

12a REV

This is Friday the 28th of October 2005. The year is rapidly slipping away. I think we fall back this weekend, don't we? And go off daylight savings time.

But we just have a couple months left here in the year and then it'll be 2006. I learned today that one of the prophecies of Nostradamus was that the Hindus would get into a big fight with the Muslims in 1999 and wage a fierce war with them for seven years, at the end of which time they would utterly wipe them off the face of the earth. Medina and Mecca and all the rest of these places would be obliterated.

And so when somebody posted this great long article full of all these details about Nostradamus, I replied, well, Hindus better hurry up. They only got till next year. It's going to be 2006 in no time.

You know, they want to keep Nostradamus' credibility. They're going to have to get with it. But it is the 28th of October.

We do continue our study tonight in Revelation, picking up with the trumpet judgments. We're going to be in chapter 10. Let's take a moment at the outset to prepare our hearts as we go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, it is always with anticipation that we look forward to spending time nourishing our souls and enjoying fellowship together in the study of your word. We thank you for its preservation. We thank you for the gift of your spirit so that we are supernaturally enabled to comprehend, to remember, to see its application and to apply it in our lives.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ, who has opened the door for us by a new and living way so that we enjoy heavenly citizenship. We enjoy a relationship with you. We have access and we have information and we have opportunity and we have potential as never before in history to grow in grace and in knowledge, to experience all of the fullness that is ours in him.

We thank you for the preservation of your word and those faithful men who, in many cases at the cost of their lives, have preserved it, transmitted it, translated it, and made it possible for us to casually have as many copies as we want without any fear of retribution or reprisal. We're grateful and we ask your blessing on us as we study your word this evening. We thank you.

Well, you remember the grand, broad outline of Revelation in this section where you have the three trumpets sandwiched between the three seals and the three bowls. At the opening of the seventh seal, the trumpet judgments begin. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the bowl judgments will shortly thereafter take place.

And so we find ourselves, as we conclude our study in chapter nine, having seen the

consequences of the fifth and sixth trumpet and those egregious consequences on the earth. Widespread destruction, widespread devastation, unheard of, unprecedented catastrophe of literally biblical proportions, unlike anything that has been seen on the earth since the days of the flood. And the cry of mankind is for death, it is not for salvation.

If you want to summarize chapter nine at the judgment of God, at the loosing of these great plagues and pressures and tribulations, the cry of man is for death, it is not for deliverance, it is not for salvation. So the result is that in verse 20, the rest of mankind who are not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. What I find consistent with our understanding and our interpretation of this time, being the last seven years of the age of Israel, is the standard of measure when God looks at people to see if there are any that seek after Him, to see if there are any that are obedient, to see if anyone is exercising faith.

What is the standard of measure? What's the standard of measure set forth in the law of Moses? What is the standard of measure set forth by the prophets? It is, how do you act? The Old Testament age is the age of external manifestation, of ritual symbolism, of active obedience manifest in what you do. There is not near the emphasis on the life of the inner man, on the thoughts and intents of the heart in the Old Testament that you find in the New. It is not absent, but it isn't emphasized to anywhere near the extent that you find the church being tasked with taking every thought captive for Christ.

There is no analog for that command, that idea, in the Old Testament. Nowhere are the Israelites told, take every thought captive for God. It's love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength, all your might.

Love your neighbor as yourself. Manifest, and of course love is not a warm gush, it is a policy of benefit and blessing. Sacrifice toward self, benefit toward others.

That's the nature of biblical love. So here, what is the measure? The rest of mankind were not killed. It doesn't say they did not turn to God in faith.

It says they did not repent of the works of their hands. They did not repent of the works of their hands. So this is an indictment that after all of the opportunity that is afforded them, the knowledge of God is still in the earth, but there's no turning.

So this brings us, they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. And all you have to do is look around in the world today to see that these kinds of things happen at unprecedented levels. It's not just that our media is better, our reporting is better.

