

No More Delay
Revelation 10:1-11
Rev. Brian Bill
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How many of you cry often and easily? Me too.

I remember watching rom coms with our four daughters when they were younger. At the beginning of every movie, I would make fun of the acting, roll my eyes, and sigh loudly during the mushy parts. But by the end of the film, I'd be the only one wiping away tears.

I've even been known to cry during commercials. The one that really got me was an old Folgers commercial featuring an Irish step dancer performing while images of fresh coffee brewing appeared on the screen. Since I'm half Irish, there's just something about the pounding of Irish drums and the rhythmic clicking of those shoes that gets me every time.

A couple months ago, Beth bought us tickets to see Riverdance in Aurora. I was thrilled. As soon as it started, tears were rolling down my cheeks. About halfway through, there was an intermission. Honestly, I was grateful because it gave me time to regain my composure.

According to Google, an intermission is a planned break in the middle of a performance that allows the audience to stretch, use the restroom, or buy refreshments. It also gives the crew time to reset the stage before the next act begins. We're about halfway through the Book of Revelation, and chapter 10 serves as an intermission of sorts. After the terrifying judgments and releasing the horrors of Hell in chapter 9, God pauses the action and resets the scene before the seventh trumpet sounds. A similar intermission occurred between the sixth and seven seal judgments. These interludes allow another opportunity for repentance.

Last week, we were gripped by this reality: *When Hell comes to earth, evil will be released, judgment will be rendered, and mercy will be rejected.* Chapter 10 is not primarily about judgment. It's about majesty, mystery, and mission. Let's read it together.

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ² He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right

foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³ and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴ And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.” ⁵ And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶ and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, ⁷ but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

⁸ Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” ⁹ So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, “Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.” ¹⁰ And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹ And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”

Here’s our main idea: *Because God reveals His majesty, mystery, and mission, believers are to worship Him, trust His timing, and take His Word to the world.*

1. Majesty: Stand in awe of the majesty and authority of God (1-3). In verse 1, John writes: *“Then I saw another angel coming down from heaven...”* Angels are mentioned over 60 times in Revelation. We’re not told the identity of this angel, but we know he’s not one of the seven or the four that have already been mentioned. He’s **“another”** one, which means, *“of the same kind.”*

He’s **“mighty,”** which means *“powerful and strong.”* While some believe this could be Jesus because of the description that follows, I think it’s more likely it was Michael or the equivalent of the “angel of Yahweh” in the Old Testament. But we’re not told, so we shouldn’t spend too much time trying to figure it out. We see similar phrasing in Revelation 14:6: *“Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead...”* and in Revelation 14:15: *“And another angel came out of the temple...”*

Notice how he’s described in verses 1-3: *“...wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his*

left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded.” Clouds are often associated with God’s presence and with judgment, while the rainbow represents mercy. Habakkuk 3:2 says, “...*in wrath, remember mercy.*” His face was bright like the sun and his legs were firm and immovable. The “*pillars of fire*” remind us how the Lord led Israel by night. I appreciate how one commentator captured this: “*The point of the reference here to God’s presence with Israel in the wilderness is that the same divine presence protects and guides the faithful witnesses of [believers] in the wilderness of the world.*”

The “*little scroll*” was likely a smaller section of the large scroll introduced in chapter 5. Some commentators believe it contained chapters 11-16. We get a sense of the angel’s colossal size in the last part of verse 2: “...*and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land.*” This shows his total dominion as he claims both land and sea. I think of Joshua 1:3: “*Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you.*” This is God’s way of showing He is reclaiming the earth.

His voice was loud, “*like a lion roaring,*” which may be a reference to “*the lion of the tribe of Judah*” in 5:5. This week, I learned that the roar of a lion can be heard up to five miles away (I’m looking forward to testing this out when our Go Team heads to Kenya in July). When the angel called out, “*the seven thunders sounded,*” suggesting the approach of a coming storm. Psalm 29:3 says, “*the God of glory thunders,*” and the rest of the psalm references the voice of the Lord seven times. Interestingly, thunder accompanies the opening of the seventh seal (8:5), the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:19), and the pouring out of the seventh bowl (16:17-18). Job 37:5 declares, “*God thunders wondrously with His voice; He does great things that we cannot comprehend.*”

Here are two applications.

