

## GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

Revelation 10:9- 11: 15; text: Revelation 10: 9 and 11: 18

September 6, 2020

**Revelation 10:9 (NIV)** So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey."

### I. Good and Bad News for Those Who Follow Jesus

#### A. John is commanded to Eat the Scroll

1. Nowhere does John tell us what was on that scroll.
  - a. Obviously, it was a word from the Lord.
  - b. Commentators all have their ideas about what it said.
2. We should note that he wasn't told to read the scroll, but to eat it, that is to make it a part of him.

#### B. God also commanded the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel to eat the scroll of prophecy he gave him, explaining that this meant (symbolized) that he wanted Ezekiel to take it to heart.

**Ezekiel 3:1 (NIV)** 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."

**Ezekiel 3:10 (NIV)** And he said to me, "Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you.

1. To take something to heart is have it become part of your experience.
  2. He wanted Ezekiel and John to live and experience that word, not just talk about it.
- #### C. For Ezekiel the word God gave tasted sweet like honey. (Ezekiel 3:3)
1. Even though that word contained many condemnations and punishments, ultimately it was a good word and good news.
  2. It ended with the promise that the Lord who sent his people into captivity would bring them back.
  3. More than that the visions God gave ultimately pointed to the Messiah and how he will restore God's people forever.
  4. As one who ate that message Ezekiel prophesied with hope and joy in his heart.
- #### D. John on the other hand had a different word to eat, one that not only tasted sweet, but it gave him a sour stomach.
1. It not only was a message of hope and joy, but it contained bad news.
  2. Don't forget John had been tortured and banished.
  3. Don't forget he was writing to churches who were beginning to experience more persecution.
  4. After the joy that followed their repentance, these Christians were suffering because of their repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
  5. And so, John prophesied with both sweetness and bitterness in his heart.
  6. His message, his experience, and his recipients' experiences reflect the good news of salvation, but also the bad news of those who had taken up their crosses for Christ.

#### E. Jesus does not hide from us the bad news that will result from following him.

**Luke 14:26-27 (NIV)** "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

1. In fact, he calls us to count the cost before we follow him.
2. He ends by saying,

**Luke 14:33 (NIV)** In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

#### F. Following Jesus is not just one happy time, but there are also times of bitterness and sacrifice.

1. Jesus mentions one specifically in the above scripture: Sometimes it costs us our families.
2. The Gentiles who came to Jesus came from families who had been worshipping the same idol gods for centuries.
  - a. There was much pressure on new Christians to continue to join their families in practicing their pagan religions.
  - b. Some today who have come to Jesus from another religions also feel this pressure, and are concerned about the salvation of loved one who remain in darkness.
3. Other Christians' grief comes from children who have left the church, or worse than that, have left the faith.
  - a. The thought of our loved one not spending eternity with Christ is almost too much to bear.
  - b. And included with that is the agony in our heart that no matter what they accomplish in life, it will all be for nothing.

### Questions:

- 1) How has trusting and following Jesus brought sweetness and joy in my life?
- 2) Have I really taken God's word to heart? Do I live his word and not just think about it and talk about it? How is that evident in my everyday life and in the choices I make?
- 3) How has taking up my cross, and giving up all to follow Jesus also brought bitterness and sorrow in my life?
- 4) As a follower of Jesus, am I grieving over family members who don't believe in Jesus? How am I dealing with this?

### II. The Promise of Comfort and Joy as Found in the John's Vision of the Temple

**Revelation 11:1 (NIV)** I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there.

#### A. It is appropriate to ask what the temple symbolizes.

1. Most but not all Bible scholars believe that Revelation was written after the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, and so if John was to measure that temple there would be nothing to measure
2. More importantly we must realize that this is a vision in which objects symbolize other realities and truths.

#### B. The temple symbolizes the church, the body of believers.

**1 Peter 2:4-5 (NIV)** As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

#### C. God tells John to measure that temple and count its worshippers to show his sweet promise that none of his worshippers would be lost. (Think about what Jesus says about God numbering the hairs on our heads.)

