

Bible Studies

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THE ANGEL OF REVELATION 10:1

We do not consider the strong angel of Revelation 10:1 to be the Lord Jesus, however glorious his appearance. Some contributors this month have given reasons for that view, all of them equally compelling. Those reasons, with some elaboration, and another, are given below.

Verse 1 refers to ‘another’ strong angel. The word ‘another’ there translates from the Greek *allos*, meaning ‘another of the same sort.’ The Lord is described in other contexts in such terms as ‘like unto his brethren’ (Heb. 2:17 RV) but it is unthinkable in the Revelation context that He would be referred to as ‘another of the same sort.’

Verse 1 refers to another strong ‘angel’. That is the focus of Surulere’s paper as far as this topic is concerned. It points out that the Lord Jesus has become (by) ‘so much better than the angels.’ It certainly would be inconsistent for one portion of Scripture to emphasise the continuing humanity of Christ, distinct from a possible angelic personhood, as Hebrews does, only for Revelation to present Him as an angel.

In verses 5 and 6 the angel makes an oath, the practice for such being, as we know from Hebrews 6:13, to swear by the greater.

Mount Forest and Aberkenfig papers between them point to this oath and we are clearly able to conclude that the angel does indeed swear by the greater. Consistent with Hebrews 6:13, if he were Deity, he would have ‘since he could swear by none greater,’ sworn by himself.

In verse 9, John tells us that in response to the voice from heaven he ‘went unto the angel saying unto him that he should give me the little book.’ Would any believer talk to the glorified Christ like that? Not if he or she recognised Him as such! John does not thus recognise him nor, tellingly, does the voice from heaven. Indeed, as the Cromer paper points out, the angel is subservient to John and the voice from heaven.

In the light of the Lord’s revelation of Him to John in Revelation 1, where John on Patmos was able to know His touch, it is not inadmissible to perceive of Christ as coming to earth ahead of His second coming—but ‘reading Him into’ angelic appearances in the New Testament relegates Him to one ‘sent forth to do service’ (Heb. 1:14).

P.D.

From Study Groups . . .

THE ANGEL AND THE LITTLE SCROLL (Revelation 10)

From Aberdeen: The phrase ‘the mystery of God is finished’ signifies an end to all misuse of power, whether wielded by fallen man or fallen angels. Indeed, no longer will God permit power to be misused throughout all creation because at the sounding of the seventh angel ‘the kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever’ and at that point God will have taken His ‘great power’ and ‘begun to reign’ (Rev. 11:15-17 NASB).

God’s clock will have run its full course. No more time for repentance will be granted to the ungodly. All the judgements communicated through God’s prophets will be fulfilled. ‘Time’ or ‘delay’ are translations of the Greek word *chronos* which means ‘a space of time’. The other instances of *chronos* in the book of Revelation are: Jezebel being given ‘space’ to repent (2:21); the martyrs being told to rest for a ‘season’ (6:11); and Satan being loosed for a little ‘season’ (20:3). These three instances of *chronos* consistently mean ‘a space of time’. So, ‘time no longer’ (10:6) must mean the same. In other words, for this present age it will be time up! The present order of things will have passed and in the ages to come God will ‘show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus’ (Eph. 2:7).

James Johnson

From Aberkenfig: As we commence the reading of this chapter we come now to an interlude—from the end of Chapter 9 to 11:14. This is the second interlude, the first being in Chapter 7 between the sixth and seventh seal. We liken these to the intermission marked by the word ‘Selah’ in the Psalms—‘pause and consider’ [Comment 1]. We are left to speculate as to why there came this interlude.

The scene has changed. We now read that John sees ‘another strong angel’. How did he realise that this angel was a strong one when we consider there are more than sixty references to angels in Revelation? Or was it the angel’s attire? He is arrayed in a cloud with a rainbow upon his head, his face like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. Obviously, there is some form of hierarchy—cherubim and seraphim for example. Further, we are told that in his hand he had an open book; his right foot was on the sea and his left on the land. It is such a contrast to what John had just witnessed—all the horrific sights and sounds of those wicked angels and demonic throngs: a single angel from heaven in all his splendour. Some commentators say that this was the Lord Jesus, others disagree; we must take it as

Scripture says: God doesn't reveal this matter. We can take it that this open book in his hand was a book differing from the one in 5:1.

