

The Facebook Commentary on Revelation Jon Paulien

Revelation Chapter 10

Each post begins with “Rev”, then the chapter number, if the comment is of general significance, and then a verse reference, if the comment is specific to that verse (ex: Rev 10:4:). Since I hope to write a book on Revelation 10-14 soon, Revelation 10 is the first chapter to be written on.

Rev 10:1 - 11:13 Introduction–

For me, Revelation 10:1-11:13 has been as difficult to interpret as any other part of Revelation. This passage seems at first to separate the sixth from the seventh trumpets and is of a different character than that of the trumpets. Instead of horrific judgments and natural catastrophies, there is prophecy, preaching, and the experience of God's people. As a result, this passage is often called an “interlude” or change of pace in the midst of the seven trumpets. Whereas the trumpets express judgments on the opponents of God's people, the interlude focuses on the people of God themselves.

The “interlude” in the seven trumpets is similar to one in Revelation 7 (the sixth seal ends at the close of Revelation 6 but the seventh seal is not broken until Revelation 8). Revelation 7 answers the question of Revelation 6:17: When the wrath of the Lamb comes to the world “Who will be able to stand?” Both interludes, therefore, offer views of what the people of God are doing as they face opposition just before Jesus' return.

Is the material in Revelation 10-11 part of the seven trumpets or is it separate from them? This is a question we can answer with certainty. Revelation 9:12 says, "The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come." The first woe clearly is the fifth trumpet (Revelation 9:1-11) and the second woe clearly begins with the sixth (Rev 9:13-21). The third woe is announced in Revelation 11:14: "The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon." These two connectors (Revelation 9:12 and 11:14) show that the interlude (Revelation 10:1-11:13) is part of the sixth trumpet.

Both the interlude of Revelation 10:1-11:13 and that of Revelation 7 are in two parts. The trumpets interlude involves the visions of 10:1-7 and 11:1-13 with 10:8-11 forming a transition that points both forward and backward. The seals interlude includes a section on the 144,000 and a section on the Great Multitude.

Just as the seals interlude (Revelation 7) answers the question at the end of the sixth seal (Rev 6:17), so the interlude of Revelation 10-11 relates to the sixth trumpet. The interlude concerns the particular point in history where the angels are released from the Euphrates River and the four winds are being held so that the sealing can take place (cf. Revelation 7:1-3). It is the time of gathering for the battle of Armageddon (compare 9:13-21 with 16:12-16) and ends just before the close of probation (Rev 10:7). So this interlude relates particularly to the time of the end, although earlier periods are also in view, as we will see when we come to Revelation 10: 5-7.

The interlude of Revelation 10:1-11:13 is a view of the righteous that runs parallel to the experience of the wicked just before the end. Satan's forces are shown preparing for the final conflict in Revelation 9:13-21. Similarly in Revelation 10:1-11:13 God prepares a people through prophecy to counteract that threat.

Rev 10:1–

The reference to a “mighty” or “strong” angel differentiates this angel from the seven trumpet angels of Revelation 8 and 9, as does the adjective “another.” And since this is “another mighty angel,” it almost certainly refers back to Revelation 5:2, where a mighty angel acts as announcer or master of ceremonies in the heavenly court room (see also the mighty angel in 18:21). Like the first mighty angel, the angel of Revelation 10 has a different mission than the first six trumpet angels, he is engaging the things of God rather than powers related to Satan.

The phrase “coming down from heaven” recalls the New Jerusalem in Revelation 3:12; 21:2 and 21:10. Fire also comes down from heaven in Revelation 13:13.

Other references to “cloud” in the Book of Revelation include the ascension of the two witnesses (11:12), the son of man seated on a cloud (14:14-16), and the second coming of Jesus accompanied by multiple clouds (1:7). In the Old Testament clouds are often depicted as “God’s chariots” (Psa 68:4; 104:3; Ezek 1:7, 28), they accompanied the Israelites during the Exodus and sheltered them (Exod 13:21-22; 14:19-20, Psa 105:39, etc.), they shelter the glory of God (Exod 16:10) and they form the border of heaven (Isa 14:14). What is important for Revelation 10 is that clouds in the Old Testament are frequently associated with God and this echo would confirm the divine nature of the mighty angel in this chapter.

Mention of a rainbow recalls the rainbow around the throne of God in Revelation 4:3 and Ezekiel 1:28 and also the rainbow that represented the covenant and expressed God’s mercy at the end of the Flood (Gen 9:13-17).

A face like the sun is reminiscent of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration as well as Revelation 1 (Matt 17:2; Rev 1:16).

Legs like pillars of fire may, along with the cloud, be an allusion to the Exodus (Exod 14:19, 24). This would imply a deliverance of God’s people as one part of the theme of Revelation 10.

There appears to be a strong allusion to Ezekiel 1:26-28 in 10:1, which would also underline the parallel with Revelation 5, since Ezekiel 1 is a divine throne scene.

There are also strong parallels between the description of this angel and Revelation 1: The mighty angel is “robed in a cloud” while Jesus “comes with the mighty clouds” (Revelation 1:7) and is “seated on the cloud” (Revelation 14:14). The mighty angel’s face is like the sun while Jesus’ face is “like the sun shining is all its brilliance” (Revelation 1:16). The mighty angel’s legs are like “fiery pillars” and the feet of Jesus are like “bronze glowing in a furnace” (Revelation 1:15). The word in the original for feet and legs is the same but in the translation they appear differently. In Greek it is clear that the mighty angel is the same figure Who appeared to John on Patmos. Perhaps the divine symbolism means that the mighty angel is Jesus.

The language of this verse is also parallel to the transfiguration of Jesus, which was the only time that His earthly disciples saw Him as He really is in heavenly glory

(Matt 17:2). The mighty angel has the appearance of the transfigured Jesus and is probably to be identified as Jesus. The rainbow above his head reminds the reader of the throne in Revelation 4:3.

While it is plausible apply this mighty angel to Jesus, it would seem that the mighty angel of Revelation 5 is not Jesus (who is represented by the Lamb there), so there is ambiguity here about the identity of the angel. At the least, one can say that the angel here functions like Christ. Compare the angel in Revelation 22:6-16, who speaks his own words, but also the words of Christ without a clear transition between. So if this is an angel and not Christ, he is certainly functioning with the full authority of Christ.

The description in these verses, therefore, reminds us of Jesus, the Old Testament Yahweh, and the great mighty acts of God: the Flood, the Exodus, and the establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai (pillars, fire, and rainbow). The powerful impression made by these opening verses is that something truly momentous is about to happen in the chapter.

Rev 10:1,2–

The mighty angel symbolizes Christ exercising His authority. He has a scroll reminding us of the worthy one who is able to open the scroll (Rev 5:7). It would appear that Jesus is both the Lamb who holds in His hand the sealed scroll (Rev 5) and the mighty angel who holds the open scroll (Rev 10). Whatever takes place in this chapter comes directly from Jesus who is in control and is acting like one who sits on the throne of heaven.

Rev 10:2–

The word for “lay open” is a perfect passive participle in the original. The perfect tense means that the scroll is seen as open and it has been open for some time, perhaps a reference back to 8:1 when the seventh seal was broken. The scroll was opened in heaven (Rev 5) and is now seen on earth to be opened. The passive is often used in Revelation to imply God’s action, it was the divine-human Lamb who broke the seals and opened the scroll (Revelation 5 and 6 especially). Participles are verbal nouns that can be used as adverbs or adjectives. Here “open” is used as an adjective to modify “scroll.”

The little scroll “lay open” in his hand. The basis of this translation is the perfect passive in the Greek, which means that the book was not in the process of being opened in our view but had already been opened before the angel appeared to John in vision. It is very likely that this refers back to the seven seals passage (Rev 6:1-8:1) where Jesus is seen to be breaking the seven seals one by one (and by implication opening the book after the seventh seal is broken). In the narrative of the book, the breaking of the seals was complete by Revelation 8:1.

Why translate with “scroll” in Revelation 10:2 and other places? For two reasons. First, there is no evidence that the codex form of book (pages glued together at one end as in books today) was invented before the writing of Revelation, which most likely occurred around 95 AD. Scrolls (long sheets of paper rolled up on a stick) were the normal book form in the First Century and before. Second, in Revelation 6:14 the word “book” is used to describe the heavens “rolling up” like a book/scroll. This clarifies

John's usage of "book" as referring to a format that is rolled up rather than glued together.

Since the seven seals that closed the scroll of Revelation 5 have been broken, could Revelation 10 be a revelation of the contents of the same scroll that we find in Revelation 5? According to most scholars, the answer would be "no," because the Greek of Revelation 10 has a different word for "book/scroll" (the Greek has "*biblion*" in Revelation 5 and "*bibliaridion*" in Revelation 10). But both words are actually diminutives of the Greek word for book, "*biblos*," which is to say "a small book." An example of a diminutive in the English language is that Carl can become Carlito--cute little Carl.

