

**Revelation 10: 8-11; "Give me the little book", Sermon # 78 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 4th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We are still in the time period of the sounding of the 6th Trumpet; the end of the second time period in Church History. We have seen that the first two time periods have set the stage for the 3rd and final one of systematic opposition to Christ's kingdom; the one in which we now live. We are seeing the introduction to this 3rd time period here in the verses that we are studying in Chapter 10. Last week we saw that it was the Lord Jesus Christ who was the mighty angel coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud. He comes down now spiritually to see the state and condition of His Church in the world, even as He did in the days of old, when He was known as the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel of the Lord that He was then. When He came to the children of Israel and led them out of Egypt and He "looked down through the pillar of cloud" in order to deal with the enemies of His cause. He dealt decisively with those enemies of His people and freed them and brought them into the Promised Land. He brought them through the Red Sea and destroyed Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen. And He will be the One who destroys the Antichristian forces when they become too great for His saints and come against His Church to attempt to destroy it at the end of this 3rd major time period. The Lord Jesus, this mighty Angel, had a little book in his hand and he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and He cried out with a loud voice, roaring as a Lion at these enemies who had raised themselves up against His Church. And "when he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices." But these thunders were sealed up because they would have revealed the details of how He would come against the Antichristian forces, plans which God Almighty will keep secret until that time, for the sake of surprise to His enemies and to better help His dear people in that coming time of crisis which we will discuss in Chapter 11. The mystery of God is the mystery of how Christ's kingdom can triumph over these Antichristian forces when they are so powerful and extensive in their influence, not only over the whole old Roman Empire, but also all over the world in our day. But triumph Christ's kingdom shall. His saints will someday come to reign spiritually upon the earth.

Now what we are looking at in this verses 8-11 which I just read to you, is John's being given that little book that was "open in the hand of the angel." All the things of the future history of what will happen to Christ's Church and how she will come to reign upon the earth are open to Him, and they are given in an

overview and are contained in this little book. Our Lord Christ knows all the trials, all the difficulties, and the persecutions that His Church must pass through in order to come to reign upon the earth. This little book is the recorded vision of what would take place during this 3rd time period. In other words, in it is contained all that the Apostle John wrote down from chapters 10 until the end of chapter 19. It is the history of the Church's spiritual battle with the Antichristian powers and her eventual triumph over them. It is a book recording in an overview the rise of the Antichristian powers to a position where they "trample underfoot" the holy city, Christ's Church and hinder the furtherance of the gospel during the 1260 days prophecy. And it is the recorded prophecy of the pouring out of the vials (bowls) in order to her destruction. I will speak more of this 1260 days prophecy and its being understood as not referring to literal days, but rather to literal years, in my next sermon to you. This afternoon we want to speak about the subject of prophecy in general and specifically the Apostle John as a prophet of the Lord. I will make 3 observations on the subject of New Testament prophecy this afternoon. They are 1st- That prophecy is a matter of taking a little book from Christ. 2nd- That prophecy is a matter not only of taking, but also of eating what is contained in the little book. And then thirdly- That understanding prophecy has both sweet and bitter aspects to it.

**1st - Let's look at the truth that New Testament prophecy is a matter of taking a little book from hand of Jesus Christ. (Verse 8)**

"Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, 'Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.'" The prophets of the Old Testament spoke mainly in reference to the future coming of Christ. But they also spoke messages to the nation of Israel and to others nations as well, telling them what their duty was, giving them the law and many promises to Israel as a nation that would bring forth the Messiah in due time. But all prophecy in the Old Testament was delivered or written down, by the power and direction of the Spirit of Christ within them. Turn with me to 1 Peter 1: 10 and you will see this. "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." You can see from this that a good deal of prophecy concerned the coming of Christ and the salvation that would be found in Him, was written down in the books of the Old Testament. In all Old Testament prophecy the Spirit of Christ was giving a message or burden to the prophet from the Lord Himself, and he received it as from the very hand of God and then wrote it down. In New Testament prophecy, Christ has already come,

and has brought grace and salvation to light, and now prophecy mainly regards what will become of Christ's Church; what enemies that she will face, and how they are defeated and how she will come to reign among the nations. It concerns the gospel and the progress of the gospel among men and nations in every generation. Prophecy in both Old Testament and New has warnings and promises of blessing attached to it, so that Christians will not look at prophecy with a casual eye. Prophecy relates to our duty as Christ's Church to fulfill the great commission. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations; teaching them to observe all that I commanded you, and Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." John had a solemn responsibility to "take the little book" from the hand of the mighty angel, his Lord Jesus Christ. His was to faithfully write down all that he saw and all that was spoken to him that God would have written down. He had the "take the little book" from the hand of Christ to do so.

