

12b REV

Let's pick up our study now in Revelation chapter 10. We saw the mighty angel that comes down from heaven and stands, who I would suggest to you is Michael. The declaration that he makes is that the mystery of God would be finished as he declared to his servants the prophets.

His servants, the prophets, are Israelites. Michael is the prince angel for Israel. It stands to reason that this would be Michael mediating in the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is still in heaven awaiting the time when he is to return.

This would be sort of a pre-return. If he were to come down and stand on the sea and the earth before the second coming, it would be somewhat anticlimactic. The second coming would become the third coming, so it can't very well be the Lord Jesus.

But it can very clearly be Michael. So I'm going to, for intents and purposes, say this is Michael, for convenience sake. If it's not, I'm sure we'll all get straightened out in the future.

But, he cried with a loud voice when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. We have already made what I think is a compelling case for the fact that this is the little scroll of Revelation chapter 5. The scroll sealed with the seven seals, that the Lord Jesus Christ breaks one by one in those intervening chapters.

And it would be, and forgive me, I can't remember exactly what I said when, whether in the first lesson on the break or never, so I'll just say what's on my mind and you can skip the parts you've already heard. But the identification of this scroll is important because if it were not the same, how anticlimactic is it to have this scroll and have the dramatic breaking of each of the seven seals and then have the scroll written on the inside and out, disappear from view, never to be read, never to be acted on. If this isn't that scroll, what happened to it? And what was the big deal in unsealing it? Because it just drops out of sight.

Because this is the same scroll, we know that there was a purpose in breaking the seals. Once the Lord Jesus has broken the seventh seal and the scroll can be opened, Jesus, who is still in heaven as the Lamb at the throne with His Father, evidently hands that scroll to Michael, the Archangel of Israel, and says, go down and implement the contents of this scroll. Let's make it happen.

It's open. We can read the plan of God and purpose of God as it is in this scroll. And now that it's open, it is in effect.

It's active. It's ready to go. So Michael comes down and stands with a foot on the sea and a foot on the earth, raises his hand toward heaven, swears that the time is up for

whatever else is going to happen on earth.

There's a whole new thing coming and it's the contents of the scroll. So as he stands there and cries with his loud voice, as when a lion roars, seven thunders utter their voices and John is told to not write down what they say. Why is that? We talked about this somewhat on the break.

The seven thunders utter the contents of this scroll. You say, well, why can't we hear what they have to say? The scroll now in heaven is sealed and that scroll is going to remain sealed until the time of Daniel's 70th week in the tribulation. The church is raptured to heaven.

The scroll is going to be there sealed. That would be sort of pointless if John revealed the contents of the scroll in the book of Revelation. Why would there be anyone in heaven wailing and saying, who can open the scroll and reveal its contents when all you have to do is look in the book of Revelation and say, well, John jumped into the future and he told us what's in the scroll.

So it would be very anticlimactic. It would just be a mechanism for wreaking judgment on the earth without any drama or any mystery or anything that God has withheld because it needs to be withheld until the time of the end. But God tells John, look, you've been transported, as it were, into the future.

You have heard the content of what's in this scroll, but you seal it up because the scroll itself is in actuality sealed right now and its contents are a mystery to all but God. And the seven thunders, what they utter, that is the content of the scroll. It's a seven sealed scroll.

There are seven thunders that utter and you get the idea that there is a seven part commission, a seven part message, a seven paragraph order, if you will, contained in that scroll that is written on the front and on the back. And its contents cannot be revealed until the, if you will, actual scroll is unsealed. Its contents are known only to God.

And that secret is preserved here. It's classified. It's classified ultra top secret.

And John is forbidden from revealing the contents of the scroll. And it just stands to reason. Of course, no point in sealing it if you've let the cat out of the bag, you know, two thousand years ahead of time.

So, I think we can say with a great deal of confidence that the content of what is uttered by the seven thunders is the content of the little scroll. Seal it up. Do not write them.

The angel raises his hand and swears that there is time no longer in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel when he is about to sound, the mystery of God will be

complete, will be fulfilled, will be consummated as he declared to his servants the prophets. It's all about Israel. Michael is the prince to Israel.

Whatever it is that the seven thunders utter, whatever is written inside that scroll, known only to God, it is fulfilled in and through Israel. No great deductive leap there. Israel is on the earth.