With a mighty voice this angel cried, as it were with a lion's roar, such that the seven thunders uttered their voices. John was instructed, however, not to write the utterances. We are not told why: we can only assume that they would be frightful messages of judgement. We are left to speculate as to why there came this interlude with the message of the seven thunders being withheld. We are told that the angel makes a vow in the name of God the Creator, and that time (delay) would be no longer. This adds more weight to the thought that this was not our Lord Jesus Christ appearing as 'the angel of the Lord' (Ex. 3:2; Judg. 2:6 and 2 Sam. 24:16); for why would he make an 'oath' or vow? God does in fact swear by Himself, for He can swear by none greater (Heb. 6:13) [Comment 2; cp. 'Introducing'—*Eds.*].

The sounding of the seventh trumpet brings an end to the mystery of God (10:7): the actual sounding occurring in 11:14-19. So we have here a parenthetical portion (10:1-11:13) coming in between the sounding of the sixth and seventh angel. The 'mystery of God' here is one of the 'mysteries of God' (1 Cor. 4:1); it is not 'the mystery of God, even Christ' (Col. 2:2 RV; see also *B.S.* 1972, p.146—'Editorial' by L. Burrows) [Comment 3]. This mystery of God is followed by words that can be likened to Amos 3:7 (NAS): 'Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.'

John is encouraged to take this little open book and to eat it. Strange that it was sweet to his taste but bitter to his belly—such a contrast! The book contained the prophecies about to be revealed and fulfilled. It had to be 'eaten and digested' so that the prophecies could be passed on to those for whom it was intended. Similar words are found in Jeremiah 15:16 and Ezekiel 2:9-3:4, although in Ezekiel we are only told of the sweetness to his taste. John was bidden 'to prophesy again over many peoples, tongues, nations and kings' (Rev. 10:11). So, we today are instructed to declare all God's counsel, as Paul did (Acts 20:27). Ours is not to dilute God's message simply to please our listeners (2 Tim. 4:1-4). God will not thrust His word into our mouths and force us to receive it. He hands it to us and we do well to take it. It will contain both sweet promises and bitter warnings of judgement [see Comment 5].

Bill Paterson

From Buckhaven: In this chapter John saw a high-ranking, strong angel coming down from heaven. He described in detail the aspect and posture of this majestic being: clothed with a cloud (cp. Ps. 104:3), a rainbow upon his head (Rev. 10:3), his face shining like the sun (cp. 1:16), feet like pillars of fire. All this reflected the majesty of the divine presence from whence he had come. His great stature and

posture, straddling land and sea, suggests universal mastery over both. His lion-like voice called forth the voice of ‘the seven thunders’—which revealed knowledge of such a sensitive nature that John was told by a voice from heaven to seal up and not to create a written record of these secret things. This voice surely came from the throne of heaven itself, the seat of divine omnipotence.

The angel then lifted up his right hand (signifying strength, authority and power) to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and, on the authority of the divine creator, that there should be no time any longer (i.e., no longer any delay), signalling the imminence and fulfilment of divine purpose. Following this statement, he then announced that when the seventh angel sounded, the mystery of God would be finished, and that what His prophets had previously revealed about God’s purposes and plans for this world was about to be fulfilled.

When the seventh trumpet sounds, God’s majesty and power will be revealed in judgement. This is the ‘day of vengeance’ (Is. 61:2 RV) and follows on from ‘the acceptable year of the Lord’ (announced by the Lord Jesus in Nazareth at the start of His public ministry in Luke 4:18). Between the fifth and seventh trumpets are the three woes. From the first trumpet until the sixth trumpet opportunity is given to repent; after that there is no more delay and the divine judgements proceed to their climax. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet we stand on the threshold of the Lord coming to judge the nations (Mat. 25:32).

