

THE SEVEN-FOLD VISIONS

(6:1 – 16:21)

FIRST VISION

SCENE 1-5 – Seals 1-5 (6:1-11)

SCENE 6 – Sixth Seal (6:12-17)
(End of this World) (NO Battle Scene)

The Interlude: Comfort and
and Protection of the Church (7:1-17)

SCENE 7 – Seventh Seal (8:1-5)
(Introduces the Second Vision)

SECOND VISION

SCENE 1-5 – Trumpets 1-5 (8:6 – 9:12)
Scene 5 (Fifth Trumpet-Angel)

SCENE 6 – Sixth Trumpet (9:13-21)
(The Great Battle)

The Interlude: The Church in Mission and
God's Protection (10:1-11:14)

SCENE 7 – Seventh Trumpet (11:15-19)
(End of this World)

The Interregnum
(Chapters 12-14)

THIRD VISION

SCENE 1-5 – Bowls 1-5 (15:1 – 16:11)

SCENE 6 – Sixth Bowl (16:12-16)
(The Battle of Armageddon)

SCENE 7 – Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)
(End of this World)

INTRODUCTION

(10:1-11)

Chapter 10:1-11:14 is an interlude between the second and third woes. This section is also known as the Second Earthly Vision. Remember that the first was recorded in Chapters 6:1-8:5.

In this second interlude, we see a picture of the Church in mission and God's protection of His Church in that mission.

OUTLINE OF THE SECOND EARTHLY VISION

I. The Mighty Angel from Heaven (10:1-11)

Commissioning of John

- *Proclamation of the Prophetic Message*

II. Temple Measured/Two Witnesses (11:1-14).

Proclamation of the Message

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

V.1 -- The first thing that John sees is “another mighty angel coming down from heaven.” The word another is important, since it tells us that this angel isn’t one of the seven-trumpet angels, nor the angel at the golden incense altar. This angel has a distinct and special mission; the commissioning of John on behalf of Jesus .

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

Note that this angel is “mighty.” Only three angels in Revelation are called mighty:

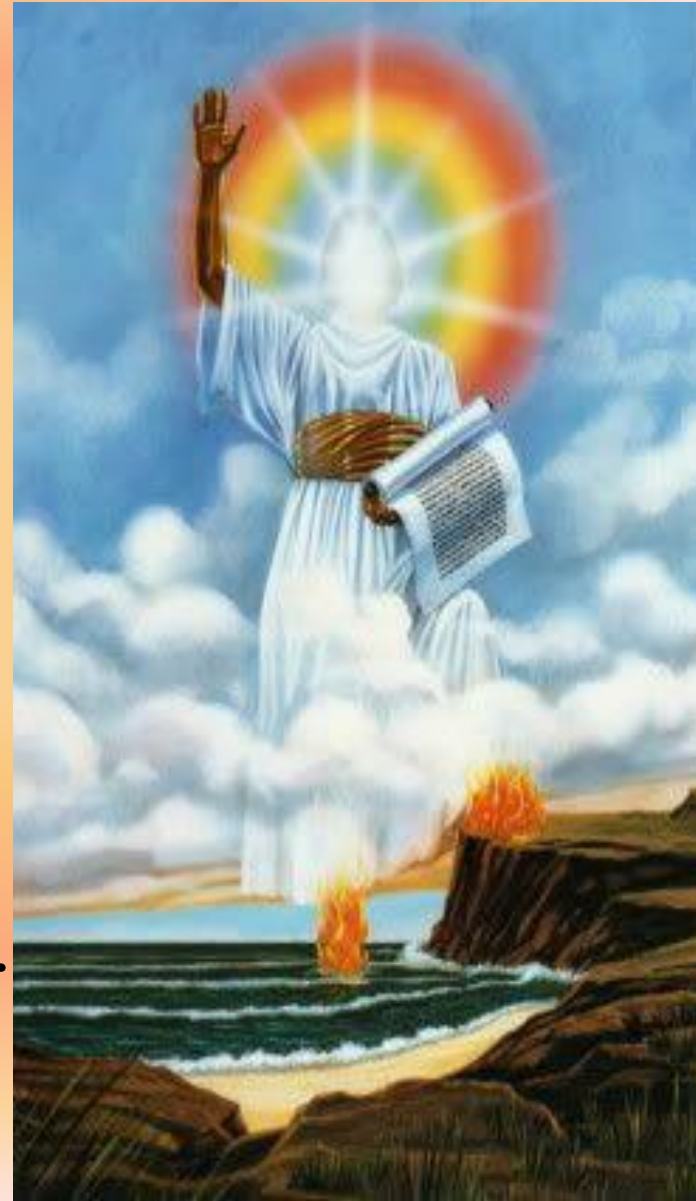
- 1). the angel of 5:2 (announcement of the Lamb, Who is Worthy);*
- 2). the angel of this chapter; and*
- 3). the angel of Chapter 18 (announcement of the fall of Babylon).*

