

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVII

June 15, 2008

No.24

## Sweet to Taste-Bitterness to Belly

Jerry Fite

**I** have some good news and bad news for you...is a phrase we hear often today. Or at least more often than “*it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey*” (Revelation 10:9). Yet, conveying the good news-bad news scenario is what God presents to John.

A strong angel appears to John. His appearance- arrayed with a cloud, a rainbow upon the head, a face as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire is like that which describes Jesus and His throne in the first and fourth chapters of Revelation (1:7, 4:3, 1:16, 15). The spirit being is a strong angel because his strength is derived from the divine authority of the Lord. The divine authority is being conveyed in the similar terms describing the appearance of the Lord, which lies behind the angel’s mission with John.

The angel, with the authority of the Lord behind him is holding a “little book” that is “open.” There is a message that John needs to know and tell. The fact that some three times the text speaks of the position of the angel’s right and left foot being

upon “*the sea and earth*” (Revelation 10:2, 5, 8) conveys the universal importance of the mission of the angel.

There is information which shall remain secret with God for John is told not to write down the things connected with the sounding of the seven thunders (Revelation 10:4). Then again, the mystery of God, the salvation revealed in the Gospel and through his prophets is finished (Revelation 10:7). But there is more information contained in the little book in the strong angel’s hand.

The message will be sweet to John’s mouth and bitter to his belly. Since the message contained in the little book is distinguished from the mystery of God or the now revealed message of the Gospel, we must look elsewhere for application.

John, beginning in chapter 11 and continuing through the remainder of the Book, reveals God’s judgment upon the world, while the persecuted children of God are promised victory. The worldly powers impose their strength over persecuted Christians and have an evil influence

over mankind. The Christian, living in such a world, will overcome and be victorious while the world will face the judgment of God. This message from the standpoint of revealing the sobering judgment upon mankind and the world would certainly make the “belly bitter.” The message of victory for the downtrodden Christian would certainly “be sweet as honey” to John’s “mouth”

Ezekiel was told to eat the roll and speak to Israel. He went “in bitterness” and the “heat” of his spirit (3:14) as he considered the message of condemnation and judgment while the message, being from God, was “as honey for sweetness” (Ezekiel 3:3). Jeremiah ate God’s message and it brought him “joy”, but because he had to “sit alone” his heart was filled with grief (Jeremiah 15:17-18).

May we pause for a moment and look ahead of what is before us and the world. For us to have victory as we pass on from this world to the next, a sobering judgment awaits the world as they pass on into eternal separation from God. Good news—bad news! Sweetness—Bitterness! Neighbor come to God!