

Bittersweet Christianity

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 5th, 2013 • Pastor Chris Lankford • Happy Cinco de Mayo!

I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

~Revelation 10:10 (NASB)

1) The Secret Of God's Mighty Angel

- A) The unrepentance of mankind (Revelation 9:20-21) is a low point in the Apocalypse. In response, a "mighty angel" (perhaps Gabriel?, cf. Daniel 12:7; or the Angel of God/Christ?, cf. Exodus 3:2-12, Revelation 1:12-16, 4:3) comes from Heaven in splendor (10:1-3) with a "little scroll" (10:2).
- B) The angel thunderously booms out the prophetic words in the little scroll, but John is commanded by God to keep these prophecies secret/sealed (10:4)! God is in control! Follow Him, even when you don't know all the details!
- C) After the little scroll is read, the mighty angel swears by God as Creator that the time has come and the mystery of God's plan for His people is being revealed (10:5-7).
- D) Oddly, John then follows God's command to 'take and eat' the little scroll (cf. Ezekiel 3:1-3; Revelation 10:8-10). The scroll tastes "sweet as honey," but "bitter" to the belly.
- E) This commissioning of John to prophecy to God's people (cf. Ezekiel 3:1-3; Revelation 10:11), like communion with Christ, calls us to take the powerful Gospel message of Christ and share it with all people in all places (10:11)!



"Bittersweet Christianity" (Revelation 10)
Week of May 5th – May 10th, 2013

Growth Group Homework



Powering Up

1. What observations from this weekend's message, *"Bittersweet Christianity,"* did you find to be the most interesting or challenging? Did it leave you with questions? Share with your group.
2. **Dinner's on Me!** If you could win a free meal every day for a year, but it could only be from one specific restaurant, which one would you choose? Why?



Digging In

3. In Revelation chapter 10, we find another literary interlude from judgments. Skim back through chapters 2-10. If you had to choose, which chapters focus more on God's redemption, and which focus more on His wrath? Write your answers below, and why. Reviewing your observations from chapters 2-10, what do you notice overall? Why is that significant?

Revelation 2 –
Revelation 3 –
Revelation 4 –
Revelation 5 –
Revelation 6 –
Revelation 7 –
Revelation 8 –
Revelation 9 –
Revelation 10 –



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4. Re-read Revelation 10:8-11. The little book (or scroll) John consumes is initially sweet, but later, has bitter effects. This relates to the main themes of Revelation: sovereignty, wrath, and redemption. These themes reveal that the book of Revelation is really about the power of the Gospel message! As 1st-2nd century Christians read Revelation, how would they have understood the “sweet” aspects of the Gospel (and the resulting Christian life)? How about the “bitter” aspects of the Gospel? List some ideas below:

<u><i>The “Sweet”ness of the Gospel</i></u>	<u><i>The “Bitter”ness of the Gospel</i></u>



Connecting To Life

5. **Keeping secrets.** How is following God different in your life when you feel He’s communicating clearly with you versus when He seems silent in your life situations? God commands the Apostle John to seal up His words in Revelation 10:4. No one knows the details John heard! Are you willing to follow God when you cannot hear Him, when He seems far away? What does that look like in your life? Share with your Growth Group.
6. **Bittersweet Symphony.** Receiving grace through Jesus Christ is sweet, but living out the Christian life is sometimes bitter. Revelation reminds us the Christian life is difficult (bitter). What is difficult in your life *because* you are a Christian? Would following Christ be the same without these bitter aspects? How can your Growth Group help you live for Christ in these difficulties?