- **Revere God as majestic and holy.** Let’s be done with casual Christianity and half-hearted holiness by seeing God alone as awesome. Paul David Tripp writes: “*Where you look for awe will shape the direction of your life...if material things are your awe source, you will neglect other things of value and won’t ever be fully satisfied, because these material things just don’t have the capacity to satisfy your awe-longing heart...misplaced awe keeps us perennially dissatisfied. Perhaps in ways that you have never come close to considering, your dissatisfaction is an awe problem.*”

- **Anchor your life to the authority of God.** Former Nebraska senator and university president Ben Sasse is living with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. He's a strong Christ follower who was recently interviewed by "60 Minutes." At the end of the interview, Scott Pelley noted, "*And God, you believe, has a plan?*" Without hesitation, Sasse answered, "*Absolutely. There are no maverick molecules in the universe.*" This reminds me of the famous quote from Abraham Kuyper: "*There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'*"

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2. Mystery: Trust God even when His ways are mysterious and delayed (4-7).

John was in the practice of writing down what he saw, but this time he is told in verse 4 to not do so: "***Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.***" Daniel was also instructed to hold back in Daniel 12:4: "***But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.***" Perhaps John felt like the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:4: "***And he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.***"

I've been pondering something Henry Ironside said when preaching about the seven thunders: "*Have you ever noticed how inquisitive people often are in regard to those things which the wisdom of God has purposely kept from them?*" Since there are some things that God has kept from us, it's important for us to live in the mystery and trust Him even when we don't understand all the details. *God has revealed everything we need to know, but not everything we want to know.* There are mysteries in Scripture meant to humble us, not frustrate us. For instance, there are many mysteries in Revelation like who the two witnesses in Revelation 11 are, the identity of the antichrist, and the mark of the Beast.

Here's how I worded it in the Ready or Not booklet: *Prophecy is not designed to satisfy our curiosity but to sanctify our character.*

Beyond Revelation, Scripture contains other puzzles like:

- Why God allows suffering and evil.
- The precise relationship between God's sovereignty and human responsibility.
- The timing of Christ's return.

- How prayer and God’s providence work together.
- Paul’s “thorn in the flesh.”

This insight is helpful: *“God calls us to study diligently, but also to live humbly. Some Christians become so obsessed with decoding prophetic mysteries that they miss Revelation’s main message: Jesus Christ wins, judgment is coming, and believers must remain faithful.”*

We could say it like this: *Where God speaks clearly, we should speak confidently. Where God is silent, we should walk carefully. And where God leaves mystery, we should respond with humility and worship.*

Then, this angel **“raised his right hand to heaven”** as if taking an oath in verses 6-7: **“And swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”** From Genesis 1:1 through the last book of the Bible, God is depicted as the eternal Creator of all things. Revelation 4:11 says, **“For you created all things.”** Revelation 14:7 reinforces this: **“Worship Him who made heaven and earth.”**

Next, we read that there will **“be no more delay.”** This answers the question, **“How long, O Lord,”** by many believers and specifically shouted out by the martyrs in 6:10: **“They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’”** This answer is fleshed out in 11:18: **“The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name...”**

When the seventh trumpet sounds, **“the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as He announced to His servants the prophets.”** While the common definition of mystery is something that no one knows, in the Bible the word refers to that which was previously unknown but now revealed. The word **“mystery”** is used of the kingdom of God (Matthew 13:11), the incarnation (1 Timothy 3:16), the ultimate conversion of the Jews and the fullness of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25), God’s purpose for the church (Ephesians 3:3-11), the mystery of the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51), and of Christ Himself (Colossians 4:3).