The little book The heavenly voice commanded the apostle to take the little book from the hand of the angel. There can be no doubt that the open scroll in his hand (*biblaridion*—little book [cp. Comment 4]) contained the word of God. When the angel presented the book, he commanded him to eat it, saying that it would be sweet to taste but cause inner bitterness. Ezekiel had a similar experience: Ezek. 3:1-3 and Ps. 19:10 speak of sweetness. Compare Psalm 119:103—‘How sweet are thy words unto my taste!’ John would yet prophesy by way of Revelation to many peoples, nations and even kings.

Setting in overview It is suggested that the events of this chapter occur at the close of the first half of Daniel’s seventieth week, between the sixth and the seventh trumpet (which sets in motion the third and final woe). This chapter reveals the absolute supremacy and sovereignty of God, whose purposes are centred in His Son.

Martin Notman

From Cromer: *The purpose of the interlude* The events revealed to John in chapters 1 to 9 foreshadowed by the first six trumpets, are those which originate in heaven, saying what God is going to do. We suggest the interlude, which begins between the sixth and seventh trumpet before the third Woe is enacted, describes the era when the gospel of the kingdom is preached.

The mighty angel This being is robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head. His face was like the sun and his legs were like fiery pillars. We are not told who this magnificent being is. Some have speculated that it might have been a revelation of Christ, but as the angel is subservient to the voice from heaven, and to John, surely this cannot be Christ.

The little scroll John is told to eat the little scroll, reminiscent of Ezekiel 3:1-3 where Ezekiel is also told to eat a scroll, and found it sweet to the taste, but afterwards he experienced bitterness of spirit as he realised there would be those who would reject the Lord's message. In John's case the scroll he ate gave sweetness to his taste but afterwards turned sour in his stomach. It is suggested that the message of the little scroll which John ate was the good news of the grace of God, which was to be spread by John and his successors over all the earth. There are those who accept the message, but many like those in Ezekiel's time, who refuse to accept it [cp. Comment 5]. This has ever been the story, since Adam, because the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4).

The mystery of God Verse 6 says 'that after this period, when the seventh trumpet sounds, there will be no more delay'; verse 7 says the mystery of God will be accomplished. This mystery of God, it is suggested, is the mystery of Christ and the Church, (see Ephesians 3) hence the connection with the preaching of the gospel. [Comment 4; see also Surulere paper].

The seven thunders John must have understood their meaning, as he could have written it down, but was forbidden to do so. It is perhaps wise not to speculate what John heard. God does not always reveal His purposes to men.

John Parker

From Greenock: Just as Paul was not allowed to speak of the things he heard in heaven (2 Cor. 12:4), John has instructions not to record what he heard. There have been many 'mysteries' in the Scriptures. With the advantage of living at our time, we can look back to the events surrounding the life on earth of our Saviour and see the revelation of some of these mysteries. The gospel writers all show how the Lord Jesus said and did things to fulfil Old Testament scriptures. An excellent example is given in Luke 4—His reading and explanation of Isaiah 61. An important point to note is that the Lord stopped at 'the acceptable year' and did not read on to 'proclaim judgement' which is still future. How and when that occurs was not to be revealed during those earthly days of His flesh.

This passage indicates an acceleration towards events still to come. Verse 6, 'time shall be no more', is given by Dr. Young (YLT) as 'that time will not be yet' and by the ISV 'there shall be no more delay'. Time is a fluid commodity in the

hands of the Creator [see also *B.S.* August 2020, p.127, Comment 2—*Eds.*]. Matthew and Mark record the Lord's words, 'And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened' (Mat. 24:22 RV).

The events following are great news for those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, but they spell out the fate of the enemies of God. The book in the angel's hand can be sweet as honey to those about to share the blessing of God; it is also able to 'knot-up' the stomachs of those who await with dread a fearful judgement which has been foretold and the warnings which they have ignored [Comment 5].

The remaining chapters of Revelation indeed cover all of mankind—all the epochs from Adam to the end, all the myriad races and languages that have been and still are, and all the human race are covered.