Even so, you and I who are New Testament believers have a solemn responsibility to take the truth of the Scriptures from the hand of Christ. How does He hand it to you? He hands it to you through pastors and teachers who are called to "prophesy" to you. I do not mean that any pastor or teacher in our days has a revelatory gift; anything of truth to add the Holy Scriptures. The New Testament prophecy has already been canonized in the book that we hold in our hands, the Bible. There is no office or gift given to any man now to be a prophet in the sense that John was. But there is a great calling given to every pastor and teacher of the Word of God to "take the book of the New Testament Scriptures" as from the hand of Christ, and then having read it carefully and prayed over it; to deliver the message to the people to whom that pastor or teacher is called. A pastor or teacher must be called of God to preach, have that call confirmed to both himself and to the minds of others, by the church or people that he is preaching to, and then he will open and declare the Word of God, hopefully in the power of the Holy Spirit. The minister of our day, and all the days of every generation since the Apostles left the scene, is to preach Christ and His Word. It is not the minister's responsibility today to prophecy in the revelatory sense that John prophesied. It is his responsibility to take what John has written and to hold forth and attempt to rightly explain the prophecies of the Scriptures. It is the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy as it says in Revelation 19: 10. John testifies in Revelation 22: 18 saying, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this Book."

**Now 2ndly- Prophecy is not only a matter of taking, but also of eating that which is contained in the little book.** (Verses 9 and 10a)

"So I went to the angel and said to him, 'Give me the little book.'" "And he said to me, 'Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.'" "Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it..." Now John, once he knows about the little book; that it is what the angel would have him to take; he responds by asking for it. This is the righteous desire and response of all who would prophecy and all who preach concerning the prophecy of the little book. "Give it to me." John is a pattern in this of all who would deliver God's Word. Their desire is to receive what God would give to them to deliver to others. Their desire is not to preach themselves but Christ Jesus. Their desire is to have possession of all of God's Words; to receive the prophecies which will make up the Holy Scriptures and then to "eat them." "Take and eat it..." says the Lord Jesus. This eating is not a literal eating. It is a spiritual eating and taking of the words of God into the heart. Jeremiah 15: 16 is a good example of a prophet doing this. "Your words were found and I did eat them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by your name. The greatest joy to each Christian and especially to those who are called to preach, is to partake of the Word of God in this holy way as we are partaking of food. It ought to become in each of us, "the joy and rejoicing of our hearts." Job says in Job 23: 12, "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." The Lord Jesus says, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the word of God."

The passage that we are studying where John is called upon to eat the little book is reminiscent of the call of Ezekiel found in Ezekiel chapter 2, verse 8 and following. Turn there if you would, with me. The Lord says to Ezekiel, "Bu you, son of man, hear what I say to you." "Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you." "Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold a scroll of a book was in it." "Then He spread it before me, and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe." "Moreover He said to me, 'Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.'" "So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll." "And He said to me: 'Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.'" The pattern with all prophecy is to take it, to eat it, and having mentally and spiritually digested it, that the prophet or the preacher will deliver it. Let me ask you by way of application; Do you consider the preaching of the Word of God to be food for your soul? Do you consider it in this holy way so that you will be nourished and grow strong on its teaching. Do you take care

how you listen to the Word of God, that you might feed upon the truths that are delivered to you? It is important that you do so, not only for your own spiritual health, but also for the salvation of others around you. You must take in the food of the Word of God, you must eat it yourself, before you can give the truth of it to others. It must become the joy and rejoicing of your heart to do so, if you would bear fruit to God.

**Now lastly- You should know that understanding prophecy has both sweet and bitter aspects to it.** (Verses 10 and 11)

"The I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth." "But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter." "And he said to me, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.'" When John ate the little book it was sweet as honey. This was because he perceived the sweetness of the good things of Christ's kingdom spreading to more and more people; many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings would be singing the praises of Jesus in this 3rd time period and it was sweet to John's soul that the time would eventually come when the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of his Lord. There is much honey in the gospel of Christ. The truth of Christ's grace, and the Father's mercy and peace, and the blessed indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believers heart; of churches being planted and growing in all these places, and all of the blessed reality of these truths spreading throughout all the world was very sweet to John's spiritual palate. The things that were sweet to John would be sweet to any Christian who longs to see the advance of Christ's kingdom.

But there are other considerations that make the prophecy of the little book which was given to John, bitter to him, and they are bitter to us as well. As we go into the prophecy in detail we will see why the little book became bitter in John's stomach. The prophecy eaten by John became bitter to him because he tasted in it all the bitterness of the persecutions and oppositions to Christ and to His people, who were trying to faithfully convey the truth of the gospel to others around them. He saw the bitterness of what was false and evil in the system of Antichrist which claims to be the only true Church and is not. He tasted the bitterness of many people being deceived by these false systems. This bitterness in his stomach made him feel sick that God's true saints would have to suffer so greatly and not see the great advances for Christ's kingdom that many true Christians had longed for, for many generations. This was bitter to him, but he had known that it would be bitter. The Lord had told him that it would be so. We should learn, as John, to take the bitter with the sweet in terms of what God has ordained to come to pass for His glory. Let us resolve by God's grace to be joyful and faithful to Christ no matter what we face in our generation. As we close this sermon, let me exhort you to a watchfulness for the Lord's coming to

you. There will be only one literal physical coming and return of our Lord Jesus. But we should understand that there is a sense in which he comes to us personally and spiritually to see if we are watching for Him. Luke 12: 32 says, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Sell what you have and give alms, provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys." "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately." "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when comes, will find watching." "Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself, and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them." "And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." The issue in our Christian lives is not whether we will see the Lord's literal physical 2nd coming and be raptured; the issue is whether we are watching for Him now, and being his faithful servants now, in whatever time and whatever way that He comes for us. Blessed are we if we do so.