

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 10

This chapter contains a vision of an angel of a wonderful appearance, the voices of the seven thunders, and an order to John to take the book in the hand of the angel, eat it, and prophesy. The angel is described by his strength, a mighty one; by his descent from heaven; by his attire, being clothed with a cloud; by a rainbow on his head; by his face being like the sun; by his feet, which were as pillars of fire, the one foot set on the sea, and the other on the earth; by having a little book open in his hand, and by the loud cry he made, like the roaring of a lion, (^{<6601>}Revelation 10:1-3), upon which seven thunders uttered their voices, which John was going to write, but was forbid, (^{<6604>}Revelation 10:4); next follows a solemn oath of the angels; the gesture he used, lifting up his hand to heaven; the person by whom he swore, the living God; what he swore to, that time should be no more, and that the mystery of God would be finished at the beginning of the seventh trumpet, (^{<6605>}Revelation 10:5-7); then several orders are given to John, as to take the open book in the hand of the angel, which he did, to eat it, as he accordingly did; when he found it to be as it was told him it would be, namely, sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly; and then to prophesy again before people, nations, tongues, and kings, (^{<6608>}Revelation 10:8-11).

Ver. 1. *And I saw another mighty angel*, etc.] Not any mere man, as Justin the emperor, as some have thought, who sent letters abroad in favour of the orthodox doctrine, against the Arians, which they suppose is meant by the little book open in his right hand; and still less the pope of Rome, whether in the sense of Papists or Protestants, which latter represent him as a tyrant, treading upon men both in the islands and in the continent, and holding forth the book of canons and decrees; rather, as Mr. Daubuz thinks, Luther, with the rest of the reformers, is intended, and especially since the prophecy of this chapter respects the Reformation, which began before the end of the sixth trumpet; and the epithets given to this angel may denote his strength and courage, his divine authority, the protection of him, and the clear doctrine of peace and reconciliation he brought: however, a

created angel is not intended: not the angel that made proclamation for the opening of the book, and unsealing it, (^{<66R2>}Revelation 5:2); between which, and having the book in his right hand open, is a wide difference; nor any other, though the epithet “mighty” belongs to angels in common; and though this angel swears by the living God; and though it was an angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this book to John; but the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, seems rather designed, as appears both by comparing this with (^{<2723>}Daniel 12:7 10:5,6); and from the power he gave to the two witnesses, (^{<6610>}Revelation 11:3); which cannot agree with a created angel; and besides, who so proper to hold the book open as he who unloosed the seals, and opened it, and to whom the epithet “mighty” may be applied in the highest sense, as God; and who as man may be said to swear by the living God, and to whom the whole description well agrees? he is sometimes called an Angel simply, (^{<0486>}Genesis 48:16 ^{<0220>}Exodus 23:20 ^{<4075>}Acts 7:35,38); sometimes the Angel of the Lord, and who appears to be Jehovah himself, the second Person, (^{<0167>}Genesis 16:7, 10 18:1,2), compared with (^{<0190>}Genesis 19:1 22:11,12); and sometimes the Angel of God's presence, (^{<2360>}Isaiah 63:9); and the Angel of the great council in the Septuagint on (^{<2306>}Isaiah 9:6); and the Angel, or messenger, of the covenant, (^{<3001>}Malachi 3:1); and may be so called, because he is a messenger from God as man and Mediator, being sent by him to declare his will and redeem his people: and he is a “mighty” one; not only as God, being the mighty God, the Almighty, which appears by his creation of all things, and upholding them in their beings; but as Mediator, having all power in heaven and in earth, and being far above all principality, power, and might; and, as man, made strong by God for himself, and for his people: he appears now as “another” angel, distinct from the seven angels who had trumpets given them to sound, and six of which had already sounded; and particularly from the angel of the sixth trumpet, who had just sounded; though some copies, and the Complutensian edition, leave out the word *ἄλλον*, “another”; and very opportunely does he appear for the comfort of his church, when the trumpets that had been blown had brought such desolations upon the empire, western and eastern, and when both the western and eastern antichrists had appeared, and before the seventh trumpet sounds, and brings in the last and greatest woe: and he is said to *come down from heaven*; which does not design his incarnation, that was long before this time; nor his spiritual presence with his people, which is common to them in all ages; nor his second coming to judgment, which

