

## Revelation Chapters 10-11 (Week 10)

### Revelation Chapters 10–11: An Interlude of Commission, Witness, and Victory

Revelation 10–11 forms a key **interlude** between the sixth and seventh trumpets, pausing the judgments to focus on God's sovereignty, the prophetic mission, faithful witness amid persecution, and the certainty of His kingdom.

**Chapter 10** A mighty angel descends from heaven—robed in a cloud, rainbow-crowned, face like the sun, legs like fire—holding an open **little scroll**. He stands astride sea and land, cries with a lion's roar, and **seven thunders** speak (but their words are sealed). He swears there will be **no more delay**: when the seventh trumpet sounds, **God's mystery** will be fulfilled. John eats the scroll: **sweet** in his mouth (joy in God's word), **bitter** in his stomach (sorrow over judgment). He is recommissioned to prophesy to many nations.

**Chapter 11** John measures God's **temple** and worshipers (protected), but the outer court is trampled by the nations for **42 months**. Two **witnesses**—called olive trees and lampstands (Zechariah 4)—prophesy in sackcloth for **1,260 days**, wielding power to perform miracles like Moses and Elijah. The **beast** kills them; their bodies lie unburied in the great city for **3½ days** while the world celebrates. After 3½ days, God resurrects them; they ascend to heaven amid an earthquake that kills 7,000 and prompts survivors to glorify God.

**Significance** These chapters reassure believers: God's word must be proclaimed despite cost, His witnesses will be vindicated, persecution is limited, and His eternal kingdom is certain. As we compare the four views (Preterist, Idealist, Progressive Dispensationalist, Classical Dispensationalist), we see varied emphases on timing and symbolism, yet all affirm faithful witness and God's ultimate triumph.

### Revelation 10–11

#### Preterist View

Most of Revelation's prophecies (chs. 4–19) were fulfilled in the events surrounding the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 66–70. John wrote before A.D. 70 to encourage persecuted Christians that God would soon judge apostate Israel (the "harlot" Babylon = Jerusalem).

- **Ch. 10:** The mighty angel (possibly Christ-like) and little scroll represent John's renewed commission to prophesy imminent judgment on Israel. The seven thunders (sealed) emphasize God's sovereign control over the coming woes. Eating the scroll is bittersweet: sweet because God's word is true and vindicates the saints; bitter because it announces horrific judgment (the Roman armies).
- **Ch. 11:** Measuring the temple (v. 1–2) literally refers to the Jerusalem temple (still standing when John wrote); the outer court is trampled by Gentiles for 42 months (A.D. 67–70). The two witnesses symbolize the Old Covenant testimony (law and prophets) or the church's prophetic witness against apostate Israel. They prophesy 1,260 days (the Roman siege period), perform miracles echoing Moses/Elijah, are killed by the "beast" (Rome/its armies), lie dead 3½ days in Jerusalem's streets, then are resurrected and ascend (symbolizing vindication and the church's triumph). The great earthquake and seventh trumpet announce the fall of Jerusalem and the transfer of the kingdom to the church (God's true temple).

**Supporting Scriptures:** Matthew 24:1–34 and Luke 21:20–24 (Jesus’ prediction of temple destruction in “this generation”); Daniel 9:24–27 and 12:7 (70 weeks and time periods fulfilled in A.D. 70); Zechariah 4 (olive trees/lampstands as witnesses); Revelation 1:1, 7; 22:6, 10, 12 (imminent “soon” language). Strength: Ties Revelation tightly to its 1st-century context and Jesus’ Olivet Discourse.

### **Idealist View**

Revelation is not primarily about specific past or future events but timeless spiritual principles and the ongoing cosmic battle between God and evil, the church and the world. Apocalyptic symbols point to recurring realities throughout church history.

