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Recommissioned

Revelation 10

1. A Mighty Angel (verses 1-7)
2. A Little Scroll (verses 8-11)

There are certain times in life when you need to step back and regroup. On the smallest scale, when you are a quarterback and it's 2nd and long and you are getting pressure. it's best to throw it away and regroup in the huddle for the next play. As a student, when you find yourself struggling in your major classes, it may be best to regroup, and change your major to something that better suits you. Perhaps in your career, when you are laid off at your work, it may be a chance to regroup, and get some further training, and change your career direction. There are times when you regroup, only to stay the course. The transmission goes out in your car, after getting quotes for repair and for a replacement car, you decide that it's best to recondition the engine and keep your car. As a student, you may be struggling in your major, but after evaluation, it really is best to stay the course and continue in your major. Regarding your career after a layoff, it still may be the best course of action to simply get a new job with a new company.

This recently happened to me. I was planning a missions trip to India and Nepal. All was going as planned. I put in my visa for India, and I received a reply, asking me to clarify my employer and occupation. When I put down that I was a pastor of a church, my visa was refused. So, I regrouped, and decided that I would only go to Nepal, and not India. It's not exactly what I planned, but it is what the Lord has guided me to do.

Well, this morning, as we turn to the Scriptures, we are going to see John be recommissioned to his task. As you may (or may not recall), John was commissioned by the Lord to write the Revelation. His commission comes in chapter 1. He was on the island of Patmos as a political prisoner. He wrote this: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to

Philadelphia and to Laodicea" (Revelation 1:10-11). And following this commission that John received, he saw a majestic vision of Jesus! Clothed with a long robe, with a golden sash around his chest. In this vision, Jesus has hair white like wool, has feet like burnished bronze, has a voice like the roar of many waters. His face was like the sun, shining in its strength. It's almost as if this vision of Jesus reinforced the commission to which John was called.

And this morning in Revelation, chapter 10, we are going to see John commissioned once again to his task. John will be shown a vision of a big and powerful angel. John will be told that he must continue on in his prophecy. We don't know how much regrouping there was with John. Perhaps these visions of the judgments that came with the seals being opened (in Revelation, chapter 6), with the trumpets being blown (in Revelation, chapters 8 and 9), led him to discouragement. And the vision was to bolster his confidence in his calling. That's speculation, for sure, but it is my hunch of what was going on behind the scenes in John's heart and mind as he is "Recommissioned" for his calling.

The title of my message this morning is "Recommissioned." The application for us this morning is this: If you are at all discouraged in what the Lord is calling you to do and to be as his witness, take heart, we have a big God. If you are discouraged by the book of Revelation, and all of the judgments that are foretold, and the death that will come upon many, take heart, there's joy at the end of the journey. So, let' s read our text.

> <u>Revelation 10</u>
> 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. 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. 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." And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets. Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying,

> "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

My first point comes in verses 1-7. In these verses, we see

1. A Mighty Angel (verses 1-7)

You can see him mentioned there in verse 1.

> Revelation 10:1
> 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.

The first thing that I would have you notice about this mighty angel is that it's "another" mighty angel. This angel is different than the seven angels who were blowing the trumpets of judgment. This angel is different than the four angels who were released to kill a third of mankind (Revelation 9:15). This angel is different than the angels of the seven churches of chapters 2 and 3. This angel is different than the "mighty angel" we read about in Revelation 5:2, who asked, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" This is "another" angel. And this angel was unlike any angel that we have seen so far. He is called a "mighty" angel, you might call him a "mammoth" angel. Look at verse 2.

> Revelation 10:2
> 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,

The picture that come to my mind is "The Colossus of Rhodes," one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It stood over a hundred feet high, about the height of the Statue of Liberty. It was made of iron and bronze. It towered over the port at Rhodes. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 226 BC. Some think that the statue straddled the entrance to the port. in which case, all ships would pass between its legs. Such is the picture that comes into my mind when I think about this mighty

angel. Verse 1 says that this angel came 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.” Verse 2 says that this angel, “And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land.” As he stood like this, it was as if he was staking his claim as sovereign over the sea and the land. This will be significant when we see the beasts come on the scene in Revelation 13. One comes up out of the sea (Revelation 13:1). The other comes up out of the earth (Revelation 13:11). Yet here, God’s angel has authority over both the land and the sea.

Now, there are some who believe that this angel here is Jesus, because there are parallels to the description we read in Revelation 1. In verse 16, we read of "A face shining like the son." In verse 15, we read of "Feet like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and voice like the roar of many waters."

> Revelation 10:3
> and [he] called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring.

