

Lent, Day 18  
Tuesday, March 26, 2019

Revelation 10:1–11

Time is running out. Yesterday I wrote about the time when life was coming to a crisis for me and my marriage. Why was it a crisis? Why couldn't I have just kept on as I was, trying to live in two worlds? Because my wife, rightly, would not allow it. She had made it clear to me before we were married that she couldn't be married to a man who smoked, particularly as we raised kids together. More than that, who I was, was inconsistent with who I was meant to be, who God desired me to be, who she desired me to be, and who I desired me to be. The crisis came because I could sense that she was coming to a place of choosing herself. Could she continue with me if I refused to honour my commitments to her and our children? It was a crisis because time was running out. As a result there was an urgency to my actions. To sort things out before it was too late and I lost the love of my life; my family.

The same thing is happening in this passage as well. Jesus has opened the seals of the scroll, now God's angel comes to the earth with a little book. He bears the markings of the presence of God (rainbow, clouds, and pillars) and he speaks with the voice of the lion/lamb. John is fed the book. It is sweet to his mouth because it is the word of God. It is bitter to his stomach because it is the judgment of God on the earth. John is now to speak God's word, prophesy, and as Wright says, he is to create the reality to come through speaking those words.<sup>1</sup>

But, like all prophesy, this is urgent because time is running out. Once that seventh trumpet is blown God's patience is done. God will not allow the martyred, the oppressed, and the victimized of the world to go on crying for justice forever without it coming. No, God must and will put his creation right. He must end the wicked systems that cause strife and he must put away anyone who will not reject the anti-God powers. This is not about God being angry because he isn't chosen. It's about God recreating the world so that there will only be the goodness and peace for everyone at all times. Without this judgment the world will stay the same.

This urgency is meant to mark the church today. We have been given the task to preach the good news to every people everywhere. Time is running out. At the same time, that urgency should be motivating us to plumb the depths of our own hearts. Jesus is to be lord of our whole self, not simply a part. That is why the practice of examine is so important during lent. It is a bitter-sweat time.

Prayer

Lord who speaks out of the thunder, help us to hear your voice and to maintain your urgency. Let your word fill our mouths even if it is bitter to our stomach. Help us to co-create your coming kingdom.  
Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> N. T. Wright, *Revelation for Everyone* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 94–95.