For those who have loved and studied God's word this sequence of events might not always be crystal clear, but the prospect is indeed glorious—'sweeter than the honey-comb' (Ps. 19:10). To the unbeliever, however, they are a hidden mystery.

Steve Henderson

From Halifax: *A mighty angel* Now, the sixth trumpet having been sounded, we observe a parenthesis—an episode introductory to the seventh trumpet blast. John sees another 'mighty' (Gk. *ischuros*) angel coming down out of heaven (Rev. 10:1 KJV). Seven trumpets had been given to seven angels (8:2); but rather than being another resembling these seven, he is likened in might to the 'strong' (Gk. *ischuros*) angel, who proclaimed with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?' (5:2). Standing upon the sea and earth the angel held in his hand 'a little book' (Gk. *biblaridion*) [Comment 6], which book, or scroll, was open and not sealed.

The angel is described as being clothed around with a cloud, reminiscent of Him of whom it is said, 'Clouds and darkness are round about him' (Ps. 97:2). The description of this angel is remarkable in that his attributes resemble those of Christ; 'his face was as the sun' (cp. Rev. 1:16) and his feet were 'as pillars of fire' (cp. 1:15). Jack Van Impe (*Revelation Revealed*, p. 115) confidently proclaims, 'This angel is Christ'. Others, referring to Daniel 12:1, suggest the angel is Michael the great prince. Yet, all we know is that the angel of Revelation 10:1 is a 'mighty' angel [Comment 7].

With raised right hand the angel swears by Him who lives forever saying, 'there shall be time no longer' (v.6 RV). M.R. Vincent (*Word Studies*) notes that this does not mean, as popularly understood, that time shall cease to exist, but that there shall be no more delay. 'How long, O Master... dost thou not judge and avenge

our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ (6:10). There would be no postponement: as the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God is also finished.

Robert J. Butler

From Mount Forest: *The seven thunders* John could have written what he heard, so speech, not just a loud noise, is referenced by the plural word ‘thunders’, and therefore the seven thunders are from beings capable of communicating. Why seven, and which seven of them? Throughout Scripture, God often expresses deep significance by noting a series or grouping of seven, so we may take it these seven also evidence that completeness. Here they are introduced in connection with the completion of the revealing of the mystery of God (v.7). Interestingly, the available Greek word (*heptaplasios*) for seven at once or seven shapes in one, i.e. ‘sevenfold’ (see LXX of Ps. 79:12; Prov. 6:31; Is. 30:6) is not used at all in the New Testament, whereas the straightforward plural word just meaning ‘seven’ is used 54 times in Revelation. So here too, if we can be consistent, there were seven beings involved, not a single thunder combined sevenfold into one. Given the high authority (cp. vv.8-9) of the other (singular) voice John hears ‘from heaven’ that governs his responses, it seems the seven thunders thus emanate from seven distinct beings. We note: ‘seven spirits’ (Rev. 1:4; 3:1: 4:5; 5:6), ‘seven angels’ (Rev. 8:2,6; 15:1,6-8; 16:1; 17:1; 21:9), and ‘seven stars’ (which are angels [or ‘messengers’ in 1:20, 2:1, 3:1—*M.A.*]: Rev. 1:16,20; 2:1; 3:1). Moreover, the mighty voices of the seven thunders are again not unlike the speaking of the four living creatures (Rev. 6:1f.). However, the identity of which seven beings speak as thunders here is simply not disclosed, so the character of their action is more important than their identification [Comment 8].