The incidence of these things is higher and greater, and the tolerance of society for

these sorts of aberrations becomes more and more in line with evil rather than good. This brings us to chapter 10. John says, I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud.

A rainbow was on his head. His face was like the sun, his feet like pillars of fire. A little book opened in his hand, set his right foot on the sea, his left foot on the land.

He cried with a loud voice as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. When the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and do not write them.

The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer. But in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished as he declared to his servants the prophets. We began our analysis of this last time and I am going to amend one interpretive decision that I made and gave you last week having to do with the little book.

I studied much more extensively on this and I think I said last week that some people think that this is the seven sealed scroll and that I didn't think so. Well, upon further study and reflection, now I do think so and I'll tell you why. It's based on going back to the Greek, but let's begin at the beginning.

We've already seen this mighty angel coming down from heaven clothed with the cloud, rainbow, sun, pillars of fire. These four elements all speak of God in heaven. You have him coming from heaven clothed with a cloud.

Clouds are associated with the return of Christ. They're associated with the ascension of Christ. They're associated with a heavenly origin or heavenly destination.

Rainbow, we know the significance of the rainbow. We know who put it there. We know what it symbolizes.

We know its purpose. It is a symbol of the covenant promises of God in general and the covenant not to destroy the earth by a flood specifically. But it stands for generally all of the faithful, unbreakable, unshakable promises of God.

Face like the sun, the shining brilliance embodied or reflected obviously speaks of the glory of God. Feet like pillars of fire, the feet of course coming in contact with things. The feet are the place of judgment.

They are the place of appeal. If you want to appeal to someone, you fall at their feet.

Well, you can't fall at the feet of someone whose feet are on fire.

This means that there is no option of appeal. There is no longer an option for mercy, for clemency, for a second chance. Falling at the feet is not an option.

Feet are on fire. This is all a representation of the judgment of God. This angel appears in judgment of God mode.

Angels can come in lots of modes, can't they? They can be in comfort. They can bring food. They can bring messages of hope and encouragement.

Hail Gideon, mighty man of valor. You know, they can do a lot of things. They can ascend and descend stairways to heaven.

But when you see one standing on the sea and on the earth with his feet on fire, his face shining, big rainbow up there, this is all about judgment. Now, who is this angelic figure? I would suggest to you that we cannot know. I will secondarily suggest to you that if we had to guess or hypothesize, this would be Michael, your prince.

Why? Michael is the national angel of Israel. We know this from the Old Testament. We know it from Daniel.

We'll get there in our study of the book of Daniel very soon. What does Michael's name mean? Mi-ka-el. Mi is who, ka is like, el is God.

Who is like God? Well, you cannot get any more God-like in your visage than this. This is a near replication of the picture of Jesus Christ, God the Son, in Revelation chapter 1, isn't it? And yet, this is not Jesus Christ. He has been consistently referred to by his title, the Lamb, ever since we first saw him appear in chapter 4. And Jesus Christ is manifestly not an angel.

He is never called an angel anywhere in Scripture, so it would be odd for God to suddenly start calling him an angel here. We've had the word Angelos over and over and over here in Revelation. All of these trumpet-sounding angels, the angels that speak with John, the angels that hold back the winds, angel, angel, angel, angel, angel, they're all inhabitants of the celestial realms.

They are all members of that sentient creation that preceded us, that is superior to us. Man is made a little lower than the angels at this point. So, this is an angel.

I would wager a few shekels if I had them that this is Michael. It's all about Israel here. Now, it says he had a little book open in his hand.

The reason I have adjusted my understanding here is, if you keep your finger in Revelation chapter 10 and go back to Revelation chapter 5, you will recall that in that chapter, John says, I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne, this is verse 1, a

scroll written inside and on the back. In Greek, the word translated scroll here is Biblion, B-I-B-L-I-O-N. Now, the basic word is Biblos.

It's where we get the word Bible. Biblos, that's the root form of the word. Biblion is one of two diminutive forms of this word.