will be by a descent from heaven, and in the clouds of heaven, for that is yet future; but in a visionary way, his appearance to and for his church and people in the dark times of antichrist, when afflicted by the Turk on the one hand, and the pope on the other:

clothed with a cloud^{f302}; which is expressive not of the human nature of Christ, with which his divinity was veiled in his state of humiliation, so that few saw the glory of his divine Person and the greater part esteemed him a mere man; but rather of the obscurity of him, his person, offices, and grace, in those times of antichristian darkness, and even of the dim light and knowledge which his true and faithful followers had of him in those times; it was a dark and cloudy day with them, as well as the whole earth was covered with the gross darkness of Popery and Mahometanism; though it seems best of all to interpret this phrase of the majestic presence of Christ in his appearances to his people, who went before the people of Israel in a cloud by day in the wilderness, descended in one on Mount Sinai, dwelt in one both in the tabernacle and temple, was overshadowed by one on the Mount when transfigured, ascended in one to heaven, and will return in one, or more: moreover, the cloud may denote the power and protection of God attending the Reformation; (see ^{<0834>}Psalm 68:34 ^{<2045>}Isaiah 4:5);

and a rainbow [was] upon his head; which was a token of the covenant; (see ^{<0113>}Revelation 4:3); and the note there: this, with its blessings, is upon the head of Christ, the antitypical Joseph, and who is the head of his church and people; and Christ appearing in this form at this time when the world was overflowed with Popery and Mahometanism, shows that God was still mindful of his covenant, even in those worst of times, and would not suffer his church to be overwhelmed, and sunk in the general deluge of antichristianism, or the gates of hell to prevail against it; Christ, at such a tirade as this, very seasonably appeals with the rainbow of the covenant on his head, as a messenger of peace, and bringer of good tidings, to let his people know that ere long it would be halcyon days with them, and there would be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, who was ever mindful of his covenant with them; and that the Gospel of peace and reconciliation would be preached unto them:

and his face [was] as it were the sun; or looked like the sun, as it did at the time of his transfiguration on the and as he is described in (^{<0116>}Revelation 1:16), and may denote clearness and purity of Christ; both as God, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express of his person; and as

man, who is holy, harmless, up defiled; and is also expressive of that fight of nature, grace, and glory, which he imparts unto the sons of men; as well as of that beauty, loveliness, and amiableness in his person, which renders him as the sun, delightful to behold; and of the majesty of his person, and the manifestations of himself, to the great comfort, pleasure, and refreshment of his saints:

and his feet as pillars of fire; which may refer to the state of the church of Christ at this time, which was in the fire of afflictions, when many of its members were called to the stake, and burnt there for the sake of the Gospel, and yet were like “pillars”, firm and unshaken; the church was like the bush that Moses saw, which was on fire, but not consumed; Christ was with his people as they passed through it, that it could not kindle upon them so as to destroy them; and their faith, which was tried by it, was found to be much more precious than of gold that perisheth: or this may show what Christ then was, both to his people and to his enemies; to his people his feet were as “pillars” of brass and marble, to bear them up, and support them under all their trials and afflictions; his goings forth towards them in a way both of providence and grace, were in such a manner, as to strengthen and confirm them in the faith of him against all the powers of hell and earth; and they were like “fire”, to consume his and their enemies; with his feet he trod upon them, and subdued them under him, who were as stubble, briers and thorns, easily consumed by him, when at the same time he was a wall of fire to his people, and the glory in the midst of them.

Ver. 2. *And he had in his hand a little book open*, etc.] By which is meant not the Bible, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; or the book of the Gospel, the substance of which lies in a little room, and is no other than the preaching of Christ, and him crucified, as God's way of salvation; and which is now more open and manifest, and more clearly made known unto the sons of men, under the Gospel dispensation, than it was before, and especially since the time of the Reformation, to which this book, and the prophecies of it, may have respect; but the same book is here designed, which in (⁶⁶Revelation 5:1) is represented as in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, as shut and sealed; but the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, having taken it out of his hand, unloosed its seals, and opened it; and whereas we never read of his laying this book down, or of his delivering it to any other, he may be well supposed to be this mighty angel, who held it open in his hand: it may be said to be “a little book”, because now not only many of the scenes and visions in it were