The angel, Michael, comes down to earth with the contents of that open scroll. The seven thunders proclaim that this seven-fold program, this seven-fold judgment, this seven-fold communication and revelation from God is going to take place. The mystery of God will be consummated as he declared to his servants the prophets.

What did he declare through the prophets? Who's the first guy you can even legitimately try to call a prophet? How about Abraham? He is the recipient of revelation from God. God comes down and speaks to him. He's a friend of God.

God eats a meal with him. God says, I will not hide from Abram what I am about to do. And he gets this direct revelation from God.

What did God tell Abram? You're going to have descendants and through you, all nations of the earth will be blessed. That is the plan and purpose of God. We are not descendants of Abraham, generally speaking.

We are Gentiles. We are not Shemites. We may have a few drops from some long-forgotten generation, but generally speaking, we can't claim any descendancy from any of the twelve tribes.

We can't claim descendancy from, we're probably Japhethites or a combination of Hamitic and Japhitic. There might be some non-Abrahamic, Semitic, who knows what we are. It goes back to the mists of time.

But whatever it is, we are not the Old Testament saints. That's for certain. So in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, this mystery is going to be finished as he declared to his servants the prophets.

Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, Go take the little scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth. And here is John actively now taking this scroll. What is this scroll about? It's got that which is uttered by the seven thunders.

It is the consummation and the fulfillment of God's plan through Israel on the earth. Whatever is going to happen is happening in and through Israel. Jesus Christ, of course, the Son of David, the seed of David, the Son of Man, the Messiah to Israel is going to be the ultimate fulfillment, the means of fulfillment of this seven-fold mystery, whatever it may be.

It's going to be consummated and fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. John, the apostle, is drawn personally into this scene and becomes a central participant. As I pointed out before the break, John goes and says, Give me the little scroll.

The angel says, Take it and eat it. It will make your stomach good. This is the same angel that just got through raising his hand to heaven, standing on the sea and on the earth, and swearing by the God who lives forever and ever, the God who created the heavens, the God who created the earth, the God who created the seas, this four-fold oath, this great and mighty angel, his whole purpose in coming down and swearing this oath and proclaiming that the time of fulfillment is at hand.

What is the completion of his mission? Giving the book to John. John takes the book and eats it. All the rest of this is eyewash if something doesn't happen with the scroll.

Jesus Christ spent four chapters of the book of Revelation opening the seals on this scroll. Why? So that it can be brought down by the angel Michael and handed to John. This is really extraordinary when you think about it.

We think of John as being sort of the reporter and the innocent bystander. And yet, in this chapter, he becomes a central player and character. Why? I took the little book out of the angel's hand.

I took the little scroll. I ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

He said to me, You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings. Why does the angel tell John, you must prophesy again about peoples, nations, tongues, and kings? By the way, this angel has got four of everything, doesn't he? Four-fold oath, four-fold reflection of the glory of God, and now he's got a four-fold commission for John. You must prophesy again about peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

Peoples. Nations. Tongues.

And kings. Now, if he's going to prophesy again, and he's been drawn into this picture, he's now in the timeline, isn't he? This isn't, Oh, won't the book of Revelation be a wonderful thing for kings and tongues and princes and nations? This is his activity in this timeline. So, keep that in mind as we proceed into chapter 11.

Did you think we'd be 11 chapters into Revelation this soon? I didn't. Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod, and the angel stood saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. Now, we're going to come back.

You know, the sweetness and the bitterness in the stomach. Don't panic. I'm going to cover that, but I want to get a little bit further into this.

Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. Completely consistent with our understanding here.

It's all about Israel, isn't it? Don't concern yourself with the Gentiles. Concern yourself with the part that concerns Israel. It is Israel alone who can approach and worship and have any truck with the temple and the altar.

It is they alone who are qualified to stand and worship there. No one else. No one who is not of Israel can stand at the altar and worship and be in the temple precincts beyond the court of the Gentiles.

You may remember that there were four courts associated with the temple. There was the court of the Gentiles, then there was the court of the women, then there was the court of the Israelites, the men of Israel, and then there was the court of the priests. And you get progressively more and more restrictive as you move in those holier and holier precincts, as it were.

