

Revelation 10 – Responding to God’s Silence

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Date: 22 January 2023

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[0 : 00] Just a quick update on the weekend away. There is the other option of a lodge. So please don't think that you either get to camp! to share with people in a dorm or come for the day.

There are also lodges that you can book as a family unit. All right? So just want to keep you up to date with that. All right? So we are in Revelation chapter 10.

And let's just pray really quickly and ask God to help us. Father, we come to your word and we need your help to understand it, Lord, and apply it.

Lord, we pray, Lord, that you would give us eyes to see this morning, ears to hear. Lord, that we wouldn't be like the person who looks in a mirror and forgets what they look like.

Lord, help me as I talk to be clear, concise helps. But Lord, we pray that we would sense your spirit moving amongst us.

[1 : 15] Lord, would we listen hard, not to my words, but to your words. Lord, we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. All right, Revelation chapter 10.

I want to start with a question. It's a kind of a rhetorical question. And you'll kind of get where I'm going in a minute. And the question is this. Can God create a rock so heavy that he can't lift?

If you've ever read much of the Bible, you will know that there are some things that are just hard to understand.

And if you have the kind of mind that likes to, you know, maybe pick apart the languages or do the theology, then you're familiar with spending hours and hours trying to figure things out, sometimes without answers.

There are just some things in the Bible that are hard to understand. And even Peter said that. So Peter said in 2 Peter chapter 3, speaking of Paul's letters, he says there are some things in them that are hard to understand.

[2 : 25] And we would agree with Peter. Like if you spent any time, like when we were going through Romans, most of us, if we're truthful, came away from Romans going, huh?

And Ephesians is the same. Colossians is certainly the same. Galatians is a little bit easier until you get to verse 3 of chapter 1.

Then it starts to get difficult. And whilst we can employ kind of the best brains and the best computer software these days to think and debate things that we read about, there is one concept of God that I think even in our thinking and debating we struggle with.

Can God create a river too wide for him to cross? When we think about God himself, we should expect perplexing conundrums.

Things that make us scratch our head and go, I just don't know. Like God made flesh. I know it to be true.

[3 : 40] How that has happened? The eternal becoming a man? What did he know?

What didn't he know? What could he do? What couldn't he do? Did he cry as a baby? Some of you are like, yes. Some of you are like, I'm not that confident to say that.

How about three in one? Father, Son, Holy Spirit. One God in three. Three distinct, yet one.

All submitting to each other in perfect union. What about the effective nature of prayer? Do our prayers change the mind of God?

Because there's some passages in the Bible. You read Jonah. You can't come away from Jonah and go, I understand that. Because it says in Jonah that God changed his mind. If God created Satan and Satan is evil, is evil God's fault?

[5 : 00] God bless you. That's it. No, I'm just kidding. All of these are difficulties. And all of these difficulties actually led Paul to write this right at the end of Romans.

He said in Romans 11, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. Like basically in our conundrum, that's deep, man. That's just deep. And he says, How unsearchable are his judgment and how inscrutable his ways.

And then he quotes the Old Testament. For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? It's been said that the most difficult things to understand are when answers to our questions seem outside the reach of God.

When God seems silent to life's most challenging and difficult questions. We've all had those experiences. And I'm just assuming you have those experiences.

You know when you pray and your prayers seem ineffective. They seem to bounce back at you from the ceiling. Where our questions go unanswered and our hope seems gone.

[6 : 18] Those times when we end up imposing the worst interpretation possible on the hardship. How could the loving and talkative God, because he is, because he has the word, we have the word, who always hears, and he does, be so indifferent to the pain and challenges and difficulties of life.

Now I start that way, because chapter 10, at least the first part of chapter 10, or at least one verse in chapter 10, what this chapter does for us is to challenge us to deal with God's silence.

To deal with those conundrums, those perplexities, those things that we just don't understand. And not necessarily silence when we're in pain or when we face challenges, but what about the silence of God, when we ask God a question and he says, God, what are you doing? It's none of your business.

It's not for you to know. Yeah, but. No, no, it's not for you to know. Yeah, but. And so as we enter chapter 10, just to give you the bigger picture of what's going on, we are entering into an interlude. Interlude. We've had one before with the six seals, at the end of the six seals, but, or the sixth seal, but here we have another one. And the idea of an interlude in the chronology, in the time, in the kind of the time scale of what's going on, is to show us another level of what's going on.

[8 : 03] So we have those trumpet judgments that have taken place, and then the interlude is showing us what else is going on in the world at the same time. It's not like the events of chapter 9 have finished, and then the events of chapter 10 start.

The events of chapter 10 kind of tuck underneath, and then take us all the way back to the beginning, and say, this is what is also true. This is what is also happening at this time.

And so the idea that we're going to see, as we explore some of these verses, is what is generally true of the whole period of time in the end time scenario. So let's just look at verse 1. And then I saw another angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

He had a little scroll open in his hand, and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land. And he called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring.

When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. So we have another angel, but this time look at his description. Now, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like a sun, or the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

[9 : 17] Now, all of those elements should be familiar to us. Right? Especially if we've been following along since the beginning of Revelation. We've heard these things before, but also, in the Old Testament, they appear.

So, wrapped in cloud, that kind of sounds like Daniel 7, where Daniel talks about, how I saw in the night visions, behold, the clouds, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like the Son of Man, and he came to the ancient of days, and he was presented before him.

And we see this, this, this cloud rider. You get this idea of, a cloud rider, coming. And you see it a few times in the Old Testament, and whenever you see it, actually, apart from here in Daniel 7, whenever you see the cloud rider, is talking about the personal God of Israel, Yahweh.

And again, so apart from perhaps Daniel 7, where it refers to someone, we often just refer to as the divine man. There is a divine man in Daniel 9, oh, in Daniel, who has never given a name, he's just described.

And then you have this rainbow over his head, Revelation 10 says. Sounds like Revelation 4, verse 3. Talking about the throne room of God. He sat there.

[10 : 35] He who sat there on the throne, had the appearance of Jasper and Carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow, that had the appearance of an emerald. And then you have another description.

Face like the sun. And again, this is like Revelation 1, 16. Pick it up from verse 13. In the midst of the lampstands, one, like the Son of Man, did you see that?

Like the Son of Man. Daniel chapter 7, like the Son of Man, the divine man. clothed with a long robe, and with a golden sash around his chest, his hair. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.

His eyes were like flame of fire. His feet like burnished bronze, refined in the furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. Now look, before you get there, before you get to verse 16, which is actually the verse we need to talk about, this is a passage where Jesus is being described, but he's being described in Daniel 7 language.

Did you notice that? This could have been just copied verbatim out of Daniel 7. And it's not only the Son of Man stuff that you would expect, but it's also the Ancient of Days description in Daniel 7 that is now transferred to Jesus.

[11:48] He says in verse 16, So you get this face like the sun in Revelation 10 to describe this mighty angel.

So the question is, who on earth is this mighty angel? Being described in the way that Jesus is described in Revelation 1, the divine man is described in Revelation 7, and how God is described. How do we reconcile? And this is again, this is one of those conundrums. How do we reconcile Jesus and God who are uncreated, eternal beings, the Godhead, with a mighty angel getting described in the same way?

Well, I think what's taking place in this description is what scholars, and you might want to write this down, you might not want to write this down, it's called Angelomorphic Christology.

You're welcome. All right. And that refers to how Old Testament writers start to merge descriptions of the Godhead together, which in terms of Old Testament Jewish theology would make no sense being a monotheistic religion, but we're Trinitarian.

[13:17] So for us Trinitarians, it's quite easy to understand that, where you get a mixture of descriptions about the Godhead, and they're all confused. So you get descriptions about God the Father, or Yahweh, and also the same as descriptions of Jesus.

For us, we're like, that makes sense. Right? So it's Angelomorphic Christology because occasionally that description is also described as the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament.

And so what you get is, in the Old Testament, descriptions of God, the angel of the Lord, and Daniel's divine man, who we'll just call Jesus for the sake of argument.

Right? And those three figures are described in Revelation 10. And I would probably argue that this mighty angel is actually just Jesus.

It's actually a description of Jesus being described in Old Testament language. To be clear, Jesus isn't an angel.