exhibited, upon the opening of the seals; but because, at the time this vision refers to, many of its prophecies were accomplished, so that the bulk of it was greatly reduced; and it may be represented as “open”, because the seals of it were unloosed, and the things in it revealed; and it is to be observed, that as the several seals of this book, and the opening of them, refer to the state of the empire, both as Pagan and as Christian, as has been seen; so the little book itself, clear of these seals, sets forth the state and condition of the church in the empire, under its different revolutions and appearances:

and he set his right foot upon the sea, and [his] left [foot] on the earth; which signifies that he was Lord and possessor of both, of the whole terraqueous globe, being the Maker and supporter of it; and that his Gospel should be spread all over the world, both on the continent and in the islands of the sea; and that his kingdom should be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; that the abundance of the sea should be converted to him, or the maritime parts of the world should be subject to the sceptre of his grace and government; and that the earth, and the uttermost parts of it, should be his possession, though it was now almost wholly in the hands of the Turk and pope; and it may be observed, that he set his foot upon both earth and sea, out of which the two beasts arise, (^{663E}Revelation 13:1,11), which shall be destroyed by him.

Ver. 3. *And cried with a loud voice,* etc.] That all might hear, and to show earnestness and affection, and that it was a matter of great importance, as well as to denote the certainty of it; what he said is not expressed, but seems to be the book of prophecy, or what regarded the state of his church and kingdom, in the several periods of time to the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become his: and this voice of his was

as [when] a lion roareth; loud and terrible; and indeed it was the voice of the lion of the tribe of Judah, which was heard far and near, throughout the whole world, by his people, and is terrible to his enemies:

and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices; which some understand of the ministers of the Gospel in the times of the Reformation, who were “Boanergeses”, sons of thunder, and think that they are the same with the angels in (^{664E}Revelation 14:6), etc. or rather these may signify the denunciations of God's judgments, and of his wrath, both upon the eastern and western antichrist, the Turk and pope, signified by the seven vials,

hereafter to be poured out, mentioned in (~~6601~~ Revelation 16:1-4,8,10,12,17).

Ver. 4. *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices*, etc.] Or declared all they had to denounce upon the enemies of Christ and his church:

I was about to write; John taking particular notice of what they said, and believing it might be for the advantage, comfort, and support of the church of Christ under its suffering circumstances, to be informed of what God had in reserve among the treasures of his wrath for their adversaries, was going to put it down in writing, that he might retain it, and the better communicate it, and in obedience to the order given him, (~~6619~~ Revelation 1:19);

and I heard a voice from heaven; from God the Father, for the Son of God in a visionary way was come down from heaven, in the form before described; and this voice answers to the Bath Kol of the Jews, and is the same which ordered John to write, (~~6643~~ Revelation 14:13), though it here forbade him:

saying unto me, seal up those things; treasure them up in thy mind, keep them within thy breast, hide them from men, for the present, and say nothing of them:

which the seven thunders have uttered, and write them not; that they may not be seen and read at present, because the same things were to be exhibited in another form, and at another time, under the seven vials; only it was thought proper that John should have some intimations of them for his own advantage, and to prepare him for the following vision, for the eating of the book, and for his prophesying before people, nations, tongues, and kings. Mr. Daubuz is of opinion, that by these “seven thunders” are meant seven kingdoms which have received the Reformation, and established it by law within their several dominions, whereby the doctrine and worship of the reformers are become the established religion there; and the laws by which it is established are “the voices” uttered by those supreme authorities; and they are these,

1. The German princes, making one republic.
2. The Swiss cantons.
3. Sweden.

4. Denmark, with Norway.
5. England and Ireland.
6. Scotland.
7. The United Provinces of the Netherlands.

And whereas John, who represents the first reformers, and other faithful men, was for writing what these thunders uttered, this denotes the zeal and earnest desires of these good men to push the Reformation further, and make a thorough work of it, as well as their expectation that now was the time in which the mystery of God was to be fulfilled, in which they were mistaken; wherefore John is bid to seal up these things, and not write them, which shows that the progress of the Reformation was to be stopped from doing fully what the first reformers were prompted to by the supreme powers which encouraged them, and that by the opposition of other temporal princes; it not being the will of God that the glorious state of the church should arise from these thunders, and be built on their laws and establishments; and suggests, that this is not the time in which, nor these the ways and means by which the mystery of God will be finished, which will not be until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, (⁶⁶⁰⁷Revelation 10:7); whereas this period of time, to which the Reformation belongs, is an event of the sixth trumpet: and this exposition bids very fair to be the right one.