The mighty angel John sees on earth with the open scroll (not depicting Christ, for verses 5-6 exclude that, and His own return to earth as the Coming One is yet future), calls out. We may imagine him calling to attention, as a herald, with the scroll already open from which the message could be pronounced. Then the seven thunders raise their voices, and the power of the Lord in the message of the Lord is reminiscent of Psalm 29. We are not told why John was commanded not to write what he heard, but it appears he fulfilled the command to ‘seal up’ that message by his eating the scroll; and if the message voiced was the same as written in the scroll he became united with it, and his personal reactions would become prophetic in themselves. ‘Malachi’ means ‘My messenger’, and Mal. 1:1 shows the Lord’s message in the Lord’s messenger (and see Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1-4). Like Jeremiah, John was to find that digesting the precious word of the Lord would lead to pain and sorrow because of the rebellion of its hearers. John would also find himself included in the statement: ‘His servants the prophets’, Rev. 10:7; (see Rev. 10:11; 11:3; Amos 3:7), and what was sealed up by John’s eating would

be revealed as the mystery that was gloriously made known (cp. Rev. 11:15-19). We need not think only Old Covenant prophets are referenced here in Revelation 10:7 [see Comments 4, 5, and 6].

Geoff Hydon

From Podagatlapalli: *The angel and the little scroll* The purpose of this mighty angel is clear, which is to announce the final judgments on earth; his right foot on the sea and left foot on the earth (10:2) indicating that his words deal with all creation and not just a limited part as with the seal and trumpet judgements. The seventh trumpet (11:15) will usher in the seven last judgements which will bring an end to the present world order. When this universal judgement comes God's truth will prevail.

We see two scrolls in Revelation: the first contains a revealing of judgements against evil, whereas the content of the second scroll is not indicated but may also contain a revelation of judgement, given its bitterness in John's belly. Similarly, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision in which he was told to swallow a scroll, sweet in his mouth but filled with judgement (Ezek. 2:9-3:1). It was sweet in his mouth but it contents brought destruction, just like those John was told to eat (Rev. 10:9-10). God's word is sweet to believers but bitter to unbelievers, who are judged by it [cp. Comment 6]. Throughout history people have wanted to know what would happen in the future, and God reveals some of it in this book. But John was stopped from revealing certain parts of his vision. An angel also told the prophet Daniel that some things he saw were not yet to be revealed to everyone (Dan. 12:9), and Jesus told His disciples that the time of the end is known by no one but God (Mark 13:32-33) [Comment 9]. God has revealed all we need to know to live for Him now. In our desire to be ready for the end we must not place more emphasis on speculation about the last days than on living godly lives while waiting. John was also stopped from revealing the message of the seven thunders.

The mystery of God It is the long expected 'day of the Lord' including the reign of Christ on earth foretold throughout all in the Old Testament. The millennial earth may be foreshadowed in the garden of Eden, which may then suggest that redeemed and resurrected human beings will dwell with God on a cleansed earth. The promise to Abraham, to David, and to Israel has long-awaited fulfilment. Now 'No more delay' says the mighty angel, until these principal prophecies will be rapidly fulfilled. Christ is to come from heaven with saints and angels; the kingdom of the world is to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15 RV, ESV). The battle of Armageddon will take place. Israel will be regathered and saved. The Gentiles living then are to be brought before the throne for judgement (Mat. 25:31-46). There is no more time of delay before these great things occur: Christ has delayed His coming (see 2 Pet. 3:9). Men have been given the

opportunity to repent. Now 'the mystery' foretold by the prophets is to be completed.

B. V. Prasada Rao

From Ravulapalem: *The effect and significance of eating the scroll* Unlike Chapter 5's closed big scroll with seven seals which John saw in heaven, here is a little scroll which lay open in the hand of another mighty angel coming down to earth from heaven. John's experience is rather similar to that of the prophet Ezekiel during his exile in Babylonia. He too was commanded to eat a scroll which tasted sweet in his mouth; but when it filled his stomach it made him responsible to foretell bitter things for the rebellious house of Israel (Ezek. 2:8-13:15). The opened scroll that the glorified Jesus Christ gives to John likewise contains a divine message [see 'Introducing' and Comment 6].

Take and eat: two verbs in the imperative mood. The Lord commanded John to overcome reluctance of touching the scroll with fear. To eat means to consume, devour or swallow. Eating God's word is a frequent theme of Scripture and indicates the acceptance, digesting of and meditating upon the sustenance derived from that which is eaten. The earthly messenger must first digest the message received from the heavenly messenger for onward future distribution. Jesus referred to himself as the 'bread of life' (John 6:35,47). John is to preach regarding 'peoples and nations and tongues'.

Sweet and sour (bitter) To feed upon this scroll is sweet for him because it is from a divine source (Ps. 19:9-10; 119:103; Jer. 15:15-16). But he finds it bitter to digest, because as previously with Ezekiel it foretells unpleasant things for rebellious humans, i.e. undoubtedly containing 'lamentations and mourning and woe' (Ezek. 2:10; Ps. 119:136). Indeed, it contains the plagues foretold in Revelation 8. To proclaim the terrible future judgements, it is always bitter to the prophets and preachers who have hearts of love and kindness like that of John.

S.J.M. Edward

From Surulere: *Mystery announced to the prophets* There are fewer more ravishing sights in the Revelation than that of the angelic personage carefully described in Chapter 10 as the bearer of the little scroll. Although described as a mighty angel (v.1), perhaps to distinguish him from the strong angel of 5:2 [see Halifax para.1—*Eds.*], his countenance is so regal and distinctly divine that some in our study group were persuaded that he is the Lord Jesus Christ. But the Lord Jesus Christ he is not, even though the Lord Jesus in His pre-incarnate appearance in the Old Testament was variously referred to as the Angel of the LORD and the Angel of His Presence (Gen.16:10; 22:12, 15; 31:11; Ex. 3:2,6). In the times we read of now the Lord Jesus when: '... He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better

than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they' (Heb. 1:3-4 NKJV).

The wise king Solomon declared: 'It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter' (Prov. 25:2). As Moses, the man of God, noted by the Spirit: 'The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of the law' (Deut. 29:9). There are several mysteries of God referenced in the Scriptures, such as the mystery of the kingdom of God (Mark 4:11); the mystery of the hardness in part of the heart of Israel (Rom. 11:25); the mystery of His will (Eph. 1:9); the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:2); the mystery of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:32); the mystery of lawlessness (1 Thes. 2:4); the mystery of the Gospel (Eph. 6:19).

The mystery or hidden or secret thing of God would appear to be the summation of all the mysteries of God. It is the focal point of Scriptures, the desire of all nations and the wonder and joy of heaven. It is that mystery, which in embryonic form was shown in the divine declaration regarding the woman's seed that shall bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). It was the message of the redemptive work, which would entail God being manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), becoming sin and dying (2 Cor. 5:21) so that through His death and resurrection He might bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). 'Of this salvation the prophets have enquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you ... Things which angels desire to look into' (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

It is that mystery of which Paul asserts, by divine revelation: 'The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. 1:26-27). Christ in the shadows and symbolisms of the Old Testament; Christ in His incarnation, death and resurrection in the New Testament, and Christ as He will be proclaimed in the eternal gospel of the post-rapture era, by His servants (Rev. 14:6) remains the sum of God's eternal purposes. And when the seventh angel sounds, at the culmination of the declaration of God's goodness and mercies in Christ and the punishment that would follow man's rejection of Him, the mystery of God is ended, as nothing else like it could possibly be proclaimed again [cp. Comment 4].

Frederick F. Ntido

COMMENTS

1. **(Aberkenfig):** ‘*Selah*’ See August issue, p.128, Comment 4.

M.A.

2. **(Aberkenfig):** The angel lifts his right hand to heaven and swears ‘by Him that lives forever and ever’ (v.6). This is the action and mode of address that a person would use when invoking the authority of someone greater than themselves, to verify the testimony they are about to give (e.g., as when a witness swears on the authority of the Bible to tell the truth in a court of law). This is quite different from the form of words used by God about Himself, (Gen. 22:16), quoted by the writer of Hebrews 6:13. This lends considerable weight to your view that it is an angel speaking rather than the risen Christ, who is ‘on an equality with God’ (Phil. 2:6). (see also Cromer para. 2, Mt. Forest para. 2, and Surulere para. 1.)

J.J.

3. **(Aberkenfig):** I accept that view, the Colossians reference being to the (necessarily eternal) Person of Christ, but the Revelation reference to something spoken which has a beginning and an end.