Court of the Gentiles furthest out, court of the women inside that, court of the men of Israel inside that, court of the priests inside that. And so John is going to measure, but he's not going to measure the court of the Gentiles, because it has been given over the holy city and so on. It will be trodden underfoot for 42 months.

Now, 42 months, how long is that? Well, 36 months is three years. Another six months is a half a year, three and a half years. This is clearly the latter half of the seven year, 70th week of Daniel.

This is consistent with what we know from other passages. Daniel says in the middle of the week, the covenant with many will be broken and sacrifice and offering will be cut off. So obviously the trodding underfoot takes place in the latter half.

This is our point. It's the last three and a half years that are in view here, because this is the point at which the holy city is trodden underfoot by the Gentiles, 42 months. Now, fascinating section here.

Verse 3, I will give power to my two witnesses and they will prophesy 1,260 days. How long is that? In 360 day years, this is three and a half years. Exactly.

You can do the math and figure it all out. 1,260 days is three and a half years in 360 day years. My two witnesses, they will prophesy these number of days clothed in sackcloth.

Why sackcloth? Sackcloth is the universal outward manifestation of mourning, sorrow, bad news. Nobody comes to your door in sackcloth and says, have a cigar, I just had a new baby. Nobody comes to your wedding in sackcloth and ashes.

Nobody comes to celebrate or to feast or to worship and to sing and shout and make a joyful noise in sackcloth. Sackcloth is mourning and sorrow and loss and woe and everything that's negative in terms of experience. These witnesses are going to go about in sackcloth for the last three and a half years of this 70th week.

Verse four says, These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. If anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner, incinerated.

These have power to shut heaven so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy. And they have power over waters to turn them to blood and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they desire. It's going to be a bad enough case on the earth with all of the other things that we've seen as a result of the opening of the seals and the blowing of the trumpets.

But these men can produce localized effects. Obviously, it's going to be localized because they are not omnipresent. They're going to be standing somewhere in the vicinity of Israel.

They're not going to wander the world necessarily. They're going to be somewhere in the Middle East, somewhere in the precincts of Israel. We know this because of where they die.

And wherever it is that they go, perhaps they travel, it doesn't say. But wherever they function in this witness, they have the power to produce plagues. Now, they're not going to be standing in Israel and produce a plague in Britain or in Argentina or something.

This would be something localized to them, something associated with them, it would seem. It's a reasonable assumption. They have power to shut heaven so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy.

They have power over waters to turn them to blood to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they desire. This harks back to Moses, doesn't it? And what was Moses' purpose? What was God's purpose in working through Moses in the bringing of the nine plagues on Egypt? The three sets of three. Bringing rebellious, unrepentant, oppressive Egypt, representing the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of bondage to its knees, and demonstrating that no matter what God did, people would not recognize Him and turn to Him.

The ministry of these two witnesses is going to be very similar. And so there is this allusion back to Moses. Also, the ability to shut heaven so that no rain falls, this alludes back to the days of Elijah when he prayed and there was no rain, and he prayed again and there was rain.

And, of course, Moses and Elijah, the two figures that show up on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah standing on that mount symbolize and represent the Law and the Prophets. Consummate Lawgiver Moses, Consummate Prophet Elijah, the Lord Jesus Christ standing there as the fulfillment of all that the Law and the Prophets revealed. And so many have concluded that these two witnesses either are literally Moses and Elijah or two individuals who come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

And you have a lot of Scripture that would sort of support this idea. Of course, the Transfiguration in Matthew 17 and Mark 9 Malachi 4, verses 5 and 6. You remember, I will send you Elijah the prophet. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and otherwise I will smite the earth with a curse.

And Jesus said, if you would accept him, John the Baptist is Elijah. And that was the precursor to the first time that the opportunity for the kingdom came around. And it would stand to reason that perhaps the genuine Elijah or someone very much like John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah would come before the second advent and the true bringing in of the kingdom.

And if you look at Deuteronomy 18.15, you find that there is a possible prediction of this second witness. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me, Moses says, from your midst, from your brethren, him you shall hear. And there are those who think that, well, with Malachi and with Deuteronomy 18.15, you have foreshadowing of the return of actual Moses and Elijah and so on.

And that's entirely possible. It's a very popular view. Almost all conservative commentators who believe that these are literal witnesses, that they are true individuals, believe that if they are not latter-day tribulational saints who fulfill the roles of Moses and Elijah, think that they actually are Moses and Elijah, that this was foreshadowed on the Mount of Transfiguration by the fact that, hey, they're not done yet.

They're still able to appear. And this, of course, would require a resuscitation. You might also notice that neither the body of Moses nor the body of Elijah was found after their death.

God buried Moses, and the book of Jude talks about that there was evidently some sort of dispute over the body of Moses, which we're not privy to. You find some fanciful discussion of it in the apocryphal books, but we don't know to what Jude is referring specifically. But, of course, Elijah, chariot of fire, Elisha, double portion of the spirit, the mantle, and all of that.

So it is interesting that neither Moses nor Elijah has a tomb or a marker or a known place of internment that God seems to have reserved them. Of course, the two individuals that we know left the earth and had no burial whatsoever are Enoch and Elijah. And there are

some who think, well, if you want to find two guys that were translated without seeing death, it's Enoch and Elijah.

I think the reason for Enoch's translation is clear when you look at the foreshadowing of the church and the rapture prior to the great tribulation foreshadowed by the flood. I can offer you a third alternative, and this has to do with why John is drawn into the picture here. And we've talked about this sometimes in the past, but you remember when the mother of James and John approached the Lord Jesus and asked for her sons to be granted the privilege of sitting at his right hand and his left in the kingdom.

And Jesus basically tells her, what you ask is not mine to grant. But the question he asks is, he says to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, he says, are you able to drink from the cup that I'm going to drink from? And can you be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? And they say, Lord, we are able. Remember that got incorporated into a hymn.

Lord, we are able, our spirits are strong. Jesus then says, you will indeed drink of the cup that I will drink from. And you will indeed be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

Specifically and exclusively to James and John he says this. But he says, to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to give. That belongs to the father.

I apologize for not having the passage in front of me. I'm familiar enough with it that I just revisited it from memory. You can look that up.

But the point is, what is the significance of drinking of Jesus' cup and being baptized with his baptism? And Jesus says, you will indeed experience both of those things. Well, what is the nickname of those two brothers? Boanerges, the sons of thunder. What has happened here in Revelation chapter 10 just prior to the introduction of the two witnesses? The seven thunders have spoken.

And as a result, having spoken the contents of the scroll, God tells John, go get the scroll from the angel. The angel says, eat it up. And John does.

It is sweet to his taste. It is bitter in his stomach. And he is immediately told, you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

Now, in earthly terms, in circa 96 AD, John on the Isle of Patmos is not going to go witness to anybody. He is going to write this book and he is going to die. That is pretty much it for him.

In the time of the 70th week, John is going to be raised at the time of the rapture and be in heaven with the rest of the New Testament church age saints. Right? Revelation 4.1, come up here. He is the archetype, sort of, of the church in that movement from earth to

heaven, that shift in perspective.

But, at this point, he is drawn back into earthly Israelite things. Why is John the one that eats the scroll? Why not some other innocent bystander? Why not Moses, or Elijah, or Samuel, or Enoch, or some Old Testament guy? Why doesn't he come back? It is John who eats the scroll. It is John that is told that he must prophesy.

Now, the sevenfold content of this scroll, uttered by the thunders, sealed up until the time of the end, is what John eats. He is the one that has heard it. He is the only living human being, at this point of writing, that knows the content of that.

He is the one to whom it was safeguarded back in 90-something AD. John knew what the seven thunders said. Why does God impart to him and no one else in the human race that knowledge? I would suggest to you that it is possible, I think likely, that it is James and John, the sons of thunder, who come back to earth and witness for three and a half years.

Why? What did Jesus say the qualifications for a witness would be? You will be witnesses unto me, because you have been with me from the beginning. That's what Jesus told the disciples before he left. You are qualified.

This is what Peter understood in the early chapters of Acts, when they had the election and chose Matthias. Because he said, we've got to find somebody to replace Judas. Somebody that has been with us from the beginning.

And so they choose Matthias, who then disappears from history forever, because he is not the replacement apostle. It's going to be the apostle Paul. But, isn't it interesting that Jesus makes the remarks he makes to James and John at the behest of their mother, coming and saying, let my son sit at your right hand and your left in the kingdom.