- **Ch. 10:** The mighty angel symbolizes divine authority and revelation; the little scroll is the Word of God (or gospel message) that is sweet to believers (promise of victory) but bitter because it brings judgment on the unrepentant. The sealed thunders show God’s mysterious sovereignty. John eating it illustrates the church’s call to proclaim God’s truth regardless of cost.
- **Ch. 11:** The temple is the spiritual church (not literal); measuring protects God’s people amid persecution. The two witnesses represent the church’s prophetic witness throughout the ages (as lampstands and olive trees = anointed testimony). They prophesy 1,260 days (symbolic of the entire church age), are opposed and “killed” by the beast (worldly powers), but are always resurrected and vindicated (the church cannot be ultimately defeated). The seventh trumpet proclaims God’s ultimate triumph and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

**Supporting Scriptures:** Zechariah 4:1–14 (olive trees and lampstands as symbolic witnesses); 2 Corinthians 4:7–12 and Acts 1:8 (church’s suffering witness and power); Matthew 16:18 (“gates of Hades will not prevail”); Ephesians 6:10–18 (spiritual warfare). Strength: Makes Revelation immediately applicable to any era of persecution.

### **Progressive Dispensationalist View**

Modified dispensationalism using an “already/not yet” tension. The kingdom is inaugurated at Christ’s first coming (resurrection/ascension) but awaits full consummation at His return. Some prophecies have partial 1st-century or church-age fulfillment, while others await literal future completion.

- **Ch. 10:** The angel and little scroll represent God’s progressive revelation and commission to the church. The bittersweet scroll illustrates the gospel: sweet in its promise of inaugurated kingdom blessings, bitter in the judgments still unfolding. John’s recommissioning points to the church’s ongoing prophetic role across the “already” (current age) and “not yet” (future consummation).
- **Ch. 11:** The temple measuring has partial fulfillment in the protection of God’s people (the church as spiritual temple) amid 1st-century and ongoing persecution, with ultimate literal fulfillment in the future Tribulation temple. The two witnesses symbolize the church’s witness (already active) that will culminate in literal future prophets during the end times. Their death/resurrection reflects the church’s present suffering and future vindication/rapture-like ascension. The seventh trumpet proclaims the kingdom that is already breaking in (through Christ’s reign) but not yet fully realized.

**Supporting Scriptures:** Ephesians 1:20–23 and Colossians 1:13 (kingdom already inaugurated); Acts 2:16–36 and Matthew 28:18–20 (already authority and mission); Daniel 7 and 9 (not-yet future elements); Zechariah 4 and Malachi 4 (witnesses bridging eras). Strength: Balances historical fulfillment with future hope and unifies Israel/church under one kingdom program.

## **Classical Dispensationalist View**

Strict literal interpretation; the church is raptured before the Tribulation (Rev. 4:1); chs. 6–19 describe future literal events in a 7-year tribulation period focused on Israel, distinct from the church age.

- **Ch. 10:** The mighty angel (possibly Christ or a special angel) descends with the little scroll (the remaining prophecies of judgments). The seven thunders are literal unrevealed judgments. John eats the scroll (sweet in mouth = joy of prophecy; bitter in stomach = sorrow of coming woes) and is recommissioned to prophesy literally to “many peoples, nations, languages, and kings” (v. 11).
- **Ch. 11:** The temple is a literal rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation. The two witnesses are two literal future prophets (commonly Moses and Elijah or Enoch and Elijah) who prophesy for exactly 1,260 days (first half of Tribulation), perform miracles (fire from mouth, drought, plagues), are killed by the beast (Antichrist), lie dead 3½ days in Jerusalem’s street (visible to the world), are resurrected bodily, and ascend to heaven. The seventh trumpet announces the end of the Tribulation, the coming of Christ’s kingdom, and transitions to the bowl judgments.

**Supporting Scriptures:** Literal reading of Daniel 7–12 and 9:27 (future tribulation and temple); Zechariah 4:1–14 and Malachi 4:5–6 (two witnesses/Elijah’s return); 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 (Antichrist in temple); Revelation 3:10 (church kept from hour of trial). Strength: Consistent literal hermeneutic and clear futurist timeline. Weakness: Requires a future rebuilt temple and can separate Israel/church too sharply.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How does each view change the way we apply Rev. 10–11 today (e.g., comfort in persecution, urgency of witness, hope in God’s sovereignty)?
- Compare the “two witnesses” across views: symbolic church (Idealist/Preterist) vs. literal future men (Classical) vs. both (Progressive).
- Which supporting Scriptures most convince you? Why?

### **Takeaway:**

Regardless of view, all agree on the certainty of God’s victory and the call to faithful witness (Rev. 10:11; 11:3).

### **Next Week: Chapters 12 & 13**

## Comparison Table

Element	Preterist	Idealist	Classical Dispensationalist	Progressive Dispensationalist
<b>Mighty Angel (Rev 10:1–3)</b>	Likely Christ-like figure; announces imminent judgment on apostate Israel (A.D. 66–70).	Symbol of divine authority and God's revelation/commission to the church.	Possibly Christ or a high-ranking angel; literal mighty messenger with future authority.	Represents divine authority in progressive revelation; bridges already/not-yet kingdom.
<b>Little Scroll (Rev 10:2, 8–10)</b>	Renewed prophetic message of judgment on Jerusalem/Israel; open = revealed doom.	The Word of God/gospel message; sweet (victory promise) but bitter (judgment cost).	Literal remaining prophecies/judgments for the future Tribulation period.	God's unfolding revelation; sweet in inaugurated blessings, bitter in ongoing woes.
<b>Seven Thunders (Rev 10:3–4)</b>	Sealed mysteries of God's sovereign control over coming A.D. 70 woes.	God's hidden/mysterious sovereignty over history's spiritual battles.	Literal unrevealed future judgments during Tribulation.	Part of progressive unfolding; some mystery remains until full consummation.
<b>John Eating the Scroll (Rev 10:9–11)</b>	Bittersweet: sweet (God's vindication) but bitter (horrific judgment on Israel).	Church's call to proclaim truth; joy in God's word vs. sorrow in opposition.	Recommissioning to prophesy literally to nations in future Tribulation context.	Church's ongoing prophetic role across current age and future fulfillment.
<b>Measuring the Temple (Rev 11:1–2)</b>	Literal Jerusalem temple (pre-A.D. 70); outer court trampled 42 months (siege).	Spiritual church/temple; protection of God's people amid persecution.	Literal future rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during Tribulation.	Partial: spiritual protection now (church as temple); ultimate literal future.
<b>Two Witnesses (Rev 11:3–6)</b>	Symbolic: church's/Old Covenant's prophetic testimony against apostate Israel; or law/prophets. Miracles echo Moses/Elijah.	Symbolic: church's ongoing anointed witness (lampstands/olive trees) throughout history.	Literal future two prophets (often Moses & Elijah, or Enoch & Elijah); exact 1,260 days in Tribulation.	Symbolic church witness now, culminating in literal future prophets in end times.
<b>Their Death, 3½ Days Dead, Resurrection &amp; Ascension (Rev 11:7–12)</b>	Symbolic: martyrdom/vindication of faithful witness; "resurrection" = triumph post-A.D. 70 (church ascends in power).	Recurring pattern: church opposed/"killed" by world powers but always resurrected/vindicated.	Literal: killed by Antichrist/beast; bodies in Jerusalem street; bodily resurrection & ascension mid-Tribulation.	Partial fulfillment in church suffering/vindication now; future literal climax/rapture-like event.
<b>Seventh Trumpet (Rev 11:15–19)</b>	Announces fall of Jerusalem; kingdom transfer to church; God's temple opened.	Proclaims God's ultimate triumph and eternal kingdom over evil.	Signals end of Tribulation; announces Christ's kingdom & bowl judgments ahead.	Kingdom already inaugurated (Christ reigns) but not yet fully consummated.

Dr. M. Robert Mulholland Jr., a New Testament professor at Asbury Theological Seminary, provides a commentary on Revelation in the **Cornerstone Biblical Commentary** series, where he covers Revelation alongside other books. His approach emphasizes spiritual formation, the transformative power of encountering God through the text, and viewing Revelation as a call to radical discipleship amid an unholy world. He often highlights themes of God's sovereignty, the contrast between "Fallen Babylon" (worldly powers/oppression) and "New Jerusalem" (God's kingdom), faithful witness, and the church's role in embodying Christ's victory.

Mulholland's interpretation of chapters 10–11 leans toward an **Idealist/symbolic** perspective with strong spiritual and applicational focus, seeing these as an interlude revealing the church's mission, suffering, protection, and ultimate vindication in the ongoing cosmic battle.

### **Summary of Revelation Chapter 10 (The Mighty Angel and Little Scroll)**

Mulholland describes chapter 10 as a major interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, shifting from judgment to God's response and the church's prophetic calling. The mighty angel (clothed in cloud, rainbow overhead, face like sun, feet like fire) symbolizes divine authority and Christ's triumphant presence over chaos (straddling sea and land). The **little open scroll** represents God's revealed word/prophetic message—complete yet requiring ingestion and proclamation.

The **seven thunders** are sealed to show God's sovereign mystery amid unfolding events. The oath of "no more delay" points to the imminent fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. John eating the scroll (sweet in mouth, bitter in stomach) echoes Ezekiel and illustrates the bittersweet nature of ministry: joy in God's truth and victory, but sorrow over judgment, opposition, and the cost of faithfulness. Mulholland stresses recommissioning ("prophesy again") as the church's ongoing call to proclaim God's word to all nations/peoples, embodying holy living amid persecution.

### **Summary of Revelation Chapter 11 (Temple Measuring and Two Witnesses)**

This continues the interlude, focusing on God's protection and the witnessing church's suffering/vindication. Measuring the temple (and worshipers) symbolizes God's preservation of His faithful people (the spiritual temple/church) amid tribulation; the outer court trampled for 42 months represents limited, temporary persecution by worldly powers.

The **two witnesses** (olive trees and lampstands, drawing from Zechariah 4) represent the church's prophetic testimony—empowered, anointed, and active throughout history. Their miracles recall Moses and Elijah, showing God's power through faithful witness against evil. The beast's attack, their death, and bodies lying unburied depict real martyrdom and worldly rejection/celebration over silenced testimony.

After 3½ days, their resurrection and ascension signify God's vindication—the church cannot be ultimately defeated; suffering leads to triumph. The earthquake and 7,000 killed prompt repentance/glorifying God. The **seventh trumpet** announces the kingdom's full realization: the world's kingdom becomes Christ's forever, with worship, judgment on nations, reward for saints, and heaven's temple opened—signaling consummation.

## Key Themes and Application in Mulholland's View

Mulholland sees these chapters as assuring believers: persecution is real but bounded; the church's witness (though costly) participates in Christ's victory; God's word is bittersweet yet essential to proclaim; ultimate triumph belongs to God. He applies this devotionally—calling readers to radical faithfulness, conformity to Christ, and holy living as witnesses in an unholy world dominated by "Fallen Babylon."

### Preterist Parallels: Josephus' *The Jewish War* and Revelation Chapters 10–11

Revelation 10–11 describes events fulfilled primarily in the Roman-Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 66–70. Flavius Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian and eyewitness in *The Jewish War* (Bellum Judaicum), provides detailed accounts of the siege, famine, civil strife, and temple's fall. Preterists often cite Josephus as "the best commentary" on these chapters (echoing John Wesley's comment on Matthew 24), highlighting striking historical parallels that align with John's apocalyptic symbols.

#### Revelation 10 Parallels

Revelation 10 emphasizes "no more delay" in fulfilling God's mystery, the bittersweet scroll (prophetic judgment on Israel), and recommissioning amid impending doom.

- No more delay / fulfillment of mystery (Rev 10:6–7): Josephus portrays the siege as the inevitable, unstoppable culmination of divine judgment on rebellious Jerusalem, with escalating horrors signaling the end of postponement.
  - Quote (Wars 6.5.4): "Thus did the miseries of Jerusalem grow worse and worse every day; and the seditious were still more irritated by the calamities they were under..." (This reflects the rapid, irreversible escalation after A.D. 66, aligning with the oath that "there should be time no longer" for delay.)
- Little scroll / prophetic commission (Rev 10:8–11): The bittersweet message of judgment echoes warnings against apostate Israel. Preterists link John's recommissioning to the church's witness during the war's chaos.
  - Josephus describes widespread prophetic warnings and portents ignored, leading to bitterness and horror (e.g., signs in the heavens, voices declaring doom). While not a direct "scroll" quote, the theme of ignored divine messages parallels the bitterness of coming woes.
- Seven thunders sealed (Rev 10:3–4): Hidden divine judgments. Josephus records mysterious, unexplained portents (e.g., a star like a sword over the city, voices saying "We are departing hence") that heightened the sense of sealed mysteries unfolding in judgment.

## Revelation 11 Parallels

- Measuring the temple / outer court trampled for 42 months (Rev 11:1–2): Symbolic/literal protection of the faithful remnant (spiritual worshipers) while the physical temple and city are trampled by Gentiles (Romans) for a limited period (A.D. 67–70 siege).
  - Josephus details the Roman trampling and desecration of the temple precincts during the siege.
  - Quote (Wars 6.4.5–8): "The ground did nowhere appear visible for the dead bodies that lay on it... Round about the altar lay dead bodies, heaped one upon another... the blood was larger in quantity than the fire..." (This evokes the trampling and pollution of the holy place.)
- Two witnesses prophesying 1,260 days in sackcloth (Rev 11:3–6): Symbolic of faithful testimony (e.g., law/prophets or church remnant) against apostasy, with miracles echoing Moses/Elijah. Some preterists identify figures like high priests Ananus ben Ananus and Jesus (Joshua) son of Gamala, who opposed the Zealots/rebels and were slain, marking turning points in the city's downfall.
  - Quote on their deaths (Wars 4.5.2): "I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall, and the ruin of her affairs..." (Ananus and Jesus are killed by rebels/Idumeans in the temple area; their prophetic warnings against rebellion align with the witnesses' testimony.)
- Death, bodies unburied 3½ days, world rejoicing (Rev 11:7–10): Bodies lie exposed in the "great city" (Jerusalem, called Sodom/Egypt); the world rejoices over silenced testimony.
  - Josephus records widespread unburied corpses due to famine, strife, and impiety—contrasting Jewish custom of prompt burial.
  - Quote (Wars 4.5.2, on Ananus and Jesus): "Nay, they proceeded to that degree of impiety, as to cast away their dead bodies without burial, although the Jews used to take so much care of the burial of men, that they took down those that were condemned and crucified, and buried them before the going down of the sun."
  - Additional quote (Wars 5–6 general siege): "It was then common to see cities filled with dead bodies, still lying unburied..." (Bodies left exposed amid chaos; the Roman world viewed Jerusalem's fall favorably.)
- Resurrection, ascension, earthquake killing 7,000 (Rev 11:11–13): Vindication of the faithful; symbolic triumph post-judgment (church exalted after A.D. 70).
  - Josephus describes massive deaths, collapses, and fear among survivors who glorified God or repented. The "7,000" is symbolic (complete number); parallels include structural failures and terror.
  - Quote (Wars 6 various): Descriptions of earthquakes/portents aren't direct, but the overall devastation and survivors' fear align thematically.
- Seventh trumpet: kingdom proclaimed (Rev 11:15–19): Kingdom transfer to the church as God's true temple after Jerusalem's fall.
  - Josephus notes the end of the Jewish temple/state and shift of power.
  - Quote (Wars 6.5.4 onward): The temple's burning and city's razing mark the close of the old order.