A study in the Greek of John's use of the three words for book reveals that John does not follow a consistent pattern in their use. He uses both "*biblos*" and "*biblion*" for the book of life (Rev 20:12 and 15). He uses "*bibliaridion*" and "*biblion*" for the scroll in the angel's hand (Rev 10:2 and 8). Since the choice of words does not rule out a parallel, the strong parallels between the two passages suggest that both scrolls are the same (Rev 5:7 and 10:2). Perhaps John is not particularly concerned as to whether the book in either case is a Carl or a Carlito.

If the scrolls of Revelation 10 and 5 are the same, that scroll is now shown to be open, which one would expect after the seventh seal is broken. The relationship between the two scrolls in that case expresses the fulfillment of what was promised in Revelation 1:1. There we find a chain of revelation. God gives the revelation to Jesus, Jesus passes it on through His angel to John and then John writes the revelation in a book. Revelation 5 would then represent the handover of revelation from the Father to Jesus and Revelation 10 would express the handover from Jesus to John.

The contents of that scroll in Revelation 5 are so important to the universe that 1) John weeps greatly that no one can open it and 2) the universe explodes with joy when the Lamb can open it. The events in the interlude of chapter 10 relate to that mighty scroll which seems to be the decisive point in human history. But it is possible that the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 reveal different aspects of the larger meaning. Perhaps the littleness of the scroll here implies that it contains only a portion of the larger scroll which contains the whole counsel of God, that portion that is particularly profitable at the time when the angel announces "time no more" (Rev 10:6). Many scholars believe that the content of the scroll is Revelation 12-22. This full disclosure will occur in the final period of earth's history.

The proclamation angel is so large that He can put one foot on the land and one in the middle of the sea. To most commentators, that means that the message is world-wide, the message of the angel message is for everybody everywhere. This juxtaposition of land and sea occurs again in Revelation 13, where the two beasts come out of the sea and the land respectively.

Rev 10:3--

This verse introduces the seven thunders. In the original there is a definite article in front of "seven thunders" (as in NIV and ESV). That suggests that the concept of the seven thunders was known to John and likely also to the churches he was writing to. The description of the seven thunders is extremely brief and remains largely a mystery to this day. The number seven, of course, represents totality or completion of whatever

the thunders are intended to symbolize.

According to Rev 5:5, the Lamb is the Lion of Judah. Of all the animal kingdom, the lion's voice is the most like thunder. The first living creature looks like a lion (Revelation 4:7) but when he speaks his voice is like the sound of thunder (Revelation 6:1). There are a number of connections: the lion is a symbol for Yahweh in the Old Testament where He acts like a lion to save His people from their enemies (Hosea 11:10, Jeremiah 25:30); judges His people like a lion (Amos 1:2, 3:8); and uses a lion for prophecy (Amos 3:7-8: "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared--who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken--who can but prophesy?") So the gift of prophecy is associated with Yahweh speaking like the voice of a lion. Whatever is going on in Revelation 10, therefore, has something to do with prophecy.

Rev 10:3-4--

Thunder is noted repeatedly in Revelation in the context of God's direct presence (Rev 14:2) and is associated with God's throne (Rev 4:5) and various aspects of the heavenly sanctuary (Rev 8:3-5; 11:19; 16:18). Combined with usage in the OT, the thunders here may portray a *theophany*, an appearance of God. If the mighty angel represents Jesus, then this would be an affirmation of high christology, the deity of Christ.

Rev 10:4--

The "voice from heaven" here is a different character than the angel who holds the little scroll. This character intrudes into the narrative again in Revelation 10:8 and is likely also the passive voice in 10:11 and much of what follows in chapter 11.

When God speaks and acts in powerful ways, an appropriate symbol is thunder. But the seven thunders are not written down so we can only speculate as to their exact meaning, but we can draw some conclusions here from the use of thunder in the Old Testament.

Seven thunders are found in Psalm 29, a song that depicts a thunderstorm over the mountains of Lebanon as the voice of God:

"The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

"The voice of the LORD is powerful;

"The voice of the LORD is majestic.

"The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

"He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox.

"The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning.

"The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

"The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, 'Glory!'" Psalm 29:3-9.

The thunderstorm is described in terms of "the voice of the LORD" and the consequences of that voice are mighty acts of God. So the thunders of Psalm 29

probably recall the mighty acts of God in Old Testament times, Creation, the Flood, the Exodus, and so on. I believe Revelation 10 has an intentional allusion to Psalm 29.