1. As Christian parents that good news comes to us as we remember our children's baptism, when God promised that our children were his own.

- a. And we find joy in the promise that the great shepherd of sheep will find his lost lambs.
- b. God will never let Satan steal away his sheep or destroy his flock.

2. The church, whose foundation is Christ will remain.

D. In the vision of the temple God also promises to put limits on what Satan can do.

**Revelation 11:2 (NIV)** But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.

1. God's church will be trampled.
2. That's certainly what was beginning to happen.
  - a. Christians were being imprisoned and tortured and killed.
  - b. They were losing their businesses.
  - c. Their families were disowning them.
3. But the good news is that that God put a time limit on this: the enemies of God will trample on the holy city for 42 months.
4. Although God allows suffering into our lives and into the life of his church, he also limits on that suffering.
  - a. In the Old Testament story of Job, each time Satan wanted to bring suffering into Job's life, God put limitations on him

**Job 2:6 (NIV)** The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

- b. Job is never told why God allowed Satan to bring this suffering into his life, but God put limits on what Satan could do, and on how long he could do it.
- c. He also does so today.

E. In telling John about the two witness, God promised in John's day and promises in our day that no one can stop the gospel from being proclaimed.

**Revelation 11:3 (NIV)** And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

1. The witnesses picture the Word of God that the church proclaims.
2. It is the good news of salvation.
3. We should note that God allows no one to stop that message from going out.

**Revelation 11:5-6 (NIV)** If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

- a. The power to stop the rain and the fire that came from the prophets mouths remind us of the Old Testament story of Elijah.
- b. When King Ahab opposed his message, Elijah, at God's command, stopped the rain from falling.
- c. When King Ahaziah sent 50 soldiers to arrest him, God sent fire from heaven to destroy them, just as Elijah said he would.
- d. The plagues remind us of Moses and the ten plagues God sent on Egypt.
4. In verses 7- 10, after they finished their message the beast or antichrist comes and kills the prophets,
  - a. The pagan world rejoices, just as the enemies of Christ rejoiced when he died.
  - b. But after three and a half days the two witnesses came back to life, and are swept into heaven.
5. This is a promise that God's faithful witnesses really never die, but as Revelation 20: 4 tells us, "they will reign with Christ a thousand years."
6. It is also is a promise that their message—the wonderful gospel of Jesus will not die.

Questions:

- 1) How have Satan and the forces of evil been active in trying to hurt me and my family or cause us grief? How have they been active in trying to hurt our church? How have they been active in trying to hurt the church of Jesus Christ?
- 2) What evidences have I seen of how God has limited Satan's power in my life? In the life of my church? And in the life of the church of Jesus Christ? What evidences do I see of how God is protecting his own?
- 3) How has Satan and his evil forces tried to hurt or stop my witness for Jesus? How is he working to stop the witness of my church and of the one church of Jesus Christ around the world?
- 4) How has God defended his witness and his witnesses?
- 5) What evidence do I see of his witness flourishing in spite of all Satan's efforts to stamp it out?

III. The Comfort and Promise after the Seventh Trumpet Is Sounded

A. The victories we see now only point us to the day after the seventh trumpet sounds it's warning to the world and the kingdom of this world fully become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Revelation 11:18 (NIV)** 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."

B. Ultimately God's promise to us his people who live in this time of good and bad news is that there's a day coming when we will be rewarded, and those who are destroying the earth will be destroyed.

**Revelation 20:10&14 (NIV)** And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever...Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

1. We look to the day when death itself will die.
2. And in that day, in keeping with [Christ's] promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:13 NIV)

Questions:

- 1) How have the victories of the church today been pointing me to the day when the seventh trumpet sounds it's warning to the world and the kingdom of this world fully become the kingdom of our Lord his Christ. (see 2 Peter 3: 11- 12 and Matthew 24:14)
- 2) How does it comfort me to know that someday Satan and death will be destroyed forever?
- 3) What do I look forward to most when I receive my reward on the new earth?

Jesus who gave John these visions reminds us, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33