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

Though this angel is not identified by name, it's obvious that he is acting in accordance with God's power and divine authority. Highlighting this fact, the mighty angel is, "coming down from heaven." Thus, he is being sent from the very presence of God, by God, to do His holy will.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

“He was robed in a cloud . . . with a rainbow-like halo . . . face was like the sun . . . and his legs were like fiery pillars” – To be robed with a cloud, is a reference that this mighty angel is coming on God’s behalf. In the Old and New Testaments, the cloud is used to signify power and glory. Thus the mighty angel came to John not on his own authority, but by that of God Almighty in power and glory.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

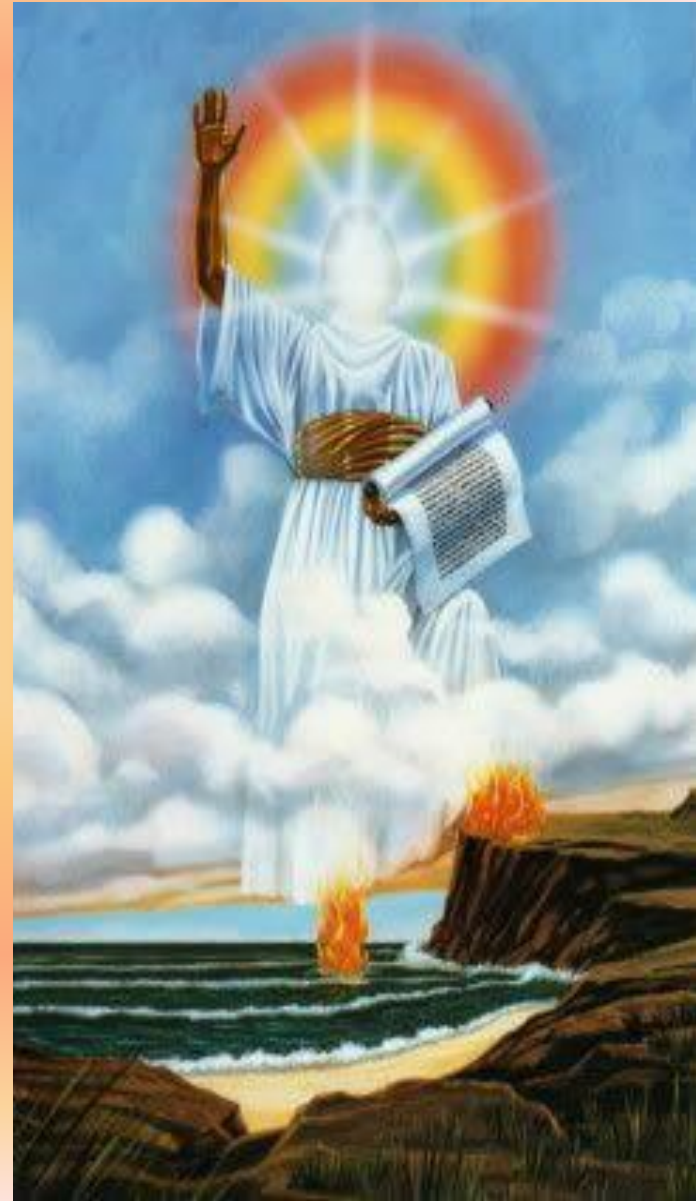
“With a rainbow-like halo (ἵρις) above his head” -- points further that he is being sent by God. The rainbow (cf. 4:3) is a sign of God’s mercy and promise to the human race (Gen 8:22; 9:13-17; Isaiah 54:8-9). Thus, the angel is bearing both the glory (a cloud) and mercy (rainbow –like halo) of God’s glory as the Creator and God’s mercy in His covenant with mankind.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

In Greek, ἶρις (from which we get the word, iris) literally means a “circle of light, a fiery-like ring.” It is used to refer to a halo.