Another Old Testament parallel is Job 37:5: "God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding" (see also Psalm 18:13). The conclusion of these Old Testament parallels are that the seven thunders of Revelation are mighty actions of God which are 1) decisive and 2) cannot be understood without revelation (Amos 3:7-8). As mentioned in relation to verse 3 the seven thunders seem to be related to prophecy. That there are seven thunders suggest that this may represent the final and complete judgment of God upon the earth. This judgment is concealed at this point in time because there is yet more to occur in earth's history before final judgment can be rendered in behalf of God's people. The hint of delay in verses 6 and 7 support the idea that the end could have come with the thunders had not God intervened to delay things (Rev 17:17). Had circumstances allowed, the time prophecies of Daniel could have been shortened.

There is an interesting New Testament parallel to the seven thunders in John 12:28-30. When God spoke to Jesus, it was with a voice that sounded like thunder:

"Father, glorify your name!"

"Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.'

"The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

"Jesus said, 'This voice was for your benefit, not mine.'"

What is interesting in this passage is that God's voice speaking like thunder in Jerusalem happened just before the cross. It is significant that in the Gospel of John the cross was the greatest revelation of God (a spiritual *theophany*).

In Revelation 14:2 thunder is mentioned in the context of the three angel's messages of Rev 14:6-12. Since the thunder of John 12 calls attention to Jesus preparing for the cross (verse 31-32), it may represent the final proclamation of the gospel, which is also referenced in Revelation 10:7.

After the seven thunders sound, a voice from heaven tells John to seal up what the seven thunders said and do not write them down. This appears to be a different voice than the voice of the mighty angel. Is it the voice of God? That would make sense since God's voice is widely associated with thunder in the Bible. Here God thunders just before the period referred to in the next passage of the chapter (verses 5-7).

According to this text, the words of the seven thunders are sealed. The concept of a sealed message reminds us of three verses in the book of Daniel.

"The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future." Daniel 8:26.

"But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge." Daniel 12:4.

"He replied, 'God your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.'" Daniel 12:9.

The last portion of Daniel was not to be understood until the time of the end.

There is no other reference in Revelation to "do not write." Instead there are about a dozen commands to John to write (Rev 1:11, 19, etc.). Revelation 22:10, in fact, specifically commands to NOT to seal up the words of the prophecy of this book. You

seal something up because the message is not relevant until a later time. There are things that God's people need to know, and these are revealed, but there are also things that are not helpful for them to know (Deut 29:29) and these are not revealed. The seven thunders belongs to the latter (cf. 2 Cor 12:2-4). Why were the seven thunders not revealed? Ellen White explains (7BC971) that "It was not best for the people to know these things, for their faith must necessarily be tested." That is as good an explanation as any I have heard.

The message of sealing up recalls Daniel and contrasts with the rest of Revelation. In Daniel 8:26 the vision is to be sealed up and that action is confirmed in Daniel 12:4, 9. In Revelation, on the other hand, there are about a dozen commands for John to write, such as Rev 1:11, 19; and 22:10. The reason given for not sealing is that "the time is near" (Rev 22:10).

In Daniel, the message is to be sealed up until a future time. In Revelation, the command to seal the thunders' is unique because John is otherwise told not to seal up the vision and is commanded to write. The difference between the sealed part of Daniel (chapters 8-12) and the book of Revelation was that what John wrote was ALL relevant to the first generation. But, apparently, the seven thunders deal with something totally beyond John's time and the time of his readers.

Rev 10:5-6—

In Revelation 4:9, the one sitting on the throne is described as him who lives forever and ever. Clearly a reference to God both there and here. This passage may also relate to the fifth seal (Rev 6:9-11) where souls under the altar ask how long and are told to wait. This passage may also relate to the hour, day month and year of Rev 9:14-15, the moment that is decisive for the enemies of God's people is also a decisive moment in God's plan.

This passage clearly alludes to a great Old Testament background text, Daniel 12:7: "The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, 'It will be for a time, times and half a time.'" There are eight major words in common, which makes this parallel one of the two or three strongest verbal parallels in the entire Book of Revelation. In each passage there is a location given, then a supernatural figure raises a hand to heaven and swears by the one who lives forever and makes a pronouncement.