It would be the equivalent of, in English, saying book and then saying booklet. To say Biblion in Greek is to say small book. Not a big book, not a giant.

Sometimes you see artistic depictions of the lamb standing there with the eyes in the midst of the throne and he's got this giant scroll with these great big seals on it, but this is a Biblion. It is a relatively small book. Now, what is a book? The type of book, you know, quarto editions and the type of back-to-front covered things that we have today were not in use in John's day.

They were scrolls and the same word was later used. So this would be a small scroll. Hence you have the translation here, but what would you say? A scrolllet, a small scroll, Biblion.

Let's just call it a Biblion. We know what a Biblion is. It is the type of record-keeping device, parchment, papyrus, whatever happened to be made of that could be rolled up and carried about.

Not a giant thing like you see the rabbis using in a modern-day synagogue or temple service. This would be a small portable thing you could stick under your arm and carry from one place to another. Something more along the lines of what the Ethiopian eunuch might have had in his copy of Isaiah.

But our point here is this is Biblion. And that is how it is universally referred to in chapter 5. Now return to chapter 10. Saw the mighty angel, he's got the rainbow, and in verse 2 it says he had a little book.

The word translated little book here is Biblaridion. I mentioned there are two diminutive forms of the word Biblos. One is Biblion, the other is Biblaridion.

I don't know that there is a substantive difference between the two words. I could say that this is not a real good English analogy because the words are different, the root words are different, but I could say I have here a booklet or I could say I have here a pamphlet. How much difference is there? What is the quantitative difference between a pamphlet and a booklet? In my mind, usually a pamphlet might be slightly smaller than a booklet but there are pamphlets that are bigger than booklets.

And so Biblaridion is not a significant enough difference, it's just a variant or an alternative diminutive of Biblos. Why is that important? Because in both places it should be translated little scroll. The difference here in verse 10, I'm sorry verse 2 of chapter 10,

is that there is a modifier.

The little scroll idea is all bound up in Biblion in chapter 5. Here we have Biblaridion Aeneogmenon. Aeneogmenon, if you want the Greek it's E-N-E-O-G-M-E-N-O-N. Aeneogmenon, that O is an omega, it's a long O. Aeneogmenon.

Well, what does that word mean? It is a participle. It is a perfect passive participle. Even if you don't care for Greek you need to pay attention to this particular word.

Perfect, what's a perfect tense? Completed action in past time. Passive, something was done to the book. Participle, this makes it a suitable modifier for a noun.

Biblaridion Aeneogmenon, a little scroll having been opened. A little scroll having been opened. The scroll was closed with seven seals, now it is a little scroll having been opened.

And this also sort of explains the change in noun, Biblion to Biblaridion, because a closed scroll looks like one thing, an open scroll looks like something else. I honestly did not have the time to go do a bunch of research to see if there was any correspondence between open scrolls being referred to as Biblaridion. I haven't seen anybody make that claim, but it is interesting that they are both little scrolls, chapter 5 and chapter 10, but this one is open.

Little book having been opened. The formation of this, without getting in any more gory details, is such that this is emphatic. It is not a little scroll having been opened, it is the little scroll having been opened.

There is no definite article with this, and in Greek it's sort of just the opposite in English. Greek normally has a definite article, and when it's absent, that makes it very emphatic. It means that there's a particular thing in view, oftentimes.

So here, having in the hand of him, literally, the little scroll having been opened. Well, the only little scroll that we've seen in the last five chapters is the one that the Lamb broke the seals on, and we have now seen all seven seals break, have we not? We have. So now the scroll is opened.

The Lamb stood in heaven and opened those seals, and we saw the consequences. Now we see this angel coming from heaven with this little scroll in his hand and standing one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. He's got this scroll in his hand.

It sort of makes sense, doesn't it? The scroll has existed in heaven. It's been sealed in heaven. It has been opened in heaven.

The consequences of those seals being opened have taken place. Now that open scroll is brought to earth. Now that it is open, it can be read.