[14:25] Right? So the JWs are wrong. Right? So Jesus isn't Michael the archangel. Right? And he's also not a created being like the Mormons say.

Right? This is the second person of the Trinity, uncreated and eternal. And he is being described in this verse in the same way the Old Testament writers described the Godhead.

And the reason I think, well, the reason I think that is because there's a bigger storyline going on. Revelation 1, verse 1, says that God gave the revelation to Jesus.

So the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants a thing must take place after he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John. So the revelation was given to Jesus.

Revelation 5 says that this revelation was in the form of a scroll. He went, took the scroll from his right hand of him who was seated on the throne. Makes sense. chapters 6 to 8 see the lamb who is unquestionably Jesus opening the scroll of Revelation.

[15:37] And now in chapter 10, the angel, who again I think is Jesus, is bringing an opened scroll from heaven and he's going to give it to John. That's just Revelation 1, verse 1.

And so there's a story being played out. Now notice what he has in his hand.

Verse 2, he has a little scroll. So I love it. Mighty angel, little scroll. Not the other way around. Like little angel, mighty scroll would be, well, it'd be a handful. Mighty angel, mighty angel, little scroll.

Okay? So, and it was open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. What does that mean? It just means he was big. Right?

Like this big dude, right? So, he called out with a loud voice like a lion roaring. And when he called out, listen to this, the seven thunders answered.

[16:41] What we're going to, what we're going to see is that the scrolls are supposed to be understood. But the message of the thunders aren't. The scroll is already open and John is going to be instructed to take it.

But the message of the thunders, we'll read in verse 4, are to be kept secret. Look what he says. When the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write. Like, wouldn't you?

Like, Jesus is there. Whatever he says, it's like a lion roaring. And then all of a sudden, seven thunders are... And he's like, cool. And he's about to write it down.

Right? So, he's about to write down. But I heard a voice from heaven saying, seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down. This is quite a remarkable scene where Jesus speaks and his voice is like the roar of a lion and in answer to his roar come seven voices that sound like thunder.

And they are voices because there is a message that John is told to seal up or keep secret what the seven thunders have said. This is not just a... You know, I don't think John is being told don't write boom.

[17:52] Right? Like, don't... However you say that, right? There is a message being relayed in those thunderous voices. Right? And John hears what they say and he's told not to write it down.

Now, we don't know what they say. Can you make a note of that? Like, we do not know what they said. It's not hidden in Daniel. It is not in Isaiah.

It is not in Ezekiel. Right? Or anywhere else in the Bible. Oh yeah, but I googled it. No, no, no. It's not. It's like...

What we can say is that the thunder is probably the voice of God. Like, where it's come from. Psalm 18, verse 13. The Lord also thunders in the heavens. Psalm 29. The God of glory thunders. So the thunder's got to come from somewhere.

[18:59] And I think we can probably safely say that it's come from God. But what the thunders, the voices are speaking about, nobody knows apart from one person.

John. Not that John. Everyone's like, John, tell us. Come on, tell us. John the apostle. John the apostle who's just heard it. Now look, let's camp out here for a little while.

What do we make of this? Like, I was thinking about this. The book that we're reading is called the book of Revelation. And John has said, don't reveal this.

Like, I have a problem with that. It's almost like, is this a waste of time? I wonder how that sits with our pride and our desire to know everything.

The practical question for us is this. Can we trust God in what He does not reveal? That's a deep question, isn't it?

[20:08] Can we trust God with the things that He doesn't reveal? Because there comes a time, I think, in our lives that we must be confronted with that question. Can I trust God with what I do not know?

Do I trust God with what He is not telling me? And like, you know, as I was thinking about this, you know, I think that, and I think we'd probably agree that much of life is actually a mystery.

And like, I think, you know, I turned 50 this year. I know, thanks, I know you don't believe that, but it is true.

Thank you. And like, I can't get over the fact that the older I get, the less I know. Right?

So, the older I get, the more I realize just how much I don't know and how much more life is a mystery. Right? And my problem is, it concerns me because when I was 16, I knew everything.

[21:12] Like, and now, 49, turning 50, I know diddly. Like, what's happened in between? But what we, what we want to think is that someone must have the answers.