Here are four ways we can apply these verses:

- **Obey what God says even when it doesn't make sense.** Have you noticed the commands of God are not always immediately logical, comfortable, or convenient? Remember Noah built an ark before there was rain, Abraham left home without knowing where he was going, and Peter let down his nets after fishing all night with no success. In each case, obedience came before understanding. Anselm said, *"I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but rather, I believe in order that I may understand."* Will you trust God enough to do what He says, even when you can't see how it will work out?
- **Confess God as the eternal Creator.** John 1:3 says, *"All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."* This week, I read a post in which a pastor said: *"You only have two options for how the universe began: Either something created everything or nothing created everything. But 'nothing' can't do anything. A physical universe bound by a chain of cause and effect demands an uncaused, supernatural first cause outside of nature. Science points to a beginning. Genesis 1:1 explains the Beginner."*
- **Be patient as you wait for God's plan.** God's delays are not necessarily His denials because He is working His way and His will according to His plans and purposes. J. Vernon McGee says it well: *"This is God's universe, and God does things His way. You might have a better way, but you don't have a universe."*

As a church, we've been patiently waiting on the Lord to lead us to our next Young Adults pastor and to a Celebrate Recovery/Counseling Pastor. Vanderbloemen, our ministry search partner, has interacted with hundreds of candidates for both roles and several strong applicants. We've had several interviews with one individual for our Young Adults Pastor. In fact, he and his wife are here this weekend to worship with us and to hang out with our Mainspring Ministry Team Sunday night. Please pray that God will direct our paths.

- **Allow the mysteries of God to move you to worship.** Brothers and sisters, you don't have to have everything figured out before living the life of faith. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God."* Jesus said it like this in John 16:12: *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."* J.I. Packer writes, *"We should not pry into*

God's secrets. We are to be content to live with what He has told us...[and] we must be content not to know what the Scriptures do not tell us."

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3. Mission: Grow in God's Word and go with the gospel (8-11). In verse 8, John is told to ***"Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."*** In verses 9-10, the angel tells him to ***"Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."*** John again becomes an active participant in the vision, moving from an observer to an actor in the drama. To ***"take"*** means, ***"to receive."*** To ***"eat it"*** means to absorb, appropriate, and assimilate the message. This is very similar to Ezekiel eating the Scriptures in Ezekiel 3:1-3.

The Bible is bittersweet because it is sweet like honey and it also smacks like a hammer sometimes. Psalm 119:103 says, ***"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*** An example of a sweet section of Scripture would be Psalm 23 or Romans 8. Equating God's Word like a holy hammer, Jeremiah 23:29 states, ***"Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"*** An example of the hammer of the Word was the message last weekend from Revelation 9.

Verse 10 shows us John's obedience: ***"And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter."*** Another way to say it is the Scriptures themselves are sweet, but the cost and demands of following Christ can feel sour. Scripture is sweet, but the cost of following Christ can feel bitter because of persecution and suffering. This leads to verse 11, when John must go and prophesy about the coming worldwide judgment: ***"And I was told, 'You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.'"***

Once again, we see that the gospel is global in its scope and it is intended for every stratum of society. John is told to preach ***"again"*** because it's easy to lose focus by only thinking of ourselves, and forgetting the lost around the world. That's why our mission statement calls us back to what matters most: ***"Edgewood is committed to living on mission by glorifying God and making disciples of Jesus in our families, among our neighbors, and among the nations."*** BTW, we have some new family resources at our Café bookstore.

While chapter 5 and chapter 7 reveal that some ***“from every tribe and language and people and nation”*** will be redeemed by the Lamb, John also sees peoples, nations and languages resisting Christ as we will see in Revelation 11:9-10: ***“For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.”*** Some authorities will align themselves with evil according to Revelation 19:19: ***“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against Him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.”***

As I was reading ahead in Revelation this week, I smiled when I read how many nations and kings will ultimately worship the Lamb in the new Jerusalem according to 21:24: ***“By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.”***

Let’s flesh out some ways we can apply this section.