Its contents can be manifest, where before they were sealed. The scroll is written on the front and on the back. It's got a lot of information on it.

Now it can be fully revealed, where it has been sealed until the time of the end. Puts us in mind of some of the last things that God tells Daniel in that book. Seal up the words of the prophecy until the time of the end.

You know, many are going to run to and fro, knowledge will increase, etc. Well, things will be revealed, such as the contents of what the seven thunders say that are not currently known. So I submit, and there are a lot of people who have the same view, and I think they're correct, that this now, because otherwise, the scroll that had these seven all-important seals on it sort of disappears from view.

Jesus opened the seven seals, but if this is not that little scroll, well, what was the big deal about breaking the seals? Because then we have no further truck with that scroll, right? Here we see what happens now that the seals are broken. And what does happen? He comes down and cries out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. You see the word when there is in italics, because it is as a lion roars.

He's going to cry out as a lion roars. Well, this is significant. Why? What happens on earth? Let's say you're on a little African safari, getting ready to go down and meet some natives or take pictures of wildlife.

None of us, of course, would go big game hunting and actually shoot anything. We're far too sympathetic to the plight of the endangered species. But you go to Africa and you pitch your tent out there in the middle of Kenya someplace, and middle of the night, all of a sudden you hear this loud lion's roar.

What does that evoke? What does it signify? It's not the same as the song of the whippoorwill or the mourning cry of the dove, is it? It has a connotation. It means danger. It means there is menace nearby.

And when this angel cries out, this is not a happy visit. The angel is not coming down to spread good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Just the opposite.

He has come to spread tidings of great woe, which shall be to all people. And so when he sounds his voice, it is a lion roar. It is the sound of warning that violent devastation, we've already seen the symbolism of the lion's teeth.

Well, here's the lion's roar. There is more woe and devastation about to come. So he cries or roars as when a lion roars.

When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Now, the content of what the seven thunders say is not revealed. Voice from heaven says, seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and do not write them.

Now, this is a very, we saw this last week, but I want to point out, something has just changed. We have been listening to John now ever since he was caught up to heaven for over five chapters. And he has been observing and reporting what happens at the throne, what happens around the throne, what angels say, what groups of individuals say, what happens when the seals are broken, what happens when the trumpets sound.

He has been an objective reporter. He's been our action news reporter on the scene, giving us the verbatim account. What just changed? God himself speaks directly to John.

John has been drawn into the activities. Now angels have commentated and observed and helped explain things for John before. But the Lamb never spoke to John.

It's always been, you know, subordinates, helpers, guides. The tour guide angel will speak and say, John, you know what that is? Here, for the first time since chapter one, when Jesus spoke directly to John, God speaks. And in this heavenly vision of this angel coming down to earth, and as John sees this, and you wonder, well, now where exactly is John? Because here's this angel.

What is John's perspective? Is he looking down at the earth on this angel? Is he looking up? Has he come to earth or whatever? But he is somewhere in the vicinity of this angel because he's going to walk up to him and take the book out of his hand. God speaks and says, see you let the things which the seven thunders uttered and do not write them. And of course, the big question is, if you're not supposed to write them, then why do we even know that the seven thunders spoke? Why is that detail included? It is a reminder to us that there are parts of God's plan that we need to know and that are revealed.

There are also parts of God's plan that we don't need to know and that are not revealed. We just have hints. We have outlines.

We have placeholders where that information will be filled in later. Another such area is the category of things you might put under the heading of angelic conflict. We don't know many of the details of what happened in the fall.

We have elusive information in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, but there's a lot of that that right now we just don't know why. We don't need to know it. We've got our hands full in the same way that the early Old Testament saints didn't need to know a lot about resurrection.

That will come later after you build a foundation of knowledge underneath it. What they call the analogy of faith, the unfolding of revelation, God reveals more and more as time passes and all of it illuminates the person and work of Jesus Christ ultimately and it centers on him. So why would this be sealed up? Why could John not write this down? It is not just to withhold information from man.