Right? And so, Google exists for that reason and that reason alone. Doesn't it? So much so that Google is now a verb.

Right? I'm going to Google it. That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to Google it. I'm going to Google it up. I don't even know what, that's not even grammatically true.

Anything you want to know, Google can tell you. Seven voices of thunder. What do they mean? And Google will tell you. Actually, it'll give you nine million web pages.

Jeff's going to check it out now. It'll give you nine million web pages in less than half a second. And then you will waste days and hours reading all the web pages that tell you what the seven voices of

thunder are actually saying where the Bible says, seal it up.

[22 : 43] We think that somebody, somewhere, must know the answer. It's just not me. And when it comes to the serious questions of life, when life gets messy and you're searching high and low for answers, we often comfort one another with this truth.

God knows. Don't we? God knows. God knows. Take two verses. Call me in the morning. God knows. And whilst that is true, and absolutely that is true, God does know, we also have to confront the reality that sometimes, often, God doesn't tell us.

God does know. God knows. And because we don't know, either we're not smart enough to know, which in my case is a real possibility, or God has chosen not to tell me.

And that part, I have a real issue with. Like, I can get over my own dumbness. Like, I just don't get it. Fine. There's lots of things I don't get.

Why, when I'm on driving, always, the traffic lights tend to go to red rather than green when I'm approaching. Why? I don't get it.

[24 : 00] I've been thinking about that one a lot. So we have to confront the reality that sometimes, God doesn't tell us. That God knows, and he chooses to withhold that information, just as he is here in our text.

That God says, oh, thunders? Oh yeah, don't tell anyone about that. It's a secret. In the 18th century, a woman by the name of Madame Guyon, who was considered a heretic by the Roman Catholic Church, which is probably why I like her, said this, if knowing answers to life's questions is absolutely necessary for you, then forget the journey.

You will never make it, for this is a journey of unknowables, of unanswered questions, enigmas, incomprehensibles, and most of all, things unfair.

This is a journey of unknowables, of unanswered questions, enigmas, incomprehensibles, and most of all, things unfair. Take a moment just to acknowledge that in your heart.

There are just some things that we just do not know. So, as Christians, how do we respond to the reality of that? How do we respond to the reality of this text where God says, don't tell?

[25 : 25] There are some things that are going on that I'm just not going to reveal to you, and you're never going to know. How do we respond as Christians to the reality of that?

The life isn't only sometimes incredibly, incomprehensibly difficult, but sometimes the reasons why are a mystery to us. How do we respond?

I think one way we respond, and one only way we respond, is by faith. But I think that's seen in two different ways. I think the first way we respond is that through faith we allow God to deal with our pride.

That's how we respond. This is a pride issue. First and foremost, it's a pride issue. This is how the psalmist responded, and I've been in this psalm many times, but this is how the psalmist responded to the silence of God.

There in Psalm 131, he writes, Oh Lord, my heart is not lifted up. My eyes are not raised too high. I do not occupy myself with things too great or too marvelous for me.

[26 : 36] Pause there because that's the result. Okay? First one is the result. You see the results first. David says to the Lord, if I can paraphrase, I'm not absorbed in myself.

I don't look down on other people. I'm not chasing dreams that are too big for me. I'm not like a restless child on my mother's knee. I'm not making demands.

I'm not worried about what's next. I'm not full of pride. And the question should be, well, David, how did you get there? Show me how you got there. So he answers in verse 2 and he says, I have calmed and quietened my soul like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Amazingly, the psalmist isn't noisy inside. Look, just quickly, the response is when God is silent about stuff, we too are silent about stuff.

Which is why I've dedicated a whole sermon to it, which I know doesn't make sense. The psalmist says, I have quietened, calmed and quietened my soul.

[27 : 52] He isn't overwhelmed with busyness and anxiety. He isn't preoccupied with thinking up the next thing he wants to say. He doesn't articulate regret or irritation or dissatisfaction.

He's quiet. it's not indifference. It's not theological. Again, take two verses, call me in the morning. And I'm not suggesting either that it's a retreat or an escape.

There is a measured and active purpose of his heart and mind to quiet the noise inside, to silence the wise. I have calmed and quietened my soul, he says.

When the messiness of life confronts you, are you quiet inside? If I'm honest, I rarely am. When the messinesses of life and the difficulties of life and challenges of life come along, what do we do? Volume goes up, doesn't it? This is an invitation, again, to return and learn composure before God. But look, it's a pride thing.

[29 : 08] How do we do that? Look again at the last sentence of the psalmist. He says, O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. What is hope?

Well, hope is an act of faith. Faith delivers us from our biggest problem. Our biggest problem? Pride. The root of pride says that I'm not loved or valued.

But the way to get loved and valued is that I have to get something. In the context of Revelation 10, that something is knowledge. If I can just get an answer to what God is doing and what God is keeping from me, then I'll feel loved.

And you know, like I've said this before and I'll keep saying it, much of end times Bible teaching actually is just rooted in pride. And what I mean by that, some of the more sensationalist, over-the-top, wacky, nutjob kind of stuff that links Revelation 11 or whatever it is to the latest Russian nuclear submarine.

Like, give me a break. It's just pride. it's finding that little morsel of knowledge that I can understand what God is doing.

[30 : 35] They're built on the premise that if I can tell you something new, something fascinating, something deep, then you'll feel loved and valued. 2 Timothy 2, verse 23, says this, have nothing to do with foolish and ignorant controversies.

2 Timothy 4, verse 3, says this, for a time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but have itching ears and they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

They will have playlists after playlists after playlists of junk. The psalmist says, don't put your hope in that.

What you can know about the deep and hidden things of God, put your hope in the Lord. The lesson is, when God is silent, you be silent. Don't waste your time on Google trying to find out what the seven voices of thunder are actually saying.

Google will tell you but I don't think it's true. And if God thought it mattered, I think he'd let us know. One of my favorite verses in the Bible and only has to be read in the King James Version.

[31 : 51] It's a worry, you know, when you sermon, when you get more amens and yeses because you quote from the King James rather than actually anything else. But anyway, John 13, verse 7.

Jesus said to Peter, what I do, thou knowest not now but thou shalt know in the hereafter. Peter was like, tell me what's going on, tell me what's going on.

I want to know, I want to know the deep things. And Jesus goes, you don't know. What I'm doing now, you don't know but you will know. That's a father's heart to say, child, just be quiet.

sit back down. Right? Control your pride. You don't have to know everything. Second response to God's silence and this is still part of the faith thing is that through, is that our response to God's silence is that we find humility through our newfound humility that we don't have to know everything. Through our newfound humility, we accept God's authority. Oh, we don't like that anymore than we like humility, do we? Like checking in our pride, we don't like authority.

[33 : 17] No, thank you. You see how this strikes at the very heart of actually our sin problem. Our sin problem is pride and our sin problem is authority.

Right? God is allowed to be silent. Isn't he?

Like, God is allowed not to tell us stuff. to believe that God is under no obligation to answer you or inform you or let you know about anything.

That's called submission and we don't like submitting. Now, of course, listen, there is absolutely nothing wrong, absolutely nothing wrong at all with questioning God, with calling out to God, with asking God, why are you letting this happen?

Absolutely nothing wrong with that and it probably is to be encouraged. But there is a time where God says, I'm not going to tell you. And when God says, I'm not going to tell you, we're done.

[34 : 23] That is then moving from a question, a point of questioning God to a point of submitting to God. Sometimes we face the same situation that Job faces, found himself in, in the face of the choice of acknowledging or rejecting the authority of God.

That's basically what Job is about. All right? So we just cut short 40 odd chapters of Job. What is Job about? It is about this man who loses everything that he might find God and he might submit to the authority of God over him.

When it comes down to the struggle of either acknowledging or rejecting the authority of God, God, we think, part of our sinful nature, we think that we have an entitlement to be answered.

Don't we? Like, Lord, why are you not answering me? And I've said that. I'm like, God, are you going to stay silent forever?

I remember him answering me once and he was like, I might, if you carry on like a spoiled brat. We think we have an entitlement to be answered as if God is not God, but I am God.

[35 : 51] Like, I need to demand an answer for him. When I demand an answer from God, who is God? It's not God anymore, is it? I've placed myself in a position of God. Who am I claiming authority over?

I'm claiming authority over God. You better answer me. Job found himself in this position and his wife was super helpful because his wife, and I wouldn't necessarily advise wives that you be this helpful, but she suggested that he curses God and die.

Wives, don't do that. If you know the story of Job, he didn't follow her advice, and instead he answered her like this. In Job chapter 2, he said, you talk like a foolish woman.

Men, I wouldn't advise you say that either. Just FYI, life lesson learned. Should we accept, this is the good bit that he said, should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?

should we only accept good things from God and nothing bad? And accepting God's authority, of course, again, means trusting God.

[37 : 06] Job 13, verse 15, though he slay me, Job said, I'm going to trust him. Though he slay me, I'm going to hope in him. Deuteronomy 29 says this, that the secret things belong to the Lord.

They're his. And faith sometimes is not an easy thing, is it? But it does carry us to victory, even in our doubts and even in our anxieties and distresses.

And this is what Revelation is helping us. This is what this verse is helping us to understand. That God sometimes just says, I'm not going to tell you. Now you deal with that because I'm God and the secret things are mine.

There's so much that we don't know. There's so much that we don't understand. And that's not an excuse to never go looking. What I'm not saying is you should just shut your Bible up and stop reading.

I'm not saying that. I'm just saying at some point we come to terms with the fact that we don't know everything and thinking that we can know everything is actually just an evidence of sin.

[38 : 19] It's an evidence of pride. So much we don't know or understand about how God works and why He allows certain things to happen.

But look, Revelation shows us, if you remember back in chapter 4, Revelation shows us that God is on the throne and He's in charge of everything. Revelation chapter 5 shows us what Jesus has done for you and me and why we can trust Him.

That tells us despite how things look, you and I are very much loved. Revelation shows us in chapter 21 how it all ends.

Paul says in Romans chapter 8 verse 18 he says, For I consider the sufferings of this present time. And look, I think within that suffering is the coming to terms with that we don't know much about much.

That whole struggle of understanding. The whole struggle of submission sometimes. that whole thing about the authority of God and our own humility.

[39 : 38] It doesn't come easy for any of us. And so it's suffering. Paul says, I consider the suffering of this present time are not worthy or not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us.

There's a lot of stuff that happens between the cross and the crown that we just do not understand. But we're called to put our hope in Him. That's our response.

We're called to put our hope in Him. And we can trust God because in Jesus He has made Himself knowable. That's the remarkable thing.

Like there's a whole bunch of stuff that we do not know. But you know what? Here's the good news. We can know Jesus. And we can put our trust and hope in Jesus.

And we can put our hope and trust in the things that we do know about Jesus. James said, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

[40 : 38] And I don't think that's a fascinating thing. I think the fascinating thing, the great truth, is that God has drawn near to us in the person of Jesus and promises that He will be with us. Even if we don't get what's going on.

Even if God does seem to be silent. Even if God does seem to be silent. Now verse 5 in Revelation 10, we're going to read the rest of the chapter and then we're going to come back to it in chapter 11 because they're linked.

And I'm going to show you next week how they're linked. But verse 5, the angel, who I saw standing on the sea and on the land, raised his right hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay.

But that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God will be fulfilled just as He announced to His servants the prophets. Then the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again.

So this is the one that said, seal it up, don't tell. Go take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and the land. So I went to the angel.

[41 : 51] There would have been a pause between the end of verse 8 and verse 9 if that had been me. Like, that would be a scary thing, wouldn't it? So I went to the angel and I told him, I would have asked him gingerly, to give me the little scroll and he said to me, take and eat it.

It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey. And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and I ate it. And it was sweet and as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

Now, just really quickly, this is just giving you some food for thought as an intro to next week.

Previously, John had been a bystander to everything. Up until this point, he'd just been watching.

Now, he is taking part. He had been recording the message that he'd been shown and he had been heard and now there's this twist in that he is to become part of the narrative.

And he is told to eat the scroll and then prophesy himself. Verse 11, I was told you must prophesy about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.