As a matter of fact, the ancient Greeks called a rainbow an ἶρις since they believed that a rainbow completely encircled the earth; the visible part of the ἶρις they called a bow.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

“...face like the sun” -- While the cloud and rainbow demonstrate the angel's relationship with God the Father; his face suggests a relationship with God the Son, Jesus. Throughout the NT, Christ's radiance is described as brilliant as the sun. But the angel isn't Christ, but rather, is a reflection of that radiant glory as seen in our Lord's face and appearance.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

“... legs like fiery pillars” – the final description of the angel are his legs. The angel’s feet are close to the description of Jesus’ feet in 1:15 and the legs of the angelic figure in Daniel 10:4-6. The use of fire describes power, victory, purification and dominance. So the description of the angel’s legs symbolizes the stability and fearful power which cannot be resisted.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

V.2 – “a little scroll” – The message being brought by the mighty angel. This message is to be proclaimed to the world by John and the Church. What is that message? Law and Gospel! We’ll detail this momentarily.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

“...right foot on the sea and left on the land” – In the OT, the sea and the land are expressions of the totality of all things created. So we see, now, that God has placed this mighty angel in dominance over the sea and the land. All are subjected to the message that the angel has brought, which he will give to John and the Church.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

Vv.3, 4 – “he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion . . . seven thunders spoke, I was about to write . . . Do not write it down.” -- This is all tied together. The angel speaks with the majestic authority of the voice of God. Note also, that the lion is a symbol of power and might. So the angel’s voice will be heard, no one can ignore him, since he speaks by the power of God. And the fearful message will be one of judgment – judgment that will serve the purpose of repentance if the message is obeyed.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

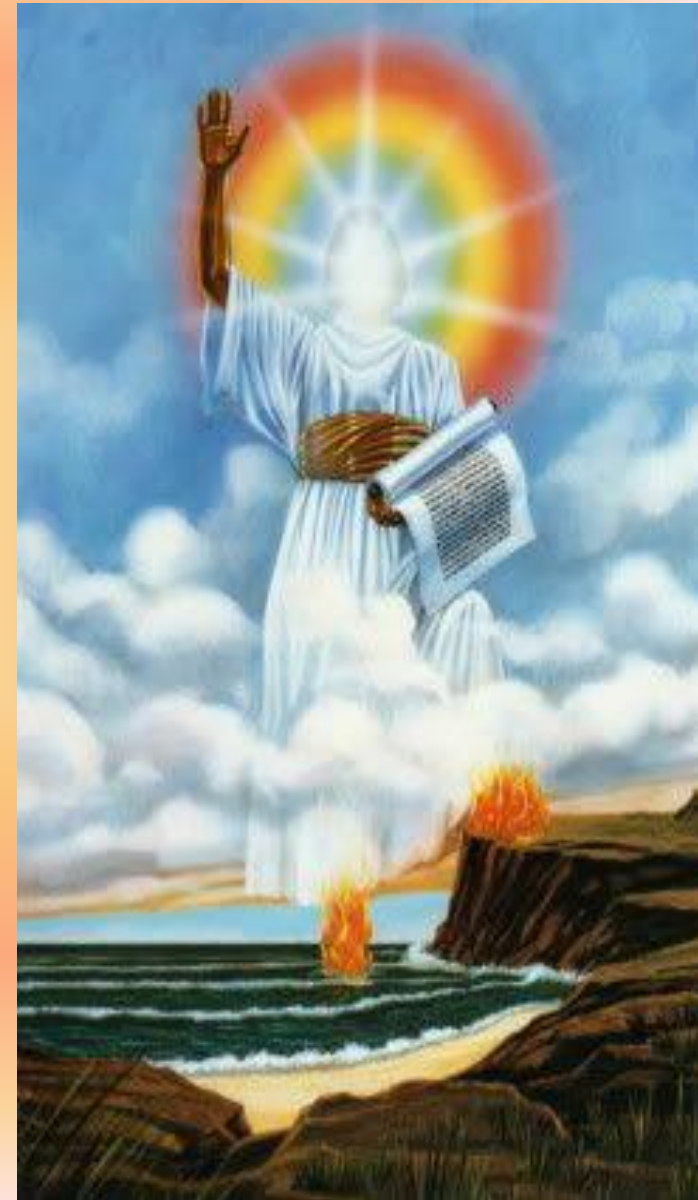
“...voices of the seven thunders spoke.” -- This is the only place in all of Scripture that uses this term, so it must be extra-special and extra-important. God’s voice is often associated with thunder and seven is a representation of the seven-fold Spirit. So, the seven thunders represent God’s presence through His Holy Spirit. The message given by God will be empowered by the Holy Spirit and, therefore, sufficient to accomplish that for which it was sent.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

“...I was about to write...do not write it down.” -- Whatever John was hearing, he was about to write it down, but was told not to write in down. It's important that we consider the text, and not speculate as so many are in the habit. The angel is bringing a scroll, a message for John, a message that has power and might and is by the authority of God. John then hears the seven thunders speak, but obviously they aren't speaking about or addressing the small scroll. Rather, it must have been something different, something that the world wasn't ready to hear. Clearly, John understood the message since he was about to write it down, yet the voice from heaven forbids John to record what he has heard. The voice has great authority, the Father or the Son, and John does not write down the message.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

Vv.5, 6 – “And he swore by Him . . . who created heaven . . . and earth” – The intent of the oath is to dramatize the certainty and truthfulness of the contents of the scroll in the angel’s hand, that is, the message that John is to proclaim to all people. So the oath assures John, and all Christians, that there will be a fulfillment, a completion of those things revealed by the seven trumpet-angels, as well as of the whole prophetic message of Revelation.



THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

In particular, “the mystery of God will be accomplished.” The events that will be dramatized by the seventh trumpet-angel will come to pass, all things will have been fulfilled and completed. When the seventh angel blows his trumpet, then the mystery of God will have been brought to its end. It is finished (ἔτελέσθη)! While the term “mystery” appears in Scripture in the normal, everyday sense of the word -- something not fully understood – “the mystery of God” appears to be a very special term.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

That same special usage appears to apply to this verse. Col. 2:2-3 offers us a clear definition of what is meant by the “mystery of God.” Understanding the definition laid out in Colossians allows us then to better understand our Lord’s more hidden reference in Mark 4:11.

Romans 16:25-27 gives us added information about why the Gospel of salvation is called a mystery. Paul also discusses the mystery at length in Ephesians 1:7-10; 3:1-13.

1 Peter 1:12 tells us that even the angels long to know the mystery of the Gospel.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN

Of special note here in verse 7 is the word “announced.” The Greek word used by John is: εὐηγγέλισεν, which literally means “good news” or Gospel. From this we see that we may use the word Gospel in the broad sense to refer to all of God’s revelation to man, and its working out in the lives of men through history. But when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet the Gospel will be finished calling men to repentance and faith. When the seventh trumpet sounds, the time of grace is over, the Age of Grace will be terminated; and next, Judgment Day!

THE MIGHTY ANGEL FROM HEAVEN



Vv. 8-10 – “Go, take the scroll...” -- Remember, the small scroll was open so its contents are not hidden, and John is to take it from the angel who stands on land and sea.

THE COMMISSIONING OF JOHN



“Take it and eat it” – The action of taking the scroll and eating it is similar to the command to Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9-3:4). The symbolic action of eating the scroll in both cases of Ezekiel and of John suggests that before they proclaim the prophetic word to others, they must first “inwardly digest” it themselves. The message of God that they were to announce must first be heard, internalized, and applied to themselves.

THE COMMISSIONING OF JOHN



As John heard the message for himself and meditated on it for his own edification, it would be both sweet and bitter. The message would be full of sorrow for him and his hearers because of the woes and the judgments of God, for the Law and just pronouncements of God's anger are never pleasant to hear.

THE COMMISSIONING OF JOHN



The message also brings joy – to the preacher, John, as he rejoices in its Gospel comfort, and then the same joy to his hearers. The forgiveness of sins, deliverance from suffering and persecution of this evil age, and the participation in the reign of Christ in the New Heaven and New Earth, which are also a part of the scroll's message.

PROCLAMATION OF THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE



10:11 – “You must prophesy again ...” -- The purpose for which John ate the scroll was to make the message to follow, in verse 11, a part of himself. Just as John was given the first message, his first commission, to give the message to the seven churches, here, John is re-commissioned, he is to, again, proclaim the message, the mystery of God to “...many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

CONCLUSION

Next week, we'll see that John's active participation continues, as he is told to "measure the temple of God" (11:1) and he then sees the continued mission of the Church in the Two Witnesses and the events that further unfold toward the great climax, the Second Advent of Jesus, the Christ.