Ver. 5. *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth,* etc.] His right foot being on the one, and his left foot upon the other, as described in (⁶⁶⁰²Revelation 10:2);

lifted up his hand to heaven; the Oriental versions read, “his right hand”; and so some copies, and the Complutensian edition: the man clothed in linen, (²⁷¹⁶Daniel 12:6,7), who is the same with the angel here, held up both his hands; the lifting up of the hand was a gesture used in swearing: (see ⁰¹⁴²Genesis 14:22); so the Jews say ^{f303}, “the right hand”, or by the right hand, *h[wby wz*, “this is an oath”, according to (²⁷¹⁷Daniel 12:7); or whether the right hand or the left, is an oath, according to (²⁷¹⁸Isaiah 62:8).

Ver. 6. *And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever,* etc.] That is, by the living God, who is the true God: and is so described to distinguish him from idol gods, who have no life nor breath in them; and to assert the excellency and perfection of his nature, who has life in himself originally, and independently, is the fountain of life to all creatures living, and who are

supported in their life and being by him; and so he always was, is, and ever will be; this is the same as swearing by Anciualus^{f304}:

who created heaven, and the things that therein are; the airy, starry, and third heavens, and the inhabitants of them, the fowls of the air, the sun, moon, and stars, and the angels of heaven, as well as the souls of departed saints, and the bodies of as many as are there:

and the earth, and the things that therein are; men, beasts, and creeping things, trees, herbs, minerals, etc.

and the sea, and the things which are therein: the several sorts of fishes in it: this is also said to distinguish the great God from all false gods, who made not the heavens and the earth, who alone is, and ought to be the object of an oath, or by whom an oath is to be made, and not any creature whatsoever; and since the Angel that here swears is the Lord Jesus Christ, this may be understood of him either as man, swearing by God the Father, in which respect the Father is greater than he; or as a divine person, and so swears by himself, (³⁰³Hebrews 6:13); for to himself do these characters belong of living for ever and ever, and of having made the heaven, earth, and sea, and all in them: the thing he swears to is,

that there should be time no longer which is not to be understood of the cessation of time, and the swallowing of it up in eternity, at the end of all things, when it will be no more measured out by the revolutions of the sun and moon, which will then be no more; for this did not take place upon the angel's oath, or at the time this vision refers to; for after this, there is to be time for the seventh angel to sound his trumpet in, though perhaps that is excepted in the next verse; and after the sounding of that, there will be the space of a thousand years, in which Christ will reign with his people on earth; and after that there will be some space of time for the Gog and Magog army to attack the beloved city; all which will be before the end of all things, or before eternity, properly speaking, takes place; and besides, such an illustrious appearing of Christ as before described, and so solemn an oath as is here made, do not seem necessary to ascertain a truth which nobody doubts of; and everyone knows that after this world, and all things in it are at an end, time will be no more. The true key to this passage is (²¹¹⁷Daniel 12:7); where the man clothed in linen swears, that to the end of wonders should be a time, times, and a half, and here the angel swears that time should be no longer; that is, that these time, and times, and half a time, should be no longer; that these dates would be up, and the events

affixed to them be accomplished, when the seventh angel should begin to sound his trumpet: the same divisions of time are made in (^{<6624>}Revelation 12:14); and are the same exactly with the 1260 days, or years, and the forty two months of years, so often mentioned in this book: for a time is a prophetic year, that is, 360 years; and times are two prophetic years, or 70 years; and half a time is half a prophetic year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years: now add the several events to be accomplished in this period of time, and it will give the full sense of this passage thus; the angel swears that the thee of antichrist's reign, his tyranny over the saints, his persecution of them, which was to last forty two months, (^{<6635>}Revelation 13:5), should be no longer; nor of the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the Papists, which bears the same date, (^{<6612>}Revelation 11:2), and is called the times of the Gentiles, (^{<6224>}Luke 21:24); nor of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which has just the same measure of duration, (^{<6613>}Revelation 11:3); nor of the church's retirement, and being hid in the wilderness, (^{<6624>}Revelation 12:14); in short, the time of the four monarchies, and of the last of them, the Roman, and of the last branch of that, the Papal, should be no more than till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; (^{<6615>}Revelation 11:15); the words will bear to be rendered, as some have observed, "that there should be delay no longer"; that is, of the coming and kingdom of Christ; though the bridegroom has tarried, he will come, and will not tarry beyond the time the angel swears to; every seal of the sealed book is a delay of, and a stop upon, the open appearance of Christ's kingdom; and the opening of every seal is an advance to it; and when the sixth seal was opened, and Paganism destroyed, and Christianity spread throughout the empire, the kingdom of Christ might have been expected to have appeared; but there was a seventh seal to be opened, which was a stop upon it, and which when opened brought ruin and destruction upon the Christian empire, both western and eastern, under the first six trumpets; and till the seventh sounds there will be a delay of Christ's kingdom, but when that sounds there will be no more a delay.

