

Revelation 10.1-11

- You must prophesy again -

Author: Evert Jan Hempenius

© 2025

www.christianstudylibrary.org

For any questions about this Scripture passage or the notes, please contact us through the Contact Us tab on the website.

Introduction

- ❖ Why is the Book of Revelation so mysterious? Beale tries to find the solution in allusions to the Book of Daniel:
 - “The word “mystery” (Rev 10:7) is chosen because of its Danielic flavor. The word is used in the Greek OT with a latter-day implication only in Daniel. Here, likewise, John uses it to refer to the interpretation of end-time prophecy as that which is understood only when accompanied by further revelation.”¹
 - The mystery lies not only in Revelation 10:7, but also in the identity of the mighty angel, the voice from heaven that spoke, the images and metaphors used, and the command not to write what the seven thunders said (Rev 10:3, 4).
 - A less often suggested solution is the following one. The Revelation needs to be mysterious because of the political-religious dangers, oppression and persecution, the Christians were facing in the first and the second centuries.
 - Try to imagine that John prophesied the downfall of the Roman Empire and that the church of Jesus Christ will be victorious in a clear and for everybody readable message. The letters with these messages, which he had sent to the seven churches in Asia, might have been intercepted by Roman officials. The consequences for the churches would be disastrous, and not only for the churches in Asia but for all the churches in the Roman Empire. They would have

¹ Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 543).

been labelled as enemies of the State, the Emperor, and the Roman gods. That this is not a far-fetched idea, is illustrated by Revelation 12 and 13.

- Some parts of Daniel are also mysterious due to the same reason. It prophesies the downfall of the empires of this world and the final victory of God.
 - The message was hidden from the Roman outsider, but (partly) understood by the Christian insider. The 21st-century reader is handicapped by living at a distance in time and place.
- ❖ Fortunately, the total picture of Revelation will aid in the understanding of chapter 10.
- The NAME of God:
 - Revelation 1:4: "who is, and who was, and who is to come";
 - Revelation 1:8: "who is, and who was, and who is to come";
 - Revelation 4:8: "who was, and who is, and who is to come"; (NIV: "who was, and is, and is to come")
 - Revelation 11:17: "Who is and who was";
 - Revelation 16:5: "who is and who was"; (NIV: "who are and who were).
 - Remarks:
 - The translations are according to the NESTLE-ALAND 28th edition.² The Textus Receptus reads both in 11:17 and 16:5: "who is and who was and who is to be" (NewKJV).
 - Revelation 1:4, 8; 4:8 are parallels with slight variation. Revelation 11:17 and 16:5 miss "who is to come."
 - A tentative conclusion might be, that there is a major turning point in Revelation 11:15: present + past + future > present + past, which indicates that the future, from the perspective of John, has come.
 - Another observation is the following. John receives the command to prophesy again (Rev 10:11; like Ezekiel, Ezek 2:8-3:9). From his perspective, this will be the near future.
 - This command follows Rev 9:20. 21: "The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—

² Nestle, E., & Nestle, E. (2012). Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece (B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, & B. M. Metzger, Eds.; 28. revidierte Auflage). Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

- A summary:
- After the plagues (Rev 8, 9) mankind did not repent. There will be no more delay. The future is near (Rev 11:15-19). For the time to come, John "must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."
 - The prophecies include the impending judgment and an implied call to repent and receive salvation.
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Revelation to John. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a stand-alone. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ The book of Revelation is like a painting. It is impossible to study one passage without looking at the book as a whole.
- ❖ A brief outline of the Book of Revelation:³

Introduction (Rev 1:1-3)	
Rev 1:1-3	The origin of and the command to write this Revelation.
The Book of Revelation (Rev 1:4-22:21)	
Rev 1:4-8	The opening liturgical setting.
Rev 1:9-3:22	PART 1
Rev 4:1-22:6	PART 2
Rev 22:7-21	The closing liturgical setting.

- PART 1: The risen and exalted Christ sends his seven messages to the seven churches in the Roman Province of Asia.

³ This outline for sermons is very brief and does not discuss all the (many) different theories about the structures and outlines of the Book of Revelation. Beale (1999) provides a detailed outline. For discussion see Garrow (1997).