The pronouncement in Revelation 10:6 is, however, different than the one in Daniel 12:7. In Daniel the "man in linen" (referring back to the divine figure in Daniel 10:5-6) announces a familiar period of time, "Time, times and half a time." (cf. Dan 7:25) But in Revelation, the angel says literally, "Time will be no more." The Greek word for "time" here is *chronos*, which means chronological time. So the pronouncement of Revelation 10:6 is clearly a reference to the three and a half times of Daniel 12:7 and perhaps 7:25. He seems to be announcing the end of the period referred to in Daniel 12. The latter part of Daniel is full of references to "appointed times" and the "time of the end." (Dan 11:27, 29, 35, 40).

C. H. Dodd, in his famous book *According to the Scriptures*, pointed out that New Testament writers did not quote the Old Testament for proof texts, but rather as pointers

to the entire context in which those texts are found. Thus, we should not expect the reference to Daniel 12:7 to be concerned only with that text, but with the larger context in which it is found. That larger context proves to go all the way back to Daniel 8, and the whole is relevant to Revelation 10 (Daniel 8-12 is already set apart from earlier chapters by the use of the Hebrew language— Daniel 2-7 is mostly in Aramaic).

The vision of Daniel 8:3-14 climaxes in verses 13 and 14, which introduce four issues: 1) "How long is the vision 2) concerning the regular burnt offering, 3) the transgression that makes desolate, and 4) the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" (Dan 8:13, ESV) After explaining verses 3-12 (Dan 8:15-25), the interpreting angel begins to explain the first of the four issues in Daniel 8:26 and then continues in 9:24-27. But he never completes his explanation of the length of the vision or any of the other three issues until Daniel 12:7-13. So in alluding to Daniel 12:7 (and 12:4 earlier in the chapter) Revelation 10 is drawing the entire sealed section of Daniel (chapters 8-12) into play.

Is Daniel 12:5-13 the very last events (Time of the End) or is it referring to the vision of Daniel 8:13-14, which leads up to the end? If you go through chapter 12, verse 4 points forward to the "time of the end." Daniel then asks "how long until then?" (verse 6) The answer is verse 7 (time, times and half), which builds on Daniel 7:25, events that bridge from the beasts to the judgment at the end. Daniel then seems to ask the same question in other words with reference back to verse 4 (Daniel 12:8-9). Then in verse ten through 12 he makes multiple reference to the issues in 8:13-14 and 11:30-35. Finally in 12:13 Daniel is pointed to the Time of the End itself. What I just wrote is clearer in the Hebrew, but can be seen in the English, I think.

The allusion to the larger context (Dan 8-12) of Daniel 12:7 means all the time prophecies of Daniel (2300 evenings and mornings [Dan 8:14]; time, times and half a time [Dan 12:7], 1290 days [Dan 12:11] and 1335 days [Dan 12:12]) are included in the announcement, "Time will be no more." Revelation 10:6, therefore, announces the close of Daniel's time prophecies. The "unsealing" time of Daniel is being entered and there will be a study of Bible prophecy on a large scale.

There appears to be an allusion also to Deuteronomy 32:40, where God is portrayed as lifting His hand toward heaven and making a declaration. In that declaration God promises to "avenge the blood of His servants and take vengeance on His enemies" (Deut 32:43). In light of this allusion, the angel's declaration is also relevant to the "how long" question of Rev 6:10, which is applied to trumpets five through seven in Revelation 8:13. The timing of the angelic proclamation in Revelation 10:6, therefore, is associated with God's promise to restore justice to His martyred saints in the fifth seal (Rev 6:9-11).

Rev 10:6—

Some scholars have suggested that this verse alludes to Exod 20:11, the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, which deals with the Sabbath. The same construction is used in Revelation 14:7, which clearly alludes to Exod 20:11 (see detail in relation to that verse). But in this verse, John uses a different Greek word for "made," *ktizō* rather than *poieō*, so the parallel is not as strong or critical to the text as it is in Revelation 14:7. It is interesting that a direct parallel to the wording of this verse can be found in the

additions to Daniel 4:37 that are found in the Apocrypha. If John were familiar with these additions, there could be an allusion to the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar here, but I don't think that is likely. The strong allusion to Daniel 12 takes precedence as background. There is another unlikely background in Acts 4:24.

Many interpreters, including William Miller, took the angelic announcement to mean the end of the world. But they overlooked two things. 1) In Daniel the time prophecies do not lead up to the end of the world, they lead up to the "time of the end." 2) That should have been clue enough, but Miller also missed the "but" in Revelation 10:7, as we will see. Verse 7 will make clear that time continues after the angel's announcement in verse 6.

Rev 10:7-

There is a hint in this verse of the delay of the second coming. The angel says, "Time will be no more," BUT in the days of the seventh angel, the mystery of God will be finished. The Millerites figured that the coming of Jesus was near because the time prophecies had run out. But the end did not come. Even though "time will be no more," it is not until the days of the seventh angel that the end will come.

It is clear from this text that the seventh trumpet ushers in the very last part of earth's history. When the seventh angel is about to sound, the mystery of God will be accomplished--finished. The blowing of the seventh trumpet, however, does not occur until Revelation 11:15. The idea of the "mystery of God" is rooted in Daniel, where God reveals to Nebuchadnezzar mysteries concerning the future that were hidden from the wise men of Babylon (Dan 2:27-29, 44-45, see also Amos 3:7). The phrase is widespread in the New Testament. It is a message brought to the world through Christ (Rom 16:25-26), equivalent to the gospel (Col 1:25-28, see also Eph 6:19). Through the gospel, the door of heaven was open to all, including both Jew and Gentile (Eph 3:3-6; 1 Tim 3:16). This concept of mystery is illustrated by the sealed scroll in Revelation 5, which is opened to view in the Book of Revelation, but remains closed to those who reject God's revelations. The full, final and visible revelation of the "mystery of God" will occur in the final consummation (Rev 11:15-18; 20:11-15).

The association between mystery and gospel is confirmed by the verb "announced" in Rev 10:7, which is the verb form of the noun translated "gospel." Rev 10:7, therefore, describes a great final proclamation of the gospel just before the blowing of the last trumpet, at the same time as the wicked are preparing for Armageddon (Rev 9:13-21, see 16:13-16). This final proclamation corresponds to the first angel flying in heaven proclaiming the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6-7). The final gospel proclamation is done in the light of the time prophecies in the book of Daniel.

There are 17 references to "servants the prophets" in the Old Testament. The most interesting of these is Amos 3:7, where it is tied in to the idea of a lion roaring. This raises the possibility of a mild structural parallel to Amos 3 in Revelation 10:3-7. This would underline the focus on Bible prophecy in Revelation 10.

This final proclamation of the gospel draws to a close just before the seventh angel sounds his trumpet. So the blowing of the seventh trumpet signals the close of human probation and an irreversible onset of the final events. The gospel has been presented through "His servants the prophets" (cf. Amos 3:7-8) for 2,000 years but in

the last days of earth's history it will be proclaimed in the context of Bible prophecy. That's why the study of Revelation matters today.

The "mystery of God" here not only portrays the final proclamation of the gospel, but sets up the counterfeit, the "mystery" of Babylon, which is clearly expressed in Revelation 17:5. So the final proclamation of the gospel will occur in conflict with a counterfeit of the gospel (see also Rev 13:7; 16:13-14).

Ellen G. White comment on this passage: "This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844." SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pg. 971.

We do not know when Jesus will come but Rev 10 suggests that we have entered the time in history when His coming is especially near, the "time of the end." At times such as this, decision becomes more important, there is no time for delay or indecision. Having said this, however, we must note that God has always portrayed the end as near (Rev 1:3). Every generation has needed to know that Jesus coming was near so they would take seriously their opportunities for a decision. But, God's Word has always contained the seeds of a deeper understanding. The disciples missed the clues that time would go on and thought that the cross and resurrection would be the end of the world. (Acts 1:6-7)

Rev 10:5-7 Conclusion–

It is common in the SDA tradition to see the sounding of the seventh trumpet as the beginning of the "investigative" judgment, the final assessment of all who ever lived on earth, after which probation closes for the human race. But the same SDAs have also seen the investigative judgment as coming at the close of Daniel's time prophecies, the theme of Rev 10:6. But Revelation 10:6-7 separates the close of Daniel's time prophecies from the start of the seventh trumpet, so seeing Revelation 11:15-18 (the content of the seventh trumpet) as before the close of probation doesn't work exegetically. It's like you can't have both. And Ellen White seems to agree with the way I have interpreted Revelation 10:6-7 here. So I would see the seventh trumpet as executive judgment rather than investigative, the time rewarding both just and unjust at the very End, and that would be appropriate to the time after the close of probation.

By way of summary, there are three eras referred to in this passage and they are elaborated in Revelation, chapter 11; the time of Daniel's prophecies (see Rev 11:1-6), the time of the end (see 11:7-13) and the time of the seventh trumpet (11:15-18).

Rev 10:8-10 Introduction–

Up to this point in the book John has been relatively passive in relation to the visions he has received. But in these verses and the ones at the beginning of chapter 11 he begins to take an active role in his prophecies. John takes the scroll from the angel's hand, eats it and then receives a rod with which to measure the temple he is shown. Prophets often perform symbolic actions. Among those in the Bible who acted out various things were Ezekiel (Old Testament) and Agabus of Caesarea (Book of

Acts).

