

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Chapter 10 marks the end of the Lord's forbearance and the full emergence of His just wrath toward mankind. But what patience and mercy He has shown for *thousands* of years before reaching this point! Let's stop a moment and remember the Lord's **longsuffering love ...**

... toward His chosen people:

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (Ex. 34:6)

But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey your commandments. They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them (Neh. 9:16-17).

Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets (Neh 9:30).

"For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off (Isa. 48:9).

Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the Lord (Jer 31:20).

Nevertheless, my eye spared them, and I did not destroy them or make a full end of them in the wilderness (Ez. 20:17).

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster (Joel 2:12-13).

And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of

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hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need (Mal 3:10).

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (Matt. 23:37)

... toward all mankind:

"In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:16-17).

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

... in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins (Rom. 3:25).

But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life (1 Tim. 1:16).

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

And His patience still waits – for now.

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed (Rom 2:4-5).

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation (2 Pet. 3:15)

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2)

Notes on Chapters 10

10:1 There is good reason to believe that this mighty angel is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is robed in the cloud which typically covered God in the Old Testament but His face shines with unveiled glory. The rainbow speaks of His covenants with man. His legs, described as glowing in Chapter 1, now appear as fiery pillars.

10:2 We see a new scroll different than the sealed one of Chapters 5-6. This one is smaller and lies open for the reading. One interpretation is that the little scroll contains the *known* Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel (while the first held the entire mystery of God's coming judgments). In general, the Lord appears as the Lamb in Revelation prophecies connected to the church, the fruit of His sacrifice, but in other character when dealing with Israel.

The placement of one foot on land and the other on the sea shows His dominion over the whole earth.

10:3-4 Just as Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 heard matters which he was not allowed to communicate, John is commanded not to write what is spoken by the seven thunders.

10:5-6 In a sense, the Lord swears by Himself just as in Genesis 22:16.

The KJV renders the end of verse 6 as “there should be time no longer.” This has often been seen as an announcement that time itself would now come to an end. But most scholars now agree it should be read, “There will be no more delay.”

There was a half hour pause between the sixth and seventh seals (Rev. 8:1). This chapter represents an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet (and second and third woes) but there is no mention of a pause in the course of justice. Instead, the Lord symbolically puts His foot down and claims His position as Judge of the world. Events are rushing toward a terminal phase. There will be no delay in blessing those who belong to the Lord and visiting the consequences of disobedience upon sinners.

10:7 What is the “mystery” here? In the New Testament the word often refers to the church, a

thing hidden from the prophets. But that seems unlikely in context. To one commentator, the mystery is God's tolerance of the existence of Satan and evil, which will be understood when His justice is fully realized.

10:8-10 Here the prophet is told to eat the little scroll, which for us would mean reading and meditating on God's word. Ezekiel chapter 3 relates a similar incident: Ezekiel is told to eat a scroll and then go prophesy to the people of Israel about coming chastisement to be inflicted on them. In Ezekiel's mouth the scroll tastes sweet but in verse 14, on his way to prophesy to his countrymen, he says, “*I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon me.*”

Like Ezekiel, the word that tastes sweet in John's mouth turns to bitterness later. The promise of the Lord's coming to bring in righteousness must sound sweet to the believer. But the thought of the terrible fate awaiting unbelievers people is naturally bitter.

10:11 “*You must again prophesy.*” There are two views of “again.” The first is that John is to resume his prophetic narrative after the command of silence in verse 4. But some believe that the seven seal, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls are all the same incidents, happening at the same time, with different symbolic aspects presented each time. In this view, John is essentially directed to take up the same basic story and “tell it again.” The little scroll may then be seen as the earlier scroll now opened to be read from the other side.