



# REVELATION

the WISDOM JOURNEY  
LESSON 769

## PERIL ON EARTH, PRAISE IN HEAVEN

### REVELATION 10-11

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As the description of the tribulation period continues in Revelation 10-11, through the apostle John, we are given a view of events both in heaven and on earth. It reminds us that what happens on earth is by God's design, under His control, and ultimately for His glory.

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The book of Revelation has been revealing in dramatic fashion some of the events that take place during the tribulation period. People living on the earth will be defiant, even though they are experiencing the direct judgment of God. They will be unrepentant and deceived by the Antichrist so that they refuse to surrender to God. And oh, the trouble they are in with God!

As we continue on our Wisdom Journey through these next two chapters in Revelation, it should only increase our gratitude for having been rescued from this wrath to come.

As we arrive at Revelation 10, time is running out for the human race! By now, half the world's population has been wiped out.<sup>1</sup> It is almost time for the seventh and final trumpet to sound.

Before that trumpet blast is heard, John sees a "mighty angel" descending from heaven to the earth. This angel has some rather amazing features. Verse 1 says he is "wrapped in a cloud," and has "a rainbow over his head." This reminds us of the appearance of the

Lord, described back in Revelation 4:3, where a rainbow encircled God's throne.

We are also told that he has a face "like the sun" and "legs like pillars of fire" (verse 1). This pictures power and authority. Verse 2 adds that "he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land." This posture suggests that his message is global.

He is also carrying a "little scroll open in his hand" (verse 2). This is not the scroll Jesus already opened back in chapters 5 and 6. This can be translated, "a small book,"<sup>2</sup> and it apparently contains information about the final judgments that are about to unfold.

Verse 3 says the angel "called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring ... [and] the seven thunders sounded." This is an affirmation of God Himself, who has sent this angel with a divine message.

John is about to write down what the angel said, but he is stopped by a voice from heaven. He is told to keep it a secret. Wouldn't you like to know what this angel said? I would. But John is not allowed to record it. This is a

reminder that while God’s Word is sufficient for what we need, it is not exhaustive. Some things are to remain hidden from us for now.

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John then hears the angel swearing an oath, based on the truth of God being the Creator of all things. In other words, if God is indeed the Creator—and He is—you can be sure this angel is about to tell the truth. And here is his message in a nutshell: he is warning the rest of the human race that there will be no more delays as God accelerates His end-times plan.

The apostle John then becomes an object lesson for every believer to this day. He is told to eat this little book. He does, and he finds that it is sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. It tasted great, but it gave him a stomachache—the kind I get if I eat something that is too rich or sweet.

Well, this little book is sweet because it is God’s word; it is bitter because it speaks of God’s judgment. This is a reminder beloved, that when you share with others the Word of God, it is both good news and bad news; it can be sweet, but it can also be upsetting. We are to deliver it all.

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Following this, we arrive at chapter 11, where John is given a measuring rod and told to go measure the temple—that is, the inner temple

consisting of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. The temple he is to measure is one that is built during the tribulation. We know from Scripture there *will* be a temple built during the glorious millennial kingdom of Christ on earth (see Ezekiel 40–43), but John is measuring the temple that was effectively built by the Antichrist and is later desecrated by the Antichrist when he enters it and declares himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

John is not to measure the courtyard of the temple, Revelation 11:2 tells us, because it has fallen into the hands of Gentiles, who will “trample the holy city for forty-two months”—this takes place over the *last* half of the seven-year tribulation period.

That is not all that will be happening in Jerusalem. For the first half of the tribulation, two witnesses will be preaching in Jerusalem. Verse 3 says these witnesses have unique authority and power from God. And verse 5 says that anyone who tries to harm them will be destroyed by fire that comes out of their mouths. Imagine that kind of protection.

These witnesses also have the power to withhold rain, turn water to blood, and “strike the earth with every kind of plague” (verse 6). The Antichrist and his followers will hate these witnesses, but they will not be able to touch them or harm them as they prophesy of Christ’s soon coming.

Eventually, when these two anonymous witnesses “have finished their testimony” (verse 7), the Beast—and this is the Antichrist as we will see later—will finally be able to kill these men. Their bodies will be left lying in the open, and their deaths will launch a global celebration. We are told in verse 10, “Those

who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents.”

Think about that: they are going to “make merry and exchange presents.” This is like the Antichrist’s “anti-Christmas”—they have everything here but Christmas trees. But their party is not going to last very long. John continues to describe what he saw in his vision:

*After . . . three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.*  
(verses 11-12)

Everybody is stunned—they drop their cake and punch on the floor—and at that moment, the next verse tells us, a great earthquake levels one-tenth of the city of Jerusalem, and 7,000 people die. That is the end of *that* party.

But not in heaven. The scene shifts back to heaven for an encouraging vision. God knows the apostle John can only handle so many terrifying visions without a break—and we are the same way.

So, verse 15 sweeps us back up to heaven, where John hears the sound of the seventh trumpet. This trumpet contains the seven bowls that pour out God’s final acts of judgment.

And what are the redeemed in heaven doing? Well, they are not worried about the Antichrist; they are not concerned about the power of Satan and his demons; they are not wondering if the cause of Christ is losing. No, the redeemed are singing, or chanting, and verse 15 gives us the lyrics: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

Every one of us today who believe in Jesus Christ will be part of this grand choir, celebrating in this great worship service in heaven as the sovereign rule and reign of Christ is promised again and again.

So, what do you do today in the meantime? I will tell you: rehearse this song, remember these lyrics. No matter what it looks like around you, no matter who seems to be in control, no matter how much the devil seems to be advancing, sing this song: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ [His anointed Messiah], and he shall reign forever and ever.”

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How does knowing about the coming tribulation increase your gratitude for the salvation you have received in Christ?

How does the reality of God’s impending judgment motivate you to share the gospel with others today?

What steps are you taking to keep your spiritual focus in the midst of a world that is opposed to God?

How does the ultimate victory of Christ influence how you view current challenges and struggles in the world around you?



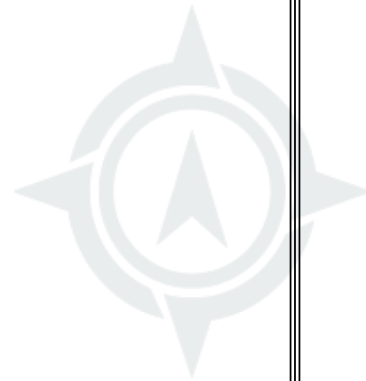
How can you rehearse the promises of God, as seen in the heavenly choir's worship, in your prayer life and worship today?

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Hindson, *The Book of Revelation: Unlocking the Future* (AMG Publishers, 2002), 113.

<sup>2</sup>Fritz Rienecker, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Cleon L. Rogers Jr. (Regency, 1980), 834.

Plot your Wisdom Journey.  
How would the Lord have you respond to what you've learned today?



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