Because of the parallels, many say that this angel is Jesus. The problem is that nowhere in Revelation, or for that matter, nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus ever identified as an angel. So, I believe that this is simply another “mighty angel.” A “mammoth” angel. So, what does this angel do?

> Revelation 10:3
> and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded.

Enjoy the apocalyptic pictures. Shouting forth like a lion, only to be answered by the seven thunders. To add to the apocalyptic imagery, it seems as if John understood these thunders.

> Revelation 10:4
> 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.”

Again, you can’t seal up something that you haven’t written down! This is apocalyptic literature. So the big question here is this: “What are these thunders?” Obviously, we don’t know. And God doesn’t want us to know. The voice told John to seal up what they said. But surely they were judgments of some type. In Revelation, thunder is often associated closely with judgment: "Then the angel

took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" (Revelation 8:5). "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail" (Revelation 11:19). "And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake" (Revelation 16:18).

In the book of Revelation, we have seen the seals in Revelation 6. We have seen the trumpets in Revelation 8-16. When we get to chapter 16, we will see the bowl judgments. I would guess that John heard about some type of judgments that would take place when the thunders sounded. We aren't told the details of these judgments, (those details were known only by John), but we are told that there were some thunders and we are told of the God's reason of why these thunders were sealed up. Look at verse 5.

> Revelation 10:5-7
> And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

So, you have this angel, raising his right hand to heaven, giving his pledge. swearing by the Lord, who lives forever, who created heaven, earth and sea, that "there would be no more delay." In other words, at this point in the history of the world, or more properly, the future, the final judgment was upon them. We are going to skip the thunder judgments and go right to the end, without any delay. Do you remember in the Olivet Discourse when Jesus said, "If those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:22). I think this is the idea of the seven thunders. God will cut them out of history, to shorten the days until the final judgment. Yet, there is still mystery.

> Revelation 10:7
> But that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

You remember, that at this point in the Revelation, we have seen the seven seals opened up. Actually, the first six seals were opened up in chapter 6. And then, there was this pause in chapter 7 to see the servants of God sealed and protected. Then, at the beginning of chapter 8, the seventh seal was opened up. And this seventh seal brought on the blowing of the first six trumpets in chapters 8 and 9. And then, there is this pause in chapter 10 to see the recommissioning of John to his task. Then, in chapter 11 (and verse 15), we will read of the seventh angel blowing his trumpet, which will bring on the pouring out of the bowls. It's this seventh trumpet which brings on the final judgment of the bowls being poured out upon the earth. That's why, verse 7 says,

> Revelation 10:7
> But that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

The question at this point is this, "What is this mystery?" First of all, when the Bible speaks about "mystery," it describes something that is unclear at one point in time, but becomes clear in another. For instance: the unifying work of the gospel. The gospel is for all who believe! Jews and Gentiles alike! We all come to God by his grace through faith in Jesus. This wasn't so clear in previous generations.

In Ephesians 3:4-6, Paul writes, "When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Similarly here in Revelation, I believe that the mystery of verse 7 that is fulfilled will be the answering of the greatest questions we have. Why do the righteous suffer? Why do the wicked prosper? Why does God allow Satan and evil men to bring evil upon the earth? Why is God so long in establishing his kingdom? When the final judgment comes, I believe that we will see and understand. God's perfect justice, God's perfect timing in it all! When the book of Revelation finds its fulfillment, we will be satisfied in what God has done in this world. That all comes with the blowing of the seventh trumpet. It brings the fulfillment of everything that God 7 announced to his servants the prophets. What a grand statement! Everything God announced to the prophets would soon come to pass.

Let's consider but a few of the prophetic announcements, which bring judgment.

Isaiah 13:9-11
Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,
to make the land a desolation
and to destroy its sinners from it.
For the stars of the heavens and their constellations
will not give their light;
the sun will be dark at its rising,
and the moon will not shed its light.
I will punish the world for its evil,
and the wicked for their iniquity.

Joel 2:1-2
Blow a trumpet in Zion;
sound an alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful people;
their like has never been before,
nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

Zechariah 13:2
And on that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness.

And the reality is that this day of judgment will also bring in times of great joy!

Isaiah 60:19-20
The sun shall be no more your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon give you light;
but the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the Lord will be your everlasting light,

and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Micah 4:6-7
In that day, declares the Lord,
I will assemble the lame
and gather those who have been driven away
and those whom I have afflicted;
and the lame I will make the remnant,
and those who were cast off, a strong nation;
and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion
from this time forth and forevermore.

We could read entire books Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, but we don't have time. But this is what the seventh trumpet will bring: the fulfillment of everything that God 7 announced to his servants the prophets. And the promise that John hears, is as firm as firm can be. this mighty angel, who lays claim to the earth and the sea (verse 2), who raises his right hand and swears by the eternal creator God (verse 6), Says that "the mystery of God would be fulfilled" (verse 7), and that "there would be no more delay" (verse 6). Now, our problem is that we are only in Revelation 10. There are 22 chapters in Revelation. This all furthers the idea that the book of book of Revelation is difficult to take strictly chronologically. as if every chapter follows in the future right after every other chapter. The book of Revelation is deeper and more nuanced than that. Well, let's move on to my second point.

2. A Little Scroll (verses 8-11)

This scroll, which was mentioned in verse 2, now becomes the focus of our narrative. We read:

Revelation 10:8
Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying,
"Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing
on the sea and on the land."

What a bold thing to do! To go to this mammoth angel and take the scroll out of his hand, as if it belonged to you. And John does what we would expect. Rather than taking the scroll, he asks for the scroll.

Revelation 10:9
So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll.

First of all, there is some question as to what this scroll is. Some would say that this is the scroll of Revelation 5, the scroll that was sealed with seven seals, that the Lamb took from the right hand of God on the throne. But I don't think so. Nowhere does John make the connection. and the word used here to identify the scroll, is different than the word used in chapter 5. In chapter 5, the scroll was identified as a "book." Here in chapter 10, the scroll is identifies as a "booklet." It was smaller. In fact, it could fit in his mouth, as John was told to eat it. Verse 9 continues:

> Revelation 10:9
> And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

Again, enjoy the apocalyptic picture! If you take a booklet out of someone's hand, you want to read it! You don't want to eat it! And yet, that's what we have pictured here. John was to take the little scroll and eat it. The voice told John what he would experience. The scroll would be sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the stomach. I have foods like this. I love apples! I love the crunch. I love the sweetness of them. But I have found that if I eat an apple, my stomach hurts a few hours later. The same with milk, and corn, and refried beans! I love milk! I love corn! I love refried beans. But if I eat them, they cause problems for my digestive system. And that's what John experiences here.

> Revelation 10:10
> And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter.

What does this mean? I think that it's a picture often used in prophesy. Jeremiah ate God's words. "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). Yet, Jeremiah prophesied some bitter words of doom to Judah. Ezekiel ate God's' words, "And he said to me, "Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey" (Ezekiel 3:1-3). But it would be better for Ezekiel later. What Jeremiah and Ezekiel experienced, John did. It was sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the stomach.

There is much about the future and bringing in the kingdom that will be sweet to us all! But what will happen before the end is bitter! What could be sweeter than the end of Revelation? when we are seated at the marriage supper of the Lamb! Weddings are happy times! We have a wedding this week! Hanna and Derek will be married on Friday! I know that I will sit and enjoy my meal on Friday and enjoy thinking of their future together! What could be happier than that? What could be sweeter than God dwelling with us without death or crying or pain? This is what we see in Revelation 21! "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:3-4). It doesn’t get any sweeter than that! Yet, not all is sweet! When Jesus comes riding on a white horse, he will come with “the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty” (Revelation 19:7). When trumpet sounds, and the bowls are poured out, it is the final wrath of God coming upon the earth (Revelation 15:1).

That’s what this little scroll brings! Sweetness of the glory to come! But bitterness with everything that it will take to get there! We have seen this already in Revelation! We have seen the sweet! We have seen the beautiful image of Jesus in Revelation 1! We have seen the glories of the throne in heaven, with all of the heavenly hosts worshiping the Lord! "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever" (Revelation 5: 13). We have seen the great multitude coming out of the great tribulation saying, "Salvation belong to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb" (Revelation 7:10). But we have also seen the bitter! We have seen the seven seals being opened, bringing wars and famine and death upon the earth. We have seen six of the seven trumpets blown, burning up a third of the earth, (Revelation 8:7) and bringing death to a third of the creatures in the sea (Revelation 8:9), and torment so bad upon the earth that people are longing to die, but death flees them (9:6), and angels killing a third of mankind (Revelation 9:15). But this was John’s commission: to proclaim the sweetness and the bitterness of the coming events. And Revelation 10 tells us that John’s ministry was to continue on!

> <u>Revelation 10:11</u>
> And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”

And here we see John’s recommissioning. He was told, “You must again prophesy.” His prophetic ministry wasn’t finished. What he had already proclaimed, me must continue doing!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 24, 2023 by Steve Brandon.
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