P.D.

4. **(Cromer and Mount Forest):** If one includes old covenant and new covenant prophets in the phrase ‘his servants the prophets’ (which I appreciate present contributors and previous *B.S.* editors have done) it does allow for the mystery of the Christ and the Church to be included within the meaning of ‘mystery of God’. But why is it necessary to do that? It seems to me to be driven by the assumption friends make that there must be a correlation between the little scroll and the mystery of God. But that does not have to be so. The two episodes can be viewed as quite distinct. The phrase ‘his servants the prophets’ does not need to be stretched to mean anything other than the most natural and consistent one of Old Testament prophets whose ministry included the sufferings of the Christ and the Millennial glories but not the church age, and not the post-millennial future from start of which the mystery of God is finished (Rev. 11:15-18). John himself can eat the scroll (which it seems to me the angel only has in order to give to John) and prophesy both the post-millennial future revealed to him and indeed the gospel of grace applicable in the days in which he lived.

P.D.

This view from P.D. is a fresh and attractive one. We note that its last sentence about the little scroll is in alignment with the long-held understanding that it contained in summary the judgements John was soon to write, in 11-18 and 19:11 to 20:15, while it may also have had summary of the O.T. items P.D. suggests. This is also consistent with Comment 5.

M.A.

5. **(Greenock and others):** This is true of the effect of the word of God on those who reject it, but we cannot regard *John* as one who awaited judgements with

dread because he had ignored God's warnings. In Revelation 10 the same person found the scroll and contents sweet to his taste, but with bitter effect on his stomach. He has received words sent from heaven (10:1), and this, with the angel's features that take character from our Lord as seen in Chapter 1, implies coming by divine authority. John thus takes delight in the words imparted to him by such a resplendent being—enjoying their truth with relief after seeing what came from the mouths of the horses, and the corrupt mind and behaviour of those left alive (9:21). But as before he had heard judgements declared, and we can sense his shock at seeing their effects, the instruction to prophesy *again* surely refers back to the record he has written of the scenes of judgement foretold. So he would know mental and bodily distress as he saw men fail to repent when warned, and thought of the fearful suffering that must follow.

6. (Halifax and others): *The very little scroll* The word *biblion* used in 10:8 is already a diminutive in one sense of the word, so the further 'mini' *biblaridion* used by John himself suggests not only the wonder that this vast figure with lion's voice from unseen heaven came with *a little book for him*, but also his wry memory of the sweet and sour experience.

7. (Halifax): As John sets down in renewed wonder each feature of the gigantic angel filling his vision, fellow-students I'm left, humbly, in no doubt that here is the angelic servant on assignment from the Son of God Himself. This mighty one is commissioned to declare the completion of divine judgements on those who refuse God and His Christ; justice for those who suffer death or torment in this world for believing; and the glory of God in action. Each feature takes our thoughts to the Lion of Judah, the Lamb who broke the seventh seal, who was at the centre of the rainbow-circled throne, who will come upon the clouds, who with eyes of flaming fire will judge and make war in righteousness (Mat. 24:30, Rev. 19:11). This angel may well be Michael, the prince for Israel, for John uses none of the names we know from the prophets and Gospels.

8. (Mount Forest): *The seven thunders* The earliest part of the Septuagint translation was made in various stages and places from early 3rd century to late 2nd C. BC, and Greek was developing in usage and form through the period to John's writings in late 1st cent. AD, so the consistency argued for is less likely, though the similar 'a hundredfold' appears in three Gospels. It would be generally agreed, however, that the messages given were all directed by God. M.A.

9. (Podagatlapalli): The words of the Lord quoted by Mark (also by Matthew, 24:35,36), are these: 'But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.' (R.V.) I agree with the view that 'that day' and 'that hour' refer to the statement, 'Heaven and earth shall pass

away' (Mark 13:31). Mark 13:31,32 and Mat. 24:35,36 should be read as a parenthetical aside and should not be conflated with the day of the Lord's return, either to the air or to the earth. J.J.