And Jesus says, well, can you drink my cup? Can you be baptized with my baptism? And then he predicts that they will be, only those two. And they are companions of the Lord Jesus. They are eyewitnesses.

John goes to great lengths in his epistles and in his gospel to say that which we have handled, which our eyes have seen, which our ears have heard, is what we testify and declare unto you. We share our fellowship with the Lord with you, so that your joy may be full. There is nobody more qualified than the beloved disciple to testify the things of God to the tribulational world.

He is an eyewitness. He is the author of the book. If you want the straight scoop, get the guy that wrote the book.

Well, he's going to be, I would submit, I would suggest, he'll be walking near us. Somebody's got a question about Revelation? Hey, I'm your man. I wrote the thing.

It's been 2,000 years, but I think I remember most of it. He can speak. Now, why is the book that he eats, the scroll, sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach? There's been a lot of great application made from this, and taking nothing away from that, that many times we enjoy the intake of the word of God, but when it gets inside us, it can be painful.

We have changes. We are convicted. We recognize that we are in need of transformation.

We are in need of improvement, and many such applications have been made. But think about this. This is sort of a good news, bad news thing, with the good news first.

The good news is the honey taste in the mouth. The bad news is the bitter stomach that follows. The good news is, guess what, John? Your brother, remember John is the last disciple to die and James is the first? They bracket the entire apostolic age.

James goes just shortly after the Lord leaves. Doesn't even get cranked up good. Doesn't even see the Jerusalem church get well underway before he's gone.

He's the first one to be martyred. His brother John outlasts them all. John, the good news is, your brother James coming back.

You and your brother James are going to be a witness team. You two sons of thunder, the thunders have spoken and the sons of thunder are going to roam the earth for three and a half years together. You and your brother James and John.

What a great deal. Now for the bad news. When they finish their testimony, verse 7 of chapter 11, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them and kill them.

Who made war against the Lord Jesus and seemingly overcame him and killed him at the first advent? Same agent. The cup that the Lord Jesus had to drink, the baptism with which he was baptized was his death on the cross. Look at these individuals.

The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit makes war against them, overcomes them and kills them and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt. What is the great city that is spiritually Sodom and Egypt? What's the only city that has spiritual significance in Israel? I mean, it's Jerusalem. It's the capital.

Why is Jerusalem trodden underfoot by the Gentiles? Why was it trodden underfoot by the Gentiles in Ezekiel's day? Disobedience, rebellion, idolatry, departure from God, breaking of the covenant and all of those who are still faithful have fled the city and it is trodden underfoot by the Gentiles. These men come and bear witness. Why are they out there testifying? Faithful Israelites, anybody else qualified to testify to the grace and

goodness of God have fled.

Remember Jesus said, don't even go inside. When you see the abomination of desolation, flee. Get out of town.

They're not coming in there and saying anything. They've got no power to roast somebody that comes after them. They have followed Jesus' instructions and have fled and are hiding in the hills.

So who's left to bear witness so that there is a basis for conviction for lack of repentance? There has to be confrontation. There has to be declaration of the message of God. There has to be the declaration of the sevenfold message that's on that scroll.

And I would suggest that it's possible, could be Moses and Elijah, could be two individuals in the spirit and power, could be James and John. John has digested this scroll. John knows its contents.

He and his brother James were told by the Lord Jesus that they would drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism. And you can't find two individuals anywhere in Scripture that come any closer to experiencing the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus than what you find right here. Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

This is a last, final testimony to Christ. That's what this witness and this testimony is all about. It's the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what the world will not absorb and will not recognize and will not admit and will not accept from the verbal testimony of these two men, they are going to get in final form when these men essentially reenact the death of the Lord Jesus in the very same city. And their bodies are going to lie there unburied because, of course, they aren't the Savior and they aren't the subjects of the prophetic, you know, being with the rich in death and so on that Jesus was. But look at verse 9. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations remember the last verse of chapter 10, will see their dead bodies three and a half days.

Three and a half days, three and a half years. Three and a half days, three and a half years. This is at the end of their three and a half year ministry and this is a summation and a distillation of their whole three and a half year ministry in three and a half days.

