

Interlude: Another Mighty Angel (Rev 10:1-7)

Rev 10:1 “I saw another mighty angel descending from the sky enveloped in a cloud. There was the rainbow on his head and his face was like the sun, legs were like columns of fire” (NR) John describes yet another angel—this one described as “mighty, strong, or powerful” (KJV, NASB, ISV). This angel interrupts the horrors of the last days, as another interlude. This flashback gives us more information in order to understand John’s future mission better in the last days.

The mighty angel helps us understand John’s role in preparing for the Lord’s Second Coming. In contrast to the destroying devils, we see a glorious being of light, covered with a halo or columns of light, and a rainbow, as a sign of reassurance that the covenant is intact (God’s message from the sign of the rainbow from Genesis 9:13). John describes the angel as he previously described the throne of God (Rev 4:3).

John records an abrupt contrast between the calamities of the last day and a glorious experience with a heavenly being. John often contrasts with opposites (light and darkness, wickedness and righteousness, etc.). He uses it to emphasize that there are only two ways in life—you either follow God or you do not.

Rev 10:2 “He held a small, open scroll in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth” (NR) Metaphorically, the angel stood on the sea and earth—communicating that he had authority over land and sea. This might symbolize the breadth of his influence or message, too. The little scroll or “book” (KJV), included John’s mission to gather the tribes of Israel, according to D&C 77:14.

Rev 10:3-4 “He shouted with a loud voice like a lion roaring . . . the seven thunders spoke with their own voices . . . I was about to write, and I hear a voice from heaven saying, ‘Seal up the things . . . do not write them’” (NR) The voice of God is often described as the voice of thunder, so it is applicable that God’s messengers utter His message with the same thunderous sound (Rev 6:1). In the Jewish world of John’s time, “the thunders” referred to the thunders of Sinai, which a first century rabbi recorded as “the Torah was also revealed with the seven voices [or thunders in other translations] of YHWH” referring to God (see Exodus 15:28; 28:6; and Marvin Sweeney, *Jewish Mysticism: From Ancient Times through Today*, 2020). As seven represents complete or whole, the message probably had something to do with the completion of the perfection of the earth. We will have to wait to learn what was actually said.

Rev 10:5-6 “Then the angel . . . raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, . . . said, “There will be no more delay!”(NIV) Time vision describes the promised time of Jesus’ Second Coming is imminent. The angel lifted his *right*, or covenant hand to heaven or to God using several beautiful names for God, and swore or “*omnuó* / promised with an oath”—as if he were making a covenant. The oath was that there would be no more delay; time was up (only the KJV refers to “time no longer,” even the NKJV changes it to “delay”). This answers the martyrs’ cry, “How long O Lord?” (Rev 6:10).

Rev 10:7 “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel . . . the mystery of God will be fulfilled” The seventh angel will be introduced in Rev 11:15, when the “mystery” or work of God will be made known and finished. John is told, just as Amos 3:7 promised, that God will proclaim His works first “to His servants, the prophets.” Until then, we have John’s commission in this chapter-long interlude.

D&C 77:14

Q. What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation?

A. We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things.

The Little Scroll / Book—John’s Personal Assignment (Rev 10:8-11)

Rev 10:8-9 “Come take the open scroll in the hand of the angel’ . . . and I went up to the angel . . . He said to me, ‘Take and eat it, and it will be bitter in your stomach, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey’” (NR) John was commanded to “eat it,” which is figurative for internalizing something. (Jeremiah and Ezekiel were also given a book to eat in Jer 15:16; Ezk 2:6-10, 3:1-3.) John will take the scroll (introduced in verse two), and fully accept his assignment or mission call.

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that John’s mission was the call of Elias, “to restore all things.” As mentioned earlier, D&C 27:6 reads: “Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days.” This new mission call and title may possibly be a new name for John. D&C 77: 9 and 14 describe Elias as the one responsible for the gathering of Israel.

We discussed earlier the scriptural references to Elias as a person (Elias who appeared on the Mt of Transfiguration, Mt 17:3; D&C 138:45). However, in the Kirtland Temple Joseph recorded an experience when, “Elias appeared, and

committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed” (D&C 110:12). This may be John, as the calling sounds similar.

John’s new mission was received as sweet news, but the assignment became difficult and even bitter over time. Perhaps the bitterness from the sorrow of seeing those who reject the message of God.