Rev 10:8–

The “voice from heaven” of verse 4 returns here. It is not that of the mighty angel. In 10:8-11 John interacts with the voice first and then with the angel who is holding the scroll (10:8-9). The passive speaker of Revelation 10:11 and beyond is not specified, but is presumably the same voice from heaven, although it is possibly the mighty angel holding the open scroll. The choice probably makes no difference for the interpretation of Revelation 10:11 - 11:13.

Rev 10:9-10–

The scroll in the angel's hand is offered as food to John. It tastes sweet as honey but leaves him with a stomach ache. There is a clear allusion here to Ezekiel 2 and 3, where there is a reference to a scroll (that is full of mourning and woe) which is unrolled in front of the prophet. But in spite of its content, when Ezekiel eats the scroll he finds it sweet as honey in his mouth. While the scroll does not make his stomach bitter, as is the case here, the mission associated with the scroll brings bitterness to Ezekiel (3:14). The content of the scroll in Ezekiel involves God's judgments against the house of Israel. The “mourning and woe” of Ezekiel's scroll may underline the fact that Revelation 10 is part of the sixth trumpet, which is the second woe of 8:13 (cf. 9:12; 11:14).

An additional significant parallel is found in Jeremiah 15:16-17. Jeremiah “eats” the words of the Lord and they become the joy and rejoicing of his heart, but in the very next verse his rejoicing is ended and he sits all alone. He later becomes a laughingstock on account of the words God gave him to present (Jer 20:7-8). This is a possible allusion, but is not nearly as clear as the Ezekiel reference. While Ezekiel is constantly referenced throughout Revelation, Jeremiah is much less so.

What is the significance of the allusion to Ezekiel 2 and 3? As noted earlier, Revelation 10 is a parallel interlude to Revelation 7. Both passages are dealing with God's people. In Revelation 7 they are being sealed, which represents God's protection during the plagues of the end time. The situation is more mixed in Revelation 10. The final call of the gospel (Rev 10:7) goes out to a people that have been in rebellion against God. So the final proclamation of the gospel is in the context of a great falling away from God and is a final opportunity to turn around and be on God's side when the End comes. The final proclamation of the gospel is as much to nominal Christians as to those outside the community. It is a call to restore that which has once been possessed, but now is lost.

While there are many parallels between this passage and Ezekiel 2-3, there is also a major contrast, which demonstrates John's creative use of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 3:4-11 Ezekiel is told that he is being sent to the house of Israel and not to other nations, in part because he is familiar with the language. But in Revelation 10:11, John's prophesying is specifically extended to the Gentile peoples and nations with all their different languages.

This gospel call in the context of a falling away sets the table for Revelation 14-18. There we find two calls for God's people to come out of Babylon (14:8; 18:4), which is an opponent of God with a Christian face (see comments on Rev 14:8 and 17:1-5).

We also find a sealing of God's people (Rev 14:1)

Rev 10:11–

Verse 11 follows immediately upon the bitterness of verse 10. The “prophesying again” is somehow a source of bitterness to John. Verse 11 explains verses 9 and 10.

The language of many peoples and nations and tongues and kings recalls similar lists in the book of Daniel (Dan 3:4, 7, 29; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14). There is similar language in Revelation 5:9, where the song sung by the elders and the four living creatures declares that the Lamb ransomed all people groups of the earth. The parallel list in Revelation 14:6 suggests that this verse anticipates the final proclamation of the gospel that we find there. It also anticipates the response of the remnant in Revelation 11:13, as we will see.

The “prophesying again” anticipates chapter 11, where there are multiple references to prophets and prophesying (Rev 11:3, 6, 10). That makes Revelation 10:11 a duodirectional text that forms the climax of the narrative of 10:8-11 while setting the table for the narrative of 11:1-13. The “prophesying again” specifically refers to the testimony of the two witnesses in chapter 11 (verses 3, 6, 10).

The word often translated "about" or “against” is the Greek *epi*– “about, concerning, against.” But Revelation often uses the Greek language with Hebrew meanings and syntax in mind. While the Greek language has dozens of prepositions, the Hebrew has only three and they need to do full service for all the possible usages. The Greek word *epi* here would be equivalent to the Hebrew *le* or *lamed*. While it can mean the kinds of things *epi* represents, it is most often simply “to.” Thus verse 11 probably does not indicate John would prophesy “about” many peoples, nations, languages and kings, but “to” them. This text is parallel to Matthew 24:14, where the gospel of the kingdom must be preached “in” (the Greek *en* rather than *epi*) all the world. Like 10:7, it is a worldwide proclamation of the gospel.