- PART 2: The heavenly courtroom and the judgment of God, ending with the descent of the new heaven and earth.
 - PART 2: Three main stages can be distinguished in this part of Revelation. Each stage is introduced by a vision of the heavenly courtroom where God resides as the Creator-King and Judge of all creation.

Part 2 (Rev 4:1-22:11)	
Stage 1	Rev 4:1-7:17 > the first six seals.
Stage 2	Rev 8:1-11:14 > (the seventh seal) and the first six trumpets.
Stage 3	Rev 11:15-22:11 > (the seventh trumpet) and the seven bowls of God's wrath > the two cities: Babylon versus the New Jerusalem.

Stage 2 (Rev 8:1-11:14) – in more detail	
Rev 8:1-5	The seventh seal: the heavenly courtroom; the seven trumpets
Rev 8:6-12	The first four trumpets
Rev 8:13	The eagle calls out: Woe! Woe! Woe!
Rev 9:1-12 – the first woe / the fifth trumpet – the locusts-scorpions	Rev 9:13-19 – the second woe / the sixth trumpet – the horses-snakes
Rev 9:20-21	The rest of mankind did not repent!
Rev 10:1-11 – John is called again like Ezekiel – to prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings	Rev 11:1-14 – John has to measure the temple – the two prophets like Moses and Eliah

- The fifth and the sixth trumpets are parallel, just like the fifth and the sixth seals.
- Revelation 10 and 11 is a turning point and form again a duplet like Revelation 7:1-8 and Revelation 7:9-17 following the opening of the first six seals.

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

The purpose of Revelation

- ❖ The purpose of the Book of Revelation is fourfold:
 - 1. Revelation: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known” (Rev 1:1).
 - 2. Promise: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city” (Rev 22:14).
 - 3. Warning: “And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book” (Rev 22:19).
 - 4. Call: “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life” (Rev 22:17).
- ❖ Revelation 22:1-2: “the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life.”

The character of the book

- ❖ The Book of Revelation is Trinitarian (God – Holy Spirit – Jesus Christ; Rev. 1:4-5) in character.
 - God is the first and the last (Rev. 1:8) – Jesus Christ is the first and the last (Rev. 1:17).
 - Jesus Christ speaks to the churches (Rev. 2:1-6) and the churches are summoned to listen to what the Spirit (Rev. 2:7) says.
 - Note the Trinitarian character of Rev. 5:
 - God, Creator residing on his throne;
 - The Son, the Lamb, standing in the midst;
 - The seven spirits, sent by the Son to the corners of the earth (East, West, North, South), who is identical with the Holy Spirit of God.
- ❖ The Book of Revelation is foremost a liturgical book with prayers, doxologies, confessions, prophecies and visions. It shows the heavenly liturgy in images and this liturgy affects the history of this world when the plagues of God strike this earth. Rev. 4:11 explains why: “**You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.**”
 - This is the priority in the life of every human being: to glorify God.

- This liturgical book reminds us of the liturgy in the Tabernacle (especially) and the temple of the Old Testament. This explains the many references to the altars and the priestly appearances of Christ and some of his angels.
 - Revelation 5 contains three songs of glorification and one acclamation “Amen”.
- ❖ The book of Revelation is also a **prophetic** book about the past, the present and the future. It sheds light on the past, the present situation of the seven churches in Asia Minor, and the future, culminating in the promise of the new heaven and the new earth.
 - From chapter 4 onwards the judgment of God is the dominating theme. He will do justice (Rev. 4-5; Rev. 6:10; Rev. 21:1-15 and other passages).

Reading and Understanding

- ❖ Reading and understanding the Book of Revelation requires:
 - Profound knowledge of the Old Testament.
 - Especially the books of Exodus and Numbers, Ezekiel and Daniel are important for study. These books are related to the oppression and deliverance of the people of God (Egypt and Babylon). Genesis 2-3 and 1 Kings 6 provide the necessary background for understanding Revelation 21:9-22:5.
 - Knowledge of the Greek-Roman world of the first century.
 - Knowledge of figures of speech, because of all the metaphors and other figures of speech.
 - Knowledge of the structure of Revelation (see above).
 - (Elementary) knowledge of Hermeneutics.