Ver. 7. *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound*, etc.] This is an exception to what the angel had said and swore to, that time should be no longer; "but", or "unless", or "except the time of the voice of the seventh angel", as the Ethiopic version renders it; when a new period and sort of time should begin, very different from the former, which then should be no more; for now will be the time of Christ's

kingdom on earth, which shall last a thousand years; this time will not be like the former, a time of darkness and ignorance, as was in some periods, partly through the errors and heresies which were propagated in early times, and through that barbarity and ignorance which the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, spread over the empire, when they broke into it, and chiefly through the smoke of the bottomless pit, the false doctrine and worship of the Papists and Mahometans; but in the time of the seventh angel, all this gross darkness will be removed, and it will be a time of unspeakable and everlasting light, so that there will be no need of the sun and moon, of Gospel ministrations and ordinances: nor will it be a time of affliction and persecution; time in that sense will be no more, as it has been under the ten Pagan emperors, and under the Arian emperors, and under the Papal hierarchy; for in this period there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, pain, and tears; though there will be time, it will be another sort of time, quite different from the former, which will be no more when the seventh angel once begins; and as soon as he begins to sound, this will put an end to antichristian time; and at the end of his sounding will begin the time of Christ, or the thousand years' reign: and then

the mystery of God should be finished; that is, the angel not only swears that time shall be no longer, but that also then shall be finished the mystery of God; by which is meant, not the resurrection of the dead, and the change of the living, which is called a mystery, (~~<4151>~~1 Corinthians 15:51); for though when this angel sounds, and has done sounding, and Christ comes, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the dead in Christ, will be finished, yet not the whole resurrection; for the rest of the dead will not live again till the end of the thousand years: but rather the Gospel is designed, which is often called the mystery, and the mystery of the Gospel, and contains many mysteries in it, which are styled the mysteries of God; which respect him, his being, persons, operations, and grace; and are revealed and made known by him; and the finishing of this may respect the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, which will be before the end of the world, and whereby the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes of souls converted; wherefore it may be best of all to understand this of the church of God, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, even all the elect of God, whose number will now be finished and completed in the conversion of the Jews, and in the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, both which are called “mysteries”, (~~<4125>~~Romans 11:25,26 ~~<4104>~~Ephesians 3:4-6); and now as the antichristian church is called

“mystery”, “Babylon”, (^{<617>}Revelation 17:5); and “the mystery of iniquity”, (^{<517>}2 Thessalonians 2:7); so the true Christian church, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, may bear the name of the mystery of God; and this may also take in the mystery of all God's providences and promises, and prophecies, respecting the state of his church and people on earth:

as he hath declared to his servants and prophets; as to Isaiah in (^{<218>}Isaiah 60:3-5), etc. and (^{<218>}Isaiah 66:8); and to Daniel, in (^{<214>}Daniel 2:44) (^{<217>}Daniel 7:25 12:6,7); and to Zechariah, in (^{<314>}Zechariah 14:9), and others; and which was a Gospel declaration, as the word signifies; it was good news and glad tidings; glorious things were declared to them, and spoken by them, concerning the city and church of God, its happy state on earth, and Christ's reign in it.

Ver. 8. *And the voice which I heard from heaven*, etc.] In (^{<604>}Revelation 10:4);

spake to me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth; as John was to prophesy, (^{<601>}Revelation 10:11); it was necessary that he should have a mission and a commission from heaven; and that he should have the open book of prophecy to prophesy out of; and that he should receive this from the angel's hands, who had unloosed its seals, and opened it: and just so to ordinary prophesying, or preaching, it is necessary that men should have their commission from heaven, should be called of God, and sent by him; and that they should have the book of the Scriptures before them, and open to them, and speak according to these oracles, agreeably to the law and to the testimony, which are profitable for doctrine; and that they should also receive the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, with gifts, and a commission to preach it, from the Angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, who has all power both in heaven and in earth; (see ^{<602>}Revelation 10:2).