The “again” implies a delay, much as there was in 10:7. John had reason to think that his ministry would be fully completed with the vision of Revelation. But he is disappointed, as illustrated by the impact eating the scroll has on him. At the time of the end, John's book would have to prophesy again by means of the end-time remnant. And this immediate disappointment also forecasted another disappointment at the close of Daniel's prophecies. There would be a group of people at that time who thought the end would come and it does not. It is not at the close of Daniel's time prophecies, but at the time of the seventh trumpet that the mystery of God is completely finished.

John would have had every reason to hope that the vision of Revelation written down would help precipitate the events of the End (Rev 1:3; 22:10). But in this verse he is notified that the writing would live on and do its most necessary work at some time in the future. This notice is similar to that which appears at the end of Daniel (12:13). The bitterness of stomach (Rev 10:9-10) may reflect John's disappointment that his book would not bring about the end, at least not immediately.

There is a possible allusion to Jeremiah 1:10, where Jeremiah receives a call to the prophetic office and is told that his prophetic ministry will place him over nations and kingdoms both to destroy and to build up. Since God's dominion is to be universal in the end, a global proclamation must first occur (cf. Rev 14:7).

The content of the “prophesying again” is found in Revelation 11:1-13. Chapter 11 is still part of the sixth trumpet, which includes the gathering time for the battle of Armageddon. It will include the final proclamation of the gospel (Matt 24:14; Rev 11:11-13; 14:7) and also the bitterness of rejection that many will experience when giving it. This end-time gospel will include a revival in the study of Daniel (Rev 10:5-7), and emphasis on Revelation (10:11), and a message about the restoration of the heavenly temple (11:1-2) and the final judgment (11:12-13). After the close of Daniel’s time prophecies (mentioned in 11:2-3) the two witnesses are killed, raised after three-and-a-half days, and ascend to heaven, modeled after Christ’s resurrection and ascension (11:3-13). The fate of these two martyred witnesses seems to illustrate the bitterness of eating the scroll. The scroll itself is good news but it brings bad times.

Strong parallels between Revelation 11 and Revelation 13 and 14 (see specifics of those parallels in the material on the two witnesses in 11:3-6) suggest that Revelation 13 and 14 elaborate on the events of chapter 11. There too one has a final proclamation of the gospel (Rev 14:1-12) along with persecution of the people of God throughout the course of Christian history (Rev 13:5-7, 15-18). So John’s “prophesying again” is elaborated not only in chapter 11 but in the second half of Revelation. That further elaboration will prove to extend throughout chapters 12-22. That means the phrase includes not only the role of the Book of Revelation at the end, but the entire work of God’s end-time remnant (Rev 12:17).

Rev 10:8-11 Spiritual Lessons–

Some spiritual lessons from this passage: 1) The delay of the end is painful (10:10) but it doesn't mean that God is no longer in control. Prophecy teaches us that God foresaw the delay and is not taken by surprise. Stable and lasting peace is available to those who come to trust that the God who is in control of history means only good for us, even though the way to that good may seem confusing and even painful. An underlying message of prophecy is that God is on our side. 2) The final proclamation of the gospel will generate opposition on the part of those who reject that gospel. It may be a bitter and sour experience for a time but the gospel will triumph in the end. Another underlying message of prophecy is that God wins! And if God wins, those who trust in Him will win also.

Rev 10:1-11 Conclusion–

Reflection on Revelation 10 from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective: The Adventist pioneers, beginning with William Miller, recognized the allusion to Daniel in Revelation 10:5-7 and saw, at first, a proclamation of the Second Coming in 10:6. When this did not occur, the experience was bitter and many fell away from the Advent Movement as a result. But with the passage of the expected time in 1843-1844, some recognized the built-in delay in verses 7 and 11 and discovered that the focus of the passage was the Time of the End instead of the Second Coming itself. Revelation 10:5-7, therefore, predicted a period of time running from the close of Daniel’s time prophecies (for them, 1798-1844) until the close of probation. During that time, faithful students of Revelation would proclaim the everlasting gospel (10:7) in the context of the books of Daniel and Revelation (10:5-7, 11) and also in the context of a message about

the heavenly temple (11:1-2). So this passage was a core basis for the Adventist conviction that we are living in a special time and delivering a special message at the end of earth's history.