

We are now in a break in the middle of the sixth and the seventh trumpets, and it's just like the break that we saw earlier in the book of Revelation between the sixth and the seventh seals. And at that time, John saw a vision of God sealing his people with the Holy Spirit. It was a very comforting thing to know that God was with them, that God is in control. And we see the same thing happening here in Revelation chapter 10. God is also bringing comfort to his people, because he is showing us through this vision that he is in control of all that is to come.

So John sees a great vision coming down from heaven in verse 1 of our reading. He says: "Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire." Of course, the natural question here is: who is this angel? Who is this mighty angel coming down out of heaven? I suppose you could understand him as being just an angel, someone sent to bring the Word of God. But I actually think that it's best to see this angel as a picture of Christ himself. The reason I say that is for several reasons, most of which are based on what he looks like.

We are told, first of all, that he is wrapped in a cloud, and clouds throughout the Bible often show the presence of God. They show that God is near. Think of Mount Sinai, for example. Mount Sinai was covered with a thick cloud when God came down to speak with Moses. And we also see a cloud in the wilderness as God leads his people through it by day with a pillar of cloud. And even at the Transfiguration, when Jesus is transformed, we see a cloud coming down to cover the mountain, and God the Father speaks through that cloud to say "This is my beloved Son." So clouds show that God is near, and he, here in Revelation 10, is wrapped in a cloud.

We're also told that he has a rainbow over his head, and this is just like earlier in Revelation when we saw another rainbow. Because when John saw a vision of God sitting on his throne, he said that there was a great, green rainbow surrounding the throne. It was a picture of his faithfulness to his people. And we see here again in Revelation 10 that he has a rainbow surrounding his head.

We're also told that he has a face shining like the sun. That's exactly how Jesus is described in Revelation chapter 1. Verse 16 says: "In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength." And it's a picture of his power and his glory. His majesty is radiating from his face like light.

And we're also told that he has legs like pillars of fire. That also looks back towards the Exodus. Because just as God led his people through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day, he did the same thing with the pillar of fire by night. So we see here a picture of God caring for his people, leading them through the wilderness to the promised land. All of these things together give us pretty good reasons to see this as Christ himself.

And even if the word "angel" throws us off here, if it bothers us to think of Jesus as an angel, just remember that in the Old Testament Jesus is often called the "Angel of the Lord." And "angel" in Greek simply means "messenger," and Jesus has certainly come to bring us the good news of the Gospel. So for all of these reasons, this is a picture of Jesus coming down to bring his message.

But John goes on to say, starting in verse 2: "He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion

roaring." So now we get three more parts of this picture. The first thing that John says is that he has a scroll, a little scroll, open in his hand. This looks back to Revelation chapter 5, where we saw another scroll. Because in Revelation chapter 5, Jesus was given a scroll sealed with seven seals. That scroll was a picture of the will of God for the future. And Jesus broke open the seals one by one, starting in chapter 6. I think it's pretty reasonable to see this scroll as the same scroll, but now open in his hand. And even if you want to see it as a different one, honestly, it ends up being the same thing, because it is a picture of the will of God that is to come. And Jesus has come to put it into action.

The second thing that John tells us is that he has his feet set on both the land and the sea. And this is a picture of his absolute authority over all things. Because in the Bible having something under your feet is a way of saying that you are ruling over it, like you have authority over it. Think of a king, for example, who is standing on top of his conquered enemies. It's a way of showing that he has gained the victory. And we hear also in Psalm 110: "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'" They become the resting place for his feet, because now he rules over them. And so for Jesus to have the land and the sea under his feet shows that he is the Master of all things, that he is the one who commands all things. He is the one who is in control.

And we are also told that he has a voice that sounds like a lion roaring. It's a picture of his royal authority, to be sure, but it also looks back towards the Old Testament. Because there were several places in the Old Testament where the Lord is compared to a roaring lion. Joel chapter 3, for example, says: "The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel." So God is like a roaring lion because of his power, because of his might. The earth will tremble before him. But he is also a lion for his people. They can trust in him, because he fights for them. And all of these things together, all of these pictures put together as one, show that God is in control, that he commands everything that is going to happen.

But Christians, I know how easy it can be to wonder about that. I myself have struggled with it too. I know how easy it is to wonder if God is really in control, especially when faced with the evil of this world. We live in a time where things seem to be getting worse and worse all the time. And we're led to ask, "Well, is Jesus really commanding all things? Is he really Lord over heaven and earth? Is he really commanding all that is to happen? How can we know that God is in control when we are faced with the evil of this world?"

We can know that he's in control for two reasons, Christians. And the first reason we see is because of the seven thunders. John says again, beginning in verse 3: "When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.'" Now, these seven thunders are angels, and we know that because in other places of Revelation angels are sometimes described as having voices like thunder. A good example of this comes from Revelation 6, which says: "Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, 'Come!'" We also know this from John chapter 12, where God is speaking out of heaven, and it is described as sounding like thunder. So it shows that this is a heavenly voice coming from a heavenly being.

But these seven thunders say something that John is immediately told not to write down. It's one of the few things in the book of Revelation that he's actually told to conceal, to seal up and to not say what they said. Now, why does he do that? I think it's because it shows us, Christians, that only God knows everything that's going to happen. We don't know everything, but God does know. He knows when it's going to happen. He knows exactly how it's going to happen. And we don't need to know the times that God has set by his own authority. What we do need to know is that they have been set. The future is not dark to God. He knows exactly what's going to happen. He commands everything that's going to happen. Nothing is a surprise to him. So it should not upset us. We should trust in him all the more, because he is the Master and Commander of all time, and he knows all that is to come.

The second reason that we can know that he's in control, Christians, is because of the oath that he takes here. He swears that there will be no more delay, but that the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he has spoken to his servants, the prophets. Now, God swearing by himself might sound kind of strange to us, but it's actually a very biblical thing. Because the reason why people swear by something greater than themselves in the first place is to show that they're serious about something. Like when I say something like, "I swear to God that I'm going to do this," or "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth, so help me God." I swear by God above me to show just how serious I am about what I say. It shows that I mean what I say. And God also swears to show how serious he is about things, but he has nothing higher than himself. He is above all things, so he can only swear by himself. But that again just emphasizes just how serious he is. If God has sworn by himself he certainly going to do it. We get a real good example of this from Isaiah chapter 45, which says: "By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'" Here in Revelation, God swears that there will be no more delay. All evil will come to an end. All things will be put under the feet of Christ. And we know it because God has said it, and he always keeps his promises.

So take this word to heart, Christians. Engrave it on your hearts, because it's a faithful and a true word. In fact, do what John does here: eat the scroll, just like Ezekiel did long ago. Ezekiel chapter 3, God says to Ezekiel: "Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." Eat that Word of God. Make it part of yourself. That scroll is described as bitter because sometimes God speaks about hard things, things like judgment, things like suffering. Christ never said that it's going to be easy to be a Christian. But that scroll is also sweet because it is the Word of God, the Word which gives life. And when we hold on to that word, we will find the confidence that we need. When we eat the Word of God by listening to his voice, when we eat it by hearing his promises, when we eat it by coming back to it again and again, it will enable us to face all things. We will know clearly that God is Lord over all, and we will know it when we are in his sweet and holy Word.

Christians, remember: Christ is Lord. All things will be put under his feet. The time will not be long. The mystery of God will be fulfilled. All evil will come to an end. So trust him. He has sworn by himself that he will do it, and God never lies.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, Master of all things, be with us in our hour of need, and guide us through all things, because you command all that is to come and will put all things under your feet; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.