within my life that I am now called to carry faithfully to others?
And when God says, “Again,” am I willing to keep serving, keep loving, keep witnessing, and keep speaking?