Christ revealed

- ❖ John received this Revelation from Jesus Christ and at the same time, this Revelation reveals the risen and exalted Christ, who holds the keys of (life and) death and Hades (Rev. 1:17). John understood the words he heard, the visions he saw, though sometimes they needed to be explained to him (Rev. 1:19-20).
- ❖ John wrote down what he heard and saw in this book and sent it to the seven churches in Asia Minor, an important province of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. In these seven messages to the churches of Asia, Jesus Christ addresses major aspects of church life. He praises and rebukes them and gives them promises of the life to come. Christians, members of these churches, understood these messages. Twice are people mentioned by name and they were warned against a movement called the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6; 2:15), active among the churches. These Christians were far more familiar with the figures of speech used in the Revelation than we are today.

- Figures of speech are not always easily understood by 21st-century readers. Sometimes they are explained, more often not. Figures of speech allow more than one explanation and application. That explains the multitude of commentaries and theories.

Hermeneutical traditions

- ❖ In the process of explaining and applying the prophecies of this book, the interpreter should ask himself two questions:
 - To which exegetical tradition do I belong? There are a plethora of traditions, especially in the Anglo-American World. To mention only three:
 - Amillennialism;
 - Postmillennialism;
 - Premillennialism.
 - Secondly, the interpreter should be aware of his situation and the local Christian community. What is my political-religious situation and how does this situation affect my reading and understanding of the Book of Revelation?

Verse 1, 3

- ❖ **“The lamb” = “ἀρνίον”**: the crucified, resurrected and glorified Christ.
 - The Lamb refers to the exodus out of Egypt (Ex 12; Jn 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7).
 - The Lamb is introduced in Revelation 5:6 “Then I (John) saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne.”
 - “looking as if it had been slain” refers to the crucifixion.
 - “standing” refers to the resurrection
 - “in the centre of the throne” refers to glorification.
 - The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll (5:1) and to open its seals (Rev 5:5, 9; 6: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1): “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!” (Rev 5:12; 17).
 - This scroll is probably the Book of Life (Rev 3:5; 13: 8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).
 - “The Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev 7:17).
 - Those who wear white robes “have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 7:14; see also Rev 12:10).
 - The Lamb is victorious: “There before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads” (Rev 14:1; see also Rev 17:14).

- The church is the bride of the Lamb (Rev 19:9, 21:9, 21:14). After the final judgment, all those whose names were written in the Book of Life will live forever in communion with the Lamb and with God (Rev 21:22, 23).

Exposition

What preceded (*The first six trumpets*)

- ❖ Revelation 8:1-5 describes the offering of the prayers of all the saints. The contents of these prayers are not described. It is most likely that they are in line with the prayers of the martyrs (Rev 6:10): "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" These prayers are followed by the six trumpets. These trumpets announce six severe plagues. The conclusion is:
 - "The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk" (Rev 9:20, 21).
 - Therefore, John is again called to prophesy against the nations.

Verse 1-4 (*The appearance of a mighty angel*)

- ❖ **"Then I saw."** This introduces a new part of the vision belonging to Revelation 8:1-11:14.
- ❖ **"another mighty angel"** (Rev. 5:2; 18:21). The vision is impressive. It is not necessary to identify this angel with some known angels like Gabriel or Michael. Otherwise, it would have been revealed to John.
 - His appearance reflects the majesty of God and Christ. In Revelation 5:2 the mighty angel is distinguished from Christ, the Lamb.
- ❖ **"coming down from heaven."** He was sent by God.
- ❖ **"He was robed in a cloud"** Probably like a Roman toga. See also Revelation 11:12: The two prophets "went up to heaven in a cloud."
 - 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. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.'"
 - For "time, times and half a time," see Revelation 12:14. It is the same period as:
 - "1,260 days" (Rev 11:3; 12:6).
 - "forty-two months" (Rev 13:5).
 - **"with a rainbow above his head"**