- **Daily ingest and assimilate the Bible.** Are you swallowing the Scriptures every day? Psalm 34:8 says, ***“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!”*** The Word does us no good until we eat it and digest it. Until you learn to feed off the Book, you will be an undernourished Christian. If you’re floundering a bit because you’re not sure where to read, our June Bible reading plan will walk us through 2 Samuel and 1 Kings.
- **Embrace the sweetness and sourness of Scripture.** Brothers and sisters, let’s savor the sweet passages while not skipping the sour ones. God’s Word is always good, but its message will not always make us happy. Speaking of that, I miss having the local Moody Radio station in the Quad Cities, don’t you? Ken and Deb did a great job walking us through the Word each day by encouraging our hearts while also exhorting us to holy living. While K-LOVE has its place, a steady diet of “positive and encouraging” can leave us spiritually malnourished if it never makes room for “powerful and exacting.” There’s value in hearing the good news of our salvation, but we also need the bad news about our sin. A faith that’s only sweet in the mouth and to the ears may never reach the soul where life change takes place.

- **Go global with the gospel.** Here's a memorable way to understand these verses:
 - Read (8).
 - Feed (9).
 - Heed (10).
 - Seed (11).

I'm thrilled that Lord willing, over 50 people are planning to participate in four mission trips this year. Our India team has already completed their ministry, and our Mexico team will be launching in just a few weeks. The Kenya team will be leaving the last week in July, and the Japan group will head out in August. Thanks to those who've already given to support those who are going. There are still some individuals in need of support.

Speaking of those who go with the gospel, check out this greeting from Edgewood members Aaron and Amanda Langworthy, who are serving the unreached in Uganda. We commissioned them during Go Con this past fall. Many of you were praying for them as they had car trouble this past week. They made it back safely.

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Invitation

The dominant theme in this passage is urgency. These days of delay are days of decision, but we know that one day delay will no longer be an option. Don't wait until it's too late. It is bad enough crying over a commercial, but you don't want to go to a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I read about a fire alarm that went off during a large class in a college lecture hall. Students looked around, laughed nervously, and assumed it was just another drill. Some kept scrolling on their phones. Others packed up slowly. A few didn't move at all because they had heard so many false alarms before.

But this time it wasn't a drill.

Smoke began filling the hallway outside, and suddenly the tone of the room changed. What people had treated casually became critically urgent. The opportunity to leave safely was there for a while, but eventually the exits became crowded and panic replaced indifference.

Friends, Revelation 10 is God's alarm sounding before the final judgment falls. Right now, we are living in the intermission of grace and mercy. The delay of judgment is not the cancellation of judgment. God is patient, giving people time to repent, believe, and receive Christ in order to be saved. But one day there will be ***"no more delay."***

Maybe you've heard the gospel so many times that you've started treating it like a drill. Perhaps, you assume there will always be another sermon, another invitation, another chance to get right with God.

A week ago, I talked to someone who started weeping because he waited too long to make things right with a family member. As I tried to comfort him, he just shook his head and said, *"I thought I had more time!"*

That sentence has echoed in my heart all week.

The Greek language uses two different words for time. One is *chronos*, from which we get "chronology." It refers to measurable time: minutes, hours, days, years. It's the ticking clock on the wall. It's your calendar, your birthday, your schedule. We all live by *chronos* time.

But the Bible also uses another word: *kairos*. *Kairos* does not simply mean a point in time; it speaks of a decisive moment, a God-given opportunity, a critical season when something must be done. *Kairos* is not about how much time is left on the clock. It's about recognizing the moment in front of you before it passes. This speaks of the urgency of sharing the gospel with prisoners as six Edgewood guys are involved in a ministry called *Kairos*.

Friend, right now, *chronos* and *kairos* are coming together. This very moment is your time and your opportunity. Your *chronos* is ticking, and your *kairos* is an opportunity right now to repent of your sins and receive Jesus Christ before it is too late.

Don't assume there will always be more time. Revelation 10 reminds us that one day there will be ***"no more delay."***

The intermission of mercy will not last forever. The next act is coming. 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, “*Now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*”

The King is coming. Don't ignore the alarm. Run to Christ while the door of mercy is still open and before the final curtain falls.

Prayer