Ver. 9. *And I went to the angel*, etc.] According to the order given him; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and, indeed, whither should any go knowledge but to him who has the words of eternal life, and is the great prophet of the church? and to whom should John go to qualify him for prophesying, but to him, who, as man and Mediator, had this revelation of future things given him? (^{<600>}Revelation 1:1);

and said unto him, give me the little book; he did not take it without his leave, but in a modest and humble manner asks him to give it him, that he might deliver out the prophecies in it to others: so ordinary prophets and ministers of the word should go to Christ, to have their eyes opened, their understandings enlightened, that they may understand the Scriptures, and explain them to others:

and he said unto me, take it, and eat it up; which must be understood not literally, but mystically; and the sense is this, take the book, and diligently peruse it, and with as much eagerness as an hungry man would eat a meal; so greedy are some persons of reading, and as it were of devouring books; hence Cicero called ^{f305} Cato “helluo librorum”, a glutton at books: and in such manner John is bid to take and eat this book, and look into it, and read it over diligently, and consider what was in it, and meditate upon it, and digest the things contained in it, and lay them up in his mind and memory; and for the present hide and conceal them, in like manner as he was bid to seal, and not write what the seven thunders uttered; and so, though this book is represented to him as open in the angel's hand, yet he must take it and eat it, and hide it in his belly, because the things in it as yet were not to be accomplished: so for ordinary prophesying, or preaching, the ministers of the word should diligently read the Scriptures, constantly meditate on them, digest the truths of the Gospel in their own minds, and lay them up in the treasury of their hearts, and bring them forth from thence in due season:

and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey; as Ezekiel's roll was to him when he ate it, (~~28RE~~ Ezekiel 3:1-3); the Alexandrian copy, instead of “thy belly”, reads “thy heart”.

Ver. 10. *And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up*, etc.] As he was bid to do:

and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; so is the Gospel in the mouth of a faithful minister of it, who has a spiritual knowledge, and a savoury experience of it; and so it is in the mouth of an understanding hearer, who finds it, and eats it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and so this little book of prophecy being looked into, read, and considered by John, the first taste and knowledge he had of the things contained in it were exceeding grateful and delightful; the view it gave him of the glorious state of the church, and kingdom of Christ on earth, filled with unspeakable pleasure:

and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter; so the ministration of the Gospel occasions bitterness, grief, and sorrow, to the preachers and professors of it, through the persecutions that attend it, the obstinacy and hardness of men's hearts against it, and its being the savour of death unto death to many that hear it; and so the little book of prophecy, upon a perusal of it, giving to John a view of the witnesses prophesying: in sackcloth, and of their bodies being killed, and lying exposed in the street of the great city, and of the church's flying into the wilderness, and continuing there for a time and times, and half a time, and of the barbarities and cruelties exercised on the saints by the whore of Rome, whom he saw made drunk with their blood, made his belly bitter, or filled him with sorrow, grief, and pain.

Ver. 11. *And he said unto me*, etc.] That is, the angel, from whom John received the little book; the Alexandrian copy reads, “they said unto me”: both the voice of God the Father from heaven, that bid him take the book, and the angel that bid him eat it:

thou must prophesy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings; which is to be understood not of John's preaching again to many people, and nations, after his return from his exile at Patmos, as he had done before his banishment thither; and much less of his prophesying along with Enoch and Elias, towards the end of the world, grounded upon two fabulous notions, the one that Enoch and Elias will appear in person before the coming of Christ, and the other, that John died not, but is still alive somewhere, and will continue till Christ's second coming; but rather of his delivering more prophecies out of the open little book; not “before”, as we render it, but either “concerning” many people, nations, tongues, and kings, as the Syriac version renders it: or “against” them, that is, those people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over which the whore of Babylon reigns, or has reigned, and the ten kings, and kings of the earth she rules over, (⁴⁶⁷¹² Revelation 17:12,13,15,18). Moreover, this may not so much design John's prophesying in person, as the prophesying: of the witnesses or ministers of the word in the several periods of time, whom John personated and represented; and of whom mention is made in the next chapter, to which this seems to be a transition.