Feature

LIST OF COUNTRIES AND 'DISTRICTS' WHERE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES OF GOD WERE LOCATED

<u>Country</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Assembly/ies / References</u>
Crete		(Tit. 1:5; cp. Acts 2:11)
Cyprus		(Acts 11:20; 21:16)
Greece	Achaia	Athens (Acts 17:34) Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1) Corinth (Acts 18:8)
	Macedonia	Beroea (Acts 17:11, 14;20:4) Nicopolis (Tit.3:12) Philippi (Acts 16:1240) Thessalonica (Acts 20:4)
Israel	Galilee	In all likelihood, assemblies in Capernaum & Nazareth (see Acts 9:31)
	Judaea	Caesarea (Acts 10; 18:22) 21:8,16) Jerusalem (Acts 11:27) Joppa (Acts 10:36-43) Lydda (Acts 9:32)
	Samaria	(region: Acts 8:1; city: v.5)
Italy		Neapolis (Acts 16:11) Puteoli (Acts 28:14) Rome (Acts 18:2; Rom. 16:3-5)
Libya		Cyrene (Acts 11:20; 13:1)
Syria		Antioch (Acts 15:22-23) Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13) Seleucia (Acts 13:4)
	Phoenicia	Phoenicia (Acts 15:3) Damascus (Acts 9:10, 19b) Ptolemais (Acts 11:19; 21:2,7) Tyre (Acts 21:4)

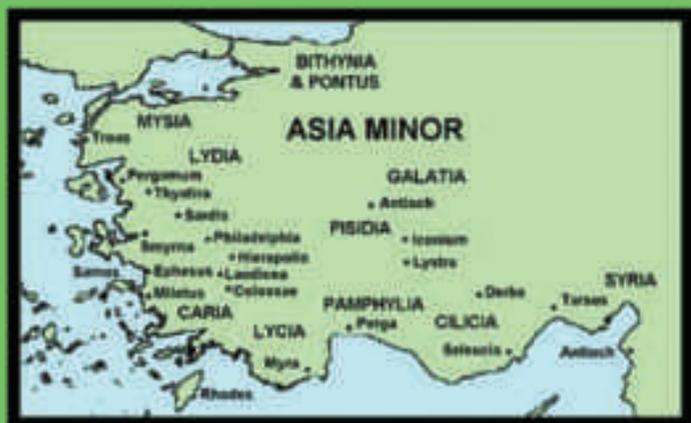
<u>Country</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Assembly/ies / References</u>
Turkey	Asia Minor	Colossae (Col. 1:2)
		Ephesus (Acts 20:4; Eph. 1:1)
		Hierapolis (Col. 4:13)
		Laodicea (Col.4:13; Rev. 3:14)
		Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20)
		Pergamum (Rev. 2:11)
		Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7)
		Sardis (Rev. 3:1)
		Smyrna (Rev. 2:8)
		Thyatira (Rev. 2:18)
	Troas (Acts 20:6)	
	Bithynia & Pontus	At least one assembly there, possibly Nicaea as district addressed in 1 Peter 1:1
	Cappadocia	Caesarea (Acts 18:22; 1 Pet. 1:1)
	Cilicia	Seleucia (Acts 15:23, 41) Tarsus (Acts 9:30; 11:25; cp. Gal. 1:21)
	Galatia	Derbe (Acts 14:21; see also 20:4) Iconium (Acts 13: 51-52; 14: 21-22) Lystra (14:21-22)
	Phrygia	None identified in New Testament, though see Acts 18:23
	Pisidia	Antioch (Acts 13:14; 14:19, 21-22)
	Pamphylia	None identified—swampy, fever-ridden land, which may have discouraged John Mark? (Acts 13:13)

The New Testament record reveals the establishment and testimony of Churches of God in eight countries, covering Europe, Middle East, North Africa and Western Asia.

N.B. *The 'church' in Acts 9:31 is a collective noun comprising all the churches of God throughout Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria.*

Today, by God's grace, 'the Fellowship' is represented in nineteen countries and is extended over six continents.

R.B. Fullarton, Bathgate



New Testament churches in Asia Minor

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