- Bratcher and Hatton comment: “It is not certain what the Greek preposition (literally ‘on’) is meant to portray here, whether the rainbow forms a complete circle ‘around’ the angel’s head, like a halo (TEV⁴, BRCL⁵), or is a semicircle ‘over’ his head (RSV⁶). Some translations have simply ‘on’ or ‘upon.’”⁷ The NIV has “above;”
 - See also Revelation 4:3.
 - The rainbow is a strong symbol. It reminds the reader of the flood and the everlasting covenant of God with the whole creation (Gen 9.13-16) and God’s faithfulness.
- **“his face was like the sun.”** Compare Revelation 1:16: “His (the glorified Christ) face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.” Moses’ face reflected the glory of God after he descended from Mount Sinai (Ex 34:30).
 - Matthew 17:2: “There he (Jesus) was transfigured before them. **His face shone like the sun**, and his clothes became as white as the light.”
- **“and his legs were like fiery pillars.”** This reflects his power.
- ❖ **“He was holding a little scroll”** This is not the same scroll as mentioned in Revelation 5:1-3.⁸
 - This scroll symbolizes the call of a prophet (Ezek 2:8-3:9). See also verses 8-11. The first scroll is probably identical to the Book of Life, which is opened in Revelation 20:12.
 - Revelation 5:5: “He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” The seven seals have been opened (Revelation 6; 8:1) but there is no mention of the opening of the scroll itself.
 - Revelation 5:1: “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” Only the risen Christ is found worthy (Rev 5:5). The reason is given in 5:9: “because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.”
 - The solemnity of Revelation 5 and the dignity of Christ stand in stark contrast to the command to John to take the little scroll and eat it. See below.

⁴ TEV: Today’s English Version

⁵ BRCL: Brazilian Portuguese common language version

⁶ RSV: Revised Standard Version

⁷ Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 156).

⁸ See also Christianstudylibrary. (n.d.). <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Revelation%205.9-10.pdf>

- **“which lay open in his hand”** The contents are not hidden but at the same time not revealed. The symbolic action of eating this scroll as accepting the prophetic call is more in view.
- Beale calls⁹ the angel a colossus, after a huge statue at the entrance of the harbour of the Greek island Rhodes.¹⁰ Although the description is impressive, the angel is also approachable to John (Rev 10:8), and he carries in his hand a little scroll, which can be eaten (Rev 10:9-10).
- ❖ **“He planted.”** John saw the angel descending from heaven.
 - **“his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land”**
 - “sea” is the Western part of the Roman Empire.
 - “land” is the Eastern part.
 - See also Revelation 13:1 (“sea”) and 13:10 (“land”).
 - It is also symbolic of the whole creation.
 - Aune comments: “The stance of the angel symbolically corresponds to the oath that he takes.”¹¹
- ❖ **“and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion.”** To draw attention. It is also frightening (Hos 11:10) and a warning. Based on this description, it is not necessary to identify the angel with Christ, who was called the lion of the tribe of Judah, which was a royal title (Rev 5:4).
 - **“a loud shout” = “a loud voice”.** Aune comments: “The description of the angel crying with a loud voice (...) is a literary technique that **emphasizes both the importance of what is said and the supernatural origin of the speaker.**”¹² See also:
 - Revelation 6:1: “one of the four living creatures say in a voice” (see also Rev 6:7);
 - Revelation 7:2: “another angel (...) called out in a loud voice” (see also Rev 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 18:2; 19:7);
 - Revelation 7:10: a great multitude. “They cried out in a loud voice”;
 - Revelation 8:13: “an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice;”

⁹ Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 529).

¹⁰ Wikimedia Foundation. (2024b, October 22). Colossus of Rhodes. Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colossus_of_Rhodes

¹¹ Aune, D. E. (1998, p. 559).

¹² Aune, D. E. (1998, p. 559).

- Revelation 9:13: “a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar” (see also Rev 16:1);
- Revelation 10:3, 6: “a loud voice in heaven” (see also Rev 10:3; 12:10; 14:13);
- Revelation 16:17: “a voice from the throne” (see also Rev 19:5; 21:3).
- This overview is not complete but shows a good variation of voices. It is not necessary to identify the speaker. John didn't see who was speaking, he only heard a voice.
- ❖ **“When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.”** (See also Psalm 29).
 - **“seven”** is a symbolic number of completeness.
 - **“thunder.”** Compare John 12:28, 29: “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.** In Revelation 8:5, 11:19, and 16:18, thunders belong to the signs of the impending judgment.
 - Thunder is impressive and can be frightening.
 - **“And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write.”** John was obedient to the command, which said: “Write on a scroll what you see” (Rev 1:11).
 - **“Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.”** Keep it secret, as the TEV translates: **“Keep secret ... and do not write.”**
 - Easley comments: “This command powerfully reminds us that the Bible does not contain all the predictions about the end of the world that God has revealed to individuals.”¹³
 - Beale writes: “Commentators have puzzled over the meaning of the prohibition and the precise identification of the “seven thunders.”¹⁴ But, if John wanted to convey the precise identification and the meaning of the prohibition, he would have done so. Not the identification and meaning are important but the effect on the reader.