It is not just to be mysterious. Who else might take this information and use it for ill?

Who is not currently in view and not currently observing and nowhere in sight as this revelation to John is being made? The prince of darkness, the prince of the power of the air, Satan who is going to be actively functioning on the earth through the Antichrist, indwelling him, would benefit evidently from knowing the content of what the seven thunders say. So God says, seal it up.

John, don't write it down. And this tells us there is going to be something that takes place, something that's not recorded in the book of Revelation, something that is not revealed in the word of God to man. But God says, I just want you to know there is a sevenfold thunder that is going to sound.

Why do we have this detail at all? Keep that question and that thought in mind as we go forward and I'll suggest to you an answer. Verse 5, the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer. Fascinating verse.

Why does this angel need to swear? And what does he swear? Well, the what is given after the how. The what is that there should be delay no longer. We'll talk about that in a moment.

But he swears by him who lives forever and ever. There is a fourfold description of him by whom the angel swears, isn't there? What is the fourfold? And once again, you notice the number four cropping up here. There were four great heavenly attributes of this angel.

Remember, cold with a cloud, rainbow on his head, face like the sun, feet like fire. All reflecting God. Now he swears a fourfold oath.

He raises his hand toward heaven and swears by A, him who lives forever and ever, B, the one who created heaven and the things that are in it, C, the one who created the earth and the things that are in it, and D, the one who created the sea and the things that are in it. A fourfold oath from a fourfold glory-reflecting angel. What does the number four represent? This is fullness, completeness, comprehensive coverage on earth.

That's why the angel comes down to earth and stands on the land and on the sea. And he comes from heaven. He raises his hand toward heaven.

He is a representative of God who lives forever and ever. And the three things that he has identified with, heaven, earth, and the sea, are the things by which he swears. He's in contact with all three of these.

His hand is in heaven. One foot is on the land. One foot is on the sea.

And these are the things that he mentions in connection with God by whom he swears. He has come from God who lives forever and ever. And that's sort of the time dimension, if you will, or the timeless dimension.

Heaven, earth, and the sea. Now these are the three domains where sentient creatures dwell. You have angels in heaven, among other places.

You have mankind, the ordered, controlled civilization is represented by the land. And the chaotic forces of evil and darkness are represented by the sea. And of course you have angels, fallen angels, who inhabit both of those areas as well.

It would seem that if you thought of this as a Venn diagram, if you think of three interlocking circles, like part of a little Olympic logo, but just take three of them, you have angels that are only in heaven. You have your second circle, which is the earth, and there's an overlap. Some angels go from heaven to earth and back again.

You have some angels that are restricted to the earth. These would be the demons that are not allowed back into heaven. And then you have another circle representing the sea.

You have some angels that mediate between the earth and the sea. You have the demons that were on the land and went into the drink with the swine. And then you have these that are represented as these uncontrollable, chaotic.

We talked about this in the last chapter, about how Satan seems to have control over some of the demons, that he goes out and marches on the earth. But he's trying through the Antichrist to establish a new world order. But then these chaotic angels, who are uncontrollable and have no king, burst forth.

The 200 million soldier army comes forth and is uncontrollable, only by God, only the set parameters of God. So anyway, this angel stands. He's identified with heaven, earth, and the sea.

And he comes from God in heaven. And he swears by God, who is identified with each of these three realms. And what does he swear? That there should be delay no longer.

Now, the word for delay, in Greek here, is the word chronos. Chronos. C-H-R-O-N-O-S.

It's from which we get chronometer. Chronos is the standard word for time. Chronos and kairos, times and seasons.

Chronos means time. There should be time no longer. The time is up, in other words.

The appointed time, the time that has been running, you know, the sand has run out of the hourglass. As the sand in the hourglass over the days are well, the time is up. There is no more sand.

The top of your hourglass is empty. Time, remember when the roll is called up yonder? Do you ever wonder about the first line of that? When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more? This is where that comes from. That time, there should be time no longer.

But, he says, in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished as he declared to his servants, the prophets. Fascinating, because the mystery that God declared to the prophets is everything having to do with Old Testament Israel. We're in the 70th week.

It's 144,000, 12,000 from each tribe. It is all about Israel. You just can't get anybody but Israel to work during this time period.

This is the mystery that is going to be completed, going to be fulfilled, going to be consummated, that was revealed to the prophets. The mystery of the church was not revealed to the prophets. This is Paul's constant refrain in the New Testament.

He is the steward of the mysteries that were not revealed in former times. What was the mystery revealed to the prophets? Fulfillment of the covenant promises to Israel by means of what? Resurrection. The mystery is resurrection.

It wasn't revealed in the law explicitly. It wasn't revealed in patriarchal days explicitly. It was implicit.

The first, I think I mentioned this last week, the very first hint that you get of resurrection is the death of Abel followed by the birth of Seth. The Abel-Seth relationship is a shadow, an adumbration of resurrection. And you have this repeated time and again down until it becomes explicit in the days of the prophet.

Your dead bones shall live. Prophecy to these bones. In comes the flesh and the sinew.

In comes the Ruach, the spirit of life. In the days of the sounding the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, completed, consummated as he declared to his servants the prophets. What are the prophets always talking about? What's the last 29 chapters, sorry, the last 27 chapters of the book of Isaiah about? What's 4366 about? Fulfillment of all of God's promises to Israel.

Isaiah is a mini Bible. The first 39 chapters are like the Old Testament. The last 26 chapters are like the New Testament.

Condemnation, judgment, all of sin and falling short of the glory of God. By the law comes the knowledge of sin. Your first 39 chapters.

Isaiah chapter 40 begins the comfort ye my people. Here comes the deliverer. Here comes salvation.

My spirit will be upon him, the suffering servant. All of that comes and is the means of fulfillment of all of these promises. Now, verse 8. Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again.

This is the same voice that said seal up the things which the seven thunders spoke. The voice says go take the little scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth. Go take the Biblion.

Same exact word that was used in chapter 5. Go take the Biblion. So if you have any doubt, it's pretty hard to argue here. Go take the Biblion.

Now you have the definite article. Go take the small scroll, the one having been opened in the hand of the messenger, the one having stood on the sea and on the earth. And I went to the messenger saying to him to give me the Biblion.

Biblion, Biblion, interchangeable terms here. Give me the Biblion, the little scroll. He said to me take and eat it and it will make your stomach bitter but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.

Then I took, verse 10, the little scroll, the Biblion, from the hand of the messenger and ate it up. Not just the word for eat, but eat up. It's a compound word.

And it was in my mouth like honey, sweet. And when I ate it, my stomach was made bitter. Aorist, passive, indicative.

There was a point where it was made bitter. And he said to me you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings. Notice that from the time God speaks in verse 4 through the end of this chapter, John has been progressively drawn into a more and more active role in the scene until now he is at the center of the scene.

He is walking up to this central angel with the flaming feet and the face like the sun. John is now an integral active part of this goings on. How important is the little scroll? The seven sealed scroll.

How important is that scroll? Gracious sakes, we've seen chapter after chapter of Revelation dedicated to this scroll. John, the Apostle John, is told by God to go take that book. And when he gets it from the hand of the angel, the angel says swallow it.

Now, I don't know how you can get any more central or any more involved than taking the seven sealed scroll that the lamb broke open and eating the thing. Is there anybody in heaven that isn't watching this scene? Is there anybody that doesn't see John at the hub and center and focus point of this entire scene? I mean it's just it's incredible. You can imagine that John might have a little indigestion being suddenly thrust into the spotlight in this way.

But what is the nature of this indigestion? Why is the book sweet to the taste and bitter in the stomach? What exactly is going on here? Well, it's a fascinating question. We're going to pause and take our break. When we come back we'll see if we can answer it.