Rev 10:10-11 “I took the little scroll . . . and it was sweet as honey . . . they then said to me, ‘You must again prophesy about many peoples’” (NR) Early in the Apocalypses, we read of the Savior receiving his mission from a large scroll—and now John receives his assignment from another scroll. At a church conference on June of 1831, Joseph Smith elaborated on this verse. His scribe recorded:

The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner, and he prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmanaser, king of Assyria, to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written.” (*josephsmithpapers.org*, John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847).

This ends the second interlude where we learned why John’s call makes him a participant now in the story of the Second Coming, not just an observer, as we will read in the following chapters.

Chapter 11: Second Woe and Two Prophets in Jerusalem

Chapter 11 fits chronologically after Rev 9:13-21, where the seventh angel is still waiting to trumpet the final call. It must wait until the testimony and martyrdom of the two witnesses.

Measure the Temple (Rev 11:1-2)

Rev 11:1-2 “I was given a reed like a stick and was told, ‘Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it. But omit the outer courtyard . . .’ (NR) John used a measuring reed or rod (which was a standard means to measure, with each reed being 15 to 20 feet long) to assess the size of a visionary temple and its worshipers. By AD 70, the temple John knew in his younger years in Jerusalem was already destroyed by Titus. Historical records date John’s apocalypse at least twenty years after the temple destruction (supposedly at the end of Caesar Domitian’s reign which lasted from AD 81 to 96, Draper, *Revelation*, 67).

A heavenly messenger told John to measure the altar of sacrifice in the court of the priests, as well as the altar of incense in the sanctuary. We assume John also measured the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. That sacred space and those gathered there to worship, were safe from some affliction, but not in the court of the Gentiles. In Herod’s Temple (18 BC to 70AD), in the Court of the Gentiles, was open to all unclean people who are not Israelites or those have not covenanted to obey God. The order for John to measure the worshipers, probably referred to covenant makers either by number, or their sincerity.

“the outer court . . . has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months”

We learn that the “holy city” or the city of Jerusalem, will be trampled by gentiles (non-Jews?) for 42 months or 3 ½ years before God intervenes. This is a specific number of days as we read in verse 3. This number becomes significant in the Apocalypse. Three-and-a-half-years is half of seven, or 1,260 days. This number is also found in Daniel 7:25. According to John’s Gospel, the Lord’s mission was also 3 ½ years. This number is repeated over and over in this chapter. John records several details about what happens during those 1,265 days.

Two Prophets in Jerusalem (Rev 11:3-13)

Rev 11:3 “I will appoint my two witnesses to prophesy one thousand two hundred sixty days” Consistent with Old

Testament scripture, the Lord gives two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). We can find these two witnesses mentioned in several scriptures and in religious speculation (i.e. D&C 77:15; 2 Nephi 8:19-20; and Isaiah 51:19-20, JST). Elder Parley P. Pratt thought they were Jewish prophets. Bruce R. McConkie thought they would be members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In this book, John defines the spirit of prophecy, and it is not necessarily an Apostle: “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10). Also Joseph Smith quoted this verse when defining his role as a prophet.

“clothed in sackcloth” Their clothing is described as the coarse and uncomfortable camels’ hair that was worn at times of mourning. This

D&C 77:15

Q. What is to be understood by the two witnesses, in the eleventh chapter of Revelation?

A. “They are two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers.”

may describe the prophets' heavy burden they carry, or the rejection they will receive. The sack cloth may represent the hardship of their message—repent. They will prophesy of the distress, grief, and sorrow that will come if the Jews do not turn to the Lord.

Rev 11:4 “They are ‘the two olive trees’ and the two lampstands, and ‘they stand before the Lord of the earth’” (NIV) These images share temple symbolism. In the Mosaic tabernacle, the lampstand or menorah shines before the veil that separates the priest from presence of God. The temple lampstand can be symbolic of the tree of life that one must eat without their sins to enter God's presence (Exodus 26:35; 40:4). Here there are two witnesses before the Lord.

John's account cites the prophet Zechariah's text of these symbols, but leaves out that they also “are two anointed ones” (Zech 4:14; also see 4:3, 11). These two witnesses or two candlesticks, have been close to God. Symbolically, candlesticks hold light. As God is the source of light, the olive oil burns to make light.

The symbol of the olive tree may represent the source of olive oil. The Bible used olive oil for healing, nourishment, and anointing. Other prophets have compared godly men to an olive tree (Judges 9:8-9; Psalms 52:8; 128:3). The history of the covenant people across the world are likened to an olive trees (Jacob 5; Psalm 52:8; Isaiah 41:19; Jeremiah 11:16).