Not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry and send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them and they stood on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them. Notice there's no, and I looked and behold, as we've seen so often in the rest of this book.

John doesn't say, and I saw the two witnesses and behold, breath entered their bodies. He just gives the fact here. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, come up here.

What did God say to John? What did the angelic voice say in 4.1? Come up here. The voice of Jesus, come up here, I will show you. John hears the same thing.

John's getting used to hearing that, isn't he? Come up here. And they ascended to heaven in a cloud and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake and a tenth of the city fell and the earthquake 7,000 people were killed and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The second woe was passed. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. Well, it's very interesting.

The death of these witnesses sparks a great celebration. Why? Because their presence, their ministry, their witness, their message is painful. It's odious.

It is a prick to the conscience. They are tormented. But the torment doesn't cause them to turn.

It puts us in mind of the middle of Luke. You remember the parable that Jesus tells about the rich man and Lazarus? O father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am what? Tormented in this flame. He doesn't say, Lord, I realize the error of my ways.

Is there any way I can be transferred out of here? I promise you I've learned my lesson. You can't imagine what a good faithful Israelite I'm going to be. His experience doesn't really change his mind.

He doesn't say, O father Abraham, can I please come over there with you? O father Abraham, how long do I have to remain here? He knows why he's there. All he says is, a drop of water for my tongue would be nice. And can you please go talk to my brothers so they won't come to this place.

Torment for people who are negative, if it doesn't change their mind, nothing will. If hard knocks don't wake you up to change of mind, you're done. There's nothing more God can do.

These people have been tormented for three and a half years by the message of these two witnesses, and they don't change their mind. God has exhausted all remedies. And he's pretty well sick and tired of everybody that's left on the earth.

And that's why the third woe is coming. The resurrection is going to turn their laughter and rejoicing to mourning. Why? Once again, it is a demonstration of God's power over

death.

What they thought is a victory turns out to be a defeat. And the fear is followed by this great natural disturbance, this earthquake that strikes. It's the same earthquake we have seen at the end of the seals.

It's the same earthquake occurring here at the end of the trumpets. And we're going to find that there is this same earthquake at the end of the bowl judgments, because this is the harbinger, the final birth pang of the great and terrible day of the Lord, where the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return and purge the earth. He's going to start swinging that rod of iron and begin the mopping up and the cleaning up to institute the kingdom.

So what do we draw from all of this by way of interpretation and application? God has a plan. It is perfect. It is complete.

It has a timetable. It is certain of fulfillment. There should be no doubt in our minds that the set purpose of God will be fulfilled.

Like the thunders, we don't always know what that plan and purpose entails. Sometimes we taste of it, and it's sweet in the mouth, but as we come to understand it, it's bitter in the stomach. Sometimes people have used this to talk about the disappointment of those who have a heart for the lost and a gift of evangelism, recognizing that as they preach the gospel, people are not all going to be saved, and this is going to be the basis of these people's condemnation, that as they preach, they are in fact essentially sealing the doom of the people who reject their message.

There are many applications that can be drawn from this. I doubt that any of them are invalid, but I think the major thing is to recognize that God's plan is set. It is going to take place.

We have an assigned role and function in it, and it's our job to be obedient. When the angel speaks, when God speaks, and John is given instructions, he follows them to the letter. There's no hesitation.

There's no question. There's no crying the blues. There's no sea loren going on.

He gets an instruction. He carries it out. This is why he's John.

This is why he's assigned this great pivotal role, both in writing this book and, I think, in both operating at the beginning of the church age and the end of the age of Israel. He was there before, and he's going to be there again. He is the great end-time apostle.

There's one man you could say in history is associated with the end times. It's the apostle John. What did Jesus say to Peter after the resurrection? What is it to you if he should remain until I come? There are just too many resonant statements made by the

Lord Jesus that indicate that John has a physical role to play, and I believe I would lay my pittance of money on James and John as the two witnesses who come back and drink that cup and experience that baptism and are accorded that great honor of following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, just as the apostle Paul did in the Gentile realm in saying, I die daily.

I bear in my marks the body of the Lord Jesus. Well, we're out of time. We'll resume here in Revelation 11 next time.

Father, thank you for the wonderful truths of your word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts and souls. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.