[43 : 05] And what is interesting is that he is told that he is going to prophesy and then in the next chapter, if you've read ahead, we're shown two witnesses prophesying in Jerusalem.

So, you can't disconnect these two issues. At the end of chapter 10 with chapter 11, they run on into each other as an idea.

The message from the angel is that the message is sweet but it will become bitter, which shadows the experience then again of the two witnesses in chapter 11 who share the good news but are then executed for their testimony.

Now, the idea of eating the scroll or the book, it shouldn't surprise you appears two other times in the Old Testament and the idea of something becoming bitter in your stomach appears another time in Numbers chapter 5 which is the real key.

If you've ever wondered what's going on in John chapter 8, read Numbers chapter 5. I'm getting ahead of myself but the woman caught in adultery and that whole kind of thing about writing in the ground and casting the first stone is rooted in Numbers chapter 5.

[44 : 32] In Numbers chapter 5 there's a recipe for drinking something that will make your stomach bitter. these are all linked. But the idea of taking the scroll or the book appears a few times.

Ezekiel chapter 3 verse 1 he said to me son of man eat whatever you find there eat this scroll go speak to the house of Israel so again eat the scroll go prophesy the same thing that has been told to John.

So I opened my mouth he gave me the scroll to eat and he said to me son of man feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it that I ate and it in my mouth was as sweet as honey.

Jeremiah 15 16 your words were found I ate them and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart for I am called by your name O Lord God of hosts. So this picture of eating is just a Hebrew idiom for receiving knowledge.

It's what we've been talking about so far. Where we would say go digest that we're saying think about it aren't we? Like that's an English idiom right?

[45 : 43] Digest this and then someone gives you something and you're like hmm I've got to think about that. Okay? No one is suggesting that you roll up your bit of paper and force it down your throat.

That would be weird and difficult. Okay? So this scene is going on at the same time as the previous trumpet judgment and it's an instruction for John to consider properly the events.

Alright? And then comes chapter 11 where we get the link between the thing that was good that becomes bitter the witnesses and the prophesying. Alright?

So I think any attempt to make this scroll the Bible is futile for many reasons. Alright? And if anything they should probably compare to the instruction in Numbers chapter 5 the application in John chapter 8 which you can look at in your own time.

But just want to encourage you to think about you know the idea of pride faith and authority. And while it's good for us to be people of the word and we need to be.

[46 : 58] And you know I want to stress that we need to be people of the Bible. There are some things that we would just not comprehend this side of eternity.

We would just not understand. There are some things that we will not know this side of eternity and there's probably things that on the other side of eternity we will also not know.

And our challenge for us is not to go and find out the things that are unknowable because that's pride. The challenge for us is to trust Jesus.

It's to draw close to Jesus. Because the more we draw close to Jesus the more we find out that whatever happens he's with us. Whatever happens we're loved.

Whatever happens we're valued. And we know that because he went to the cross and he died for us. And so if there's any encouragement in this word at all it's to draw close to God and God will draw close to you.

[48 : 01] And you'll find that actually in that you can trust him. Let's pray. Father thank you for your word. Lord we want again say that it is difficult not just to understand but way even more difficult to actually then digest for it to become a part of our thinking and a part of our lives.

Lord we want it to be. Lord we want so much Lord to be rid of our pride that demands answers demands knowledge demands to get on the inside track and confine out the secret things the deep things.

And that is not to say that there's some things that you call us into to know more of you. To wade out into the water waist deep.

Lord you call us into those signs sometimes Lord but we also recognize there's some things that we just don't know. Lord we don't know sometimes how you work or why you work the way you do.

And Lord would you help us Lord to think about the way that you work Lord just in terms of your goodness for us. That if Jesus has died for us surely that you have your best for us.

[49 : 24] That there is only good things for us. Lord that because you're in charge because you're on the throne because you have then gone to the cross and purchased us. Surely your word is true that you're going to be with us.

So Lord we ask that you would help us to submit to that authority over us. Lord to acknowledge in our own hearts Lord that there are some things that are unknowable and sometimes even seemingly unfair.

Lord but we want to praise and worship a God who has made himself knowable in the person of Jesus and draw close to him. and Lord we ask that you would help us to do that.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.