Verse 5-7

- ❖ **“Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven.”** See also Daniel 12:7 and Deuteronomy 32:40).
 - **This is a solemn stance. It must have been an impressive vision to John.**

¹³ Easley, K. H. (1998, p. 172).

¹⁴ Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 534).

- Aune comments: “Here it appears that raising the right hand to heaven when an oath is taken is a gesture that symbolically appeals to God, who dwells in heaven and therefore sees and knows everything, as a witness to the oath.”¹⁵
- ❖ **“And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever.”** See also Revelation 4:9 (who sits on the throne; see also Rev 15:7) and “the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!” (Rev 1:18; see also Rev 11:15).
 - Bratcher and Hatton write: “In this context the angel is taking an oath, making a solemn statement, with God as witness, that something is true.”¹⁶ It is binding.
 - **“who created the heavens and all that is in them...”** God is the Creator. The repeated “and all that is in them” is used to emphasize. See also Revelation 14:7.
 - **“and said, “There will be no more delay!”**
 - Bratcher and Hatton comment: “the translation can be ‘God will not wait any longer.’ NJB¹⁷ translates “The time of waiting is over”; this is a good model to imitate.”¹⁸
 - Revelation 6:9, 10: “The souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘**How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge** the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’”
 - Revelation 8:3: “Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with **the prayers of all the saints**, on the golden altar before the throne.”
 - **“delay”** refers to the experience of Christians. Christians of all times pray: “your kingdom come” (Mt 6:10). God is not postponing his plans. It also refers to the prayers of all the saints (Rev 8:3).
 - It refers also to Revelation 11:15 onwards:
 - "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.'"

¹⁵ Aune, D. E. (1998, p. 564).

¹⁶ Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 159).

¹⁷ NJB: New Jerusalem Bible

¹⁸ Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 159).

- "The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. **The time has come for judging the dead**, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth" (Rev 11:18).
- ❖ **"But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet"** See Revelation 11:15 above.
 - The seven trumpets recall the fall of Jericho (5:13-6:27; especially 6:4). The seventh trumpet announces all that precedes the downfall of Babylon (Rome; the powers of this world; Rev 16:17-21) and final judgment (Rev 11:14-19; 20:11-15).
- ❖ **"the mystery of God will be accomplished"**
 - **"the mystery of God"** is what needs to be revealed. Compare this with Revelation 1:20: "The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." In this case, the mystery is revealed but in Revelation 10:7 it is still open to revelation in the near future of the readers.
 - **"will be accomplished"**
 - Bratcher and Hatton refer to Beckwith: **"God's plan is to fulfill his purposes for humanity by means of Jesus Christ.** Beckwith defines it as follows: 'the purpose of God to bring his kingdom to its consummation—a purpose hidden from the world but in the end to be fully revealed in its accomplishment.'"¹⁹
 - Beale refers also to Daniel 12.²⁰
- ❖ **"just as he announced to his servants the prophets."** This is most likely a reference to the prophets of the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel (see below). Revelation 11:6 recalls the prophets Moses and Elijah to mind.

Verse 8-11

- ❖ **"Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more:"** See above.
- ❖ **"Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."**
 - This and the following is parallel to Ezekiel 2:8-3:3:
 - "'But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.'

¹⁹ Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 160).

²⁰ Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 543).

- Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.
 - And he said to me, 'Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel.'
 - So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.
 - Then he said to me, 'Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.'
 - So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth."
- ❖ **“He said to me, “Take it and eat it.”** It is part of the Ezekiel's call. Now, John is called again to prophesy.
- ❖ **“It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey...”**
- This part has a chiasmic structure:
 - A. **“It will turn your stomach sour,”**
 - B. **“but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.”**
 - C. **“I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it.”**
 - B’. **“It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth,”**
 - A. **“but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.”**
 - C. John accepts his commission like Ezekiel. The parallels with Ezekiel are strong near the end of Revelation:

Ezekiel	Revelation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The valley of the dry bones and the resurrection (Ezek 37; 37:9-14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first resurrection (Rev 20:5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prophecy against Gog and Magog (Ezek 38-39) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gog and Magog (Rev 20:7), deceived by Satan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new temple (Ezek 40-48) • • The river flowing out of the temple (Ezek 47) • The gates of the city and the size (Ezek 48:30-35) • The Name of God (Ezek 48:35) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Jerusalem and the temple (Rev 20:9-21:5) • The river of the water of life (Rev 22:1, 2) • The gates and the measurement (Rev 21:12-21) • The Name of God (Rev 22:4)

- The message will be sweet, a call to perseverance (see Revelation 13), a message of victory and justice (see Revelation 14-20), and the promise of salvation, hope and life (see Revelation 21-22).
 - Note also the background of Revelation 4 found in Ezekiel 1.
 - The result will be sour, caused by oppression and persecution (Rev 12-13).
- ❖ **“Then I was told, ‘You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.’”**
- **“must”** is a divine imperative.
 - In contrast, look at Revelation 13:7: "He (the beast from the sea; Rev 13:1) was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation." See also Revelation 20:3, 8).
 - **This means that John must speak in the public.**
 - Beale writes: **“prophesy”** does not merely refer to God’s word about the future but also includes God’s revealed interpretation of present reality. **The use of “prophesy” in 1:3 and 22:7–10, 18–19 shows that the entire book has this focus on the *present* since John exhorts his first-century readers to “hear” and “keep the words of the prophecy of this book.”** If they do not obey God’s precepts in the book, then they will suffer *in the present age* the plagues that are written in the book (22:18–19). Therefore, the book’s “prophesy” includes divine precepts for living in the present, **about which the readers must make a decision.**²¹
 - “Many nations”:
 - The Lamb has "men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9; see also Rev 7:9; 15:4).
 - Men from "every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial" (Rev 11:9). The bodies are from the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, who were killed by the beast from the Abyss (Rev 11:3-10; see also Rev 11:18).
 - The nations living in the Roman Empire (Rev 17:8; 18:3; 18:23)
 - An angel "had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev 14:6).
 - The nations are subject to the divine wrath (Rev 19:15).
 - The nations as objects of salvation (Rev 21:24, 26; 22:2).

²¹ Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 555).

- ❖ There is urgency: “there will be no more delay” (Rev 10:6).

Application

Contemporary context

- ❖ What is the contemporary context of the church?
- ❖ Religious: predominantly Islamic, Hinduist, Buddhist, Secular, or Christian. Are there any idols?
- ❖ Religious freedom: oppression, persecution, or liberty.
- ❖ Political: democracy or autocracy. Is there corruption and the need for bribery, or fairness?
- ❖ Society: is there justice or injustice?

The purpose of Revelation

- ❖ Explain the purpose of Revelation:
 - The glorification of God and the Lamb, the resurrected Christ.
 - A call to Christians, especially those who suffer persecution and oppression, to be faithful.
 - To prophesy again (John) the church has to continue his witness and prophesy.
 - To comfort Christians who suffer. “There will be no more delay.”

Glorify

- ❖ God as Creator-King-Judge. He is faithful to his purposes and his plan.

Verse 1-4

- ❖ Stand in awe of the Godly powers. He rules. The angels and thunders reflect his glory.
- ❖ Not everything is revealed to the church. This is a warning to those who try to outline the end times.

Verse 5-7

- ❖ God is faithful. He will accomplish his mystery. Till it is revealed it remains a mystery.

Verse 8-11

- ❖ John is commissioned to prophesy again.
 - Clarify the background of Ezekiel.
- ❖ Explain the sweetness of the message: repentance, salvation and judgment.
- ❖ John has a public task! He must prophesy about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.

- The church today has also a public task and has to perform this task with wisdom (Rev 13:18, endurance and faithfulness (Rev 13:10)).

Bibliography

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Aune, D. E. (1998). *Revelation 6–16* (Vol. 52B). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*. Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

Boxall, I. (2006). *The Revelation of Saint John*. London: Continuum.

Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the Revelation to John*. New York: United Bible Societies.

Easley, K. H. (1998). *Revelation* (Vol. 12). Broadman & Holman Publishers.