Rev 11:5 “If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouth and consumes their enemies” (NR) The witnesses cannot be physically harmed during their 3 ½ year mission (paralleling their master, Jesus of Nazareth). The fire coming out of their mouth may represent their divine protection. The torture devised to harm them will be reversed and kill the wicked designer. Earlier, during the fifth angel's trumpet call (Rev 9:4), we learned that the servants of God who have been sealed by Him, will not suffer the same plagues. We believe that God protects his obedient anointed servants until their missions are complete.

Rev 11:6 “They have power to seal up the sky so that it will not rain during the days of the prophesying; and they have powers over the waters . . . any plague they want” (NR) The two prophets have remarkable power over the earth and heavens—as did Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and (1 Kings 18; Exodus 7:17-25). This may mean it will not rain for over three years as in Elijah's day. Or it might refer just to a certain area of the world, or even to a lack of divine blessings. We also learn that these two witnesses can go beyond the Mosaic plagues and Elijah's draught as they may call out any plague they want to afflict those not sealed to God.

Rev 11:7-8 “When they have completed their testifying, the beast that came out of the abyss will . . . kill them” (NR) After their mission is complete, like the Lord, they will be killed. The prophets who join the martyrs have their testimonies sealed with their blood. The offensive war that their enemies have raged for 42 months will come to an abrupt end when they are killed.

Rev 11:8-10 “Their corpses will lie in the main street of . . . spiritually Sodom and Egypt where also the Lord was crucified . . . for three and a half days . . . the inhabitants of the earth will gloat” (NR) While their dead bodies lie in Jerusalem for 3 ½ days, the wicked city will rejoice and celebrate their deaths. Nations will look at their corpses—possibly on the evening news or on satellite internet coverage. The parallel time period testifies of Christ again.

Rev 11:11-12 “After three and a half days, the spirit of life from God entered into them . . . they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here’ And they went up into the sky in a cloud” (NR) In Jerusalem, those celebrating the death of the two witnesses, will all see the error of their judgement, but they will not have long to ponder before the next event. The witnesses' resurrection is patterned after the Lord's three days and three nights in a tomb (Mt 12:40). This is another witness to the pattern established of the Jesus' death. We must carefully read the death and resurrection account in John's Gospels that allows for three full nights in the tomb (starting with the Lord's death at 3:00pm on Thursday, a Sabbath Holy Day as Passover began, until nearly sunrise on Sunday, or 3 ½ days). We can trust John's timing as the most accurate. Hosea 12:10 tells us that the lives of the prophets typify of the Savior before and after His resurrection (also 2 Kings 2:11).

Rev 11:13-14 “At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed” (NIV) The third great earthquake arrives in Jerusalem and kills one tenth or a tithe of the city's inhabitants. Seven thousand may be symbolical as a tithe of a portion of the greater whole. It speaks symbolically of all the wicked being killed, especially as those who are saved “gave glory to God,” suggesting the possibility of their conversion, too. They learn to trust in the Lord's hand and glorify God. These people accept the Lord's judgment and for the first time in the text, respond positively.

The Seventh Angel's Trumpet Call and Third Woe (Rev 11:14-19)

Rev 11:14 “The second woe is finished. Now the third woe comes quickly” (NR) Two woes are complete with good overcoming evil. The third woe is announced, but not explained.

Rev 11:15 “The seventh angel blew his trumpet. And there were loud voices in heaven saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord’” (NR) The angel's trumpet announces the impending return of the Christ.

The angelic praise is part of Handel's oratorio, "The Messiah," and the words will be on the lips of the heavenly choirs at that time. All kingdoms will bow to the Savior as He reigns in righteousness.

Rev 11:16-18 "The twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God . . ." (NIV) The same 24 elders from John's seven Churches of Asia around Ephesus, rejoice with the purification of the earth and worship God. They acknowledge God's power and praise Him for His imminent righteous reign. They sang or chanted a beautiful poem thanking God for His judgment—for punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous.

*We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was
because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign.
The nations were angry,
and your wrath has come.
The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name,
both great and small—
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.*

Rev 11:19 "The temple of God in heaven opened, and the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple" (NR) John sees the heavenly temple again, but this time, it is opened to reveal the Ark of the Covenant. This ancient golden throne, with its lid as the golden mercy seat, had been missing since the destruction of Solomon's Temple (2 Samuel 6:15; also see Exodus 25:16; 40:20; Numbers 7:89). It was seen as God's throne or the place of God's presence. It represented God's authority, justice, mercy, nurturing, and law all returning to the earth. By so doing, the earth will return to its paradisiacal state. The verse ends with God's cosmic earthquakes, lightening, and hail closing the celestial history and opening the next era.