

CHAPTER 10

The Angel of the Covenant

The prophet Malachi was a “preparer of the way.” He was the man who closed the chapter on Old Covenant revelation. One of the great promises he makes is this:

“See, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty (Malachi 3:1).

The word messenger is exactly the same word as angel. That is what an angel is: he is a messenger from God. Our subject for this chapter is “the angel of the Covenant” or “the messenger of the Covenant,” the one who comes to reveal the purposes of God in all their fullness.

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down." Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by Him who lives for ever and ever, who created the Heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced to his servants the prophets." Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings" (Revelation 10:1-11).

The angel of God came down and found John on the Island of Patmos. As we read the description of this angel, as we see

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another awesome representation of a heavenly being, we are pressed to the conclusion that this angel is none other than Jesus Himself. It should not surprise us that we are talking about Jesus as an Angel. It should not disturb us theologically to see Jesus in this way because that is how we meet Him all the time in the Old Testament. Every pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament has Him described as the "Angel of the Lord" or the "Angel of His Presence." Not only that, but this Angel of the Lord speaks as if He Himself is God. He receives worship and gives commands. He is none other than the Lord Himself. It was the Angel of the Lord that appeared in the bush and who spoke to Moses. This is another enigma, demonstrations of the pre-incarnate Christ in all His divinity, taking on Angelic form to communicate to mankind. He is the ultimate messenger, God's last Word. There is no greater message than the message that Jesus brings. There is no greater revelation than the revelation that Jesus speaks into our hearts. The Angel of the Lord has come. Jesus has appeared.

The Cloud and the Covenants

There are tremendous similarities between this Angel and the risen Christ that we saw in Chapter 1, a striking family resemblance. If this is not Jesus, it must be His twin brother. They both have a face that shines like the sun. Both of them stand on fiery legs and, what is more, this Angel, who comes down out of Heaven, is robed in a cloud, and in the Scriptures the only one who robes himself in the dark clouds of the sky is God. If this is not God, he has stolen God's coat! He has come down dressed in a cloud because clouds in the Scripture always represent the presence of God. God makes Himself known in the cloud. God speaks out of the cloud. He is enthroned in the cloud above the

cherubim. He communicates to His people in the cloud. He came down the mountain in a cloud. God dwells in clouds. When Jesus is on the mountain of transfiguration and His face starts shining like the sun, even in His earthly body, then a great cloud surrounds Him. He is not only shining like the sun, He is robed in a cloud out of which God speaks. When Jesus ascended back into the presence of the Father, He went up in a cloud, and when He comes again, He is coming in the clouds. And here is Jesus with His visitation coat on. He is dressed in a cloud. We are encountering Christ again in this Angelic manifestation.

He also represents, in His stance, in His appearance, in His attitudes, all the covenants that God has made with humanity down through the years since the beginning of time. As we have seen, there are those that teach that the Bible is structured around dispensations. There is disagreement between dispensationalists about how many dispensations there are, but there are several. The calamity, as you look at such a doctrine and such a structure, is this: all of them end in disaster. All of them end in failure, and the ultimate one for them, which is the Church Age, also ends in failure because it climaxes with the Laodicean church. That is when Jesus comes and rescues us from our imminent failure, rescues us from our inevitable decline, and accomplishes worldwide salvation when we are out of the way.

It is not arrogance and self-interest that makes me dissatisfied with such a proposition. It is because I find that all the way through Scripture God never invested in failure. The God who begins something is the God who completes it. God does not entertain the thought that what He has embarked upon could come to ruin. God begins well and ends up better. The purposes of

God unfold with greater and greater glory. Rather than seeing the Bible structured around a number of dispensations, you can see clearly when you read the Scriptures that everything is built around covenants.

God is the God of covenants, and God has never related to man outside of a covenant. God has made it very clear that He has rules of engagement with His people. There are many covenants, and covenant was a recognized way of nations relating together in these distant and biblical times. There would be clearly defined parameters of behavior and expectation between two people who entered into covenant. Some meet around a board to discuss, others go to arbitration to beat out the details, but God does not make covenant like that. When God made a covenant, it was a covenant between a Sovereign and His servants. There was no question of equality. There was no sitting around and thrashing out the details. There was no going to arbitration. God would say, "These are the terms of the covenant. You can receive them, you can reject them, but you cannot change them. They are not open to negotiation. This is My covenant. It carries great demands but innumerable blessings."

There is a little word or sentence that recurs through the Scriptures from the beginnings in Genesis right through to the Book of Revelation that some teachers have said encapsulates the concept of covenant. It goes like this: "I will be your God and you will be My people." That encapsulates the covenant relationship into which we have come with the Lord. "I will be your God." That contains a demand, and it has a benefit. It demands that I worship Him. It demands that I put Him in first place. It demands that He have all of my life. But it also means that if He is my God, He will meet all my needs. If He is my

God, He will never leave me nor forsake me. If He is my God, He will lead me in paths of righteousness and make me lie down in green pastures. If He is my God, this covenant entails great responsibility, but it also brings me immense benefit and blessing.

“You will be My people.” The emphasis is on belonging; there is a sense of ownership. You are not your own; you have been bought with a price. In the Book of Revelation the first mention of the blood of Jesus in chapter 1 says that He “has freed us from our sins by His blood” (Rev. 1:5). There is liberty. There is a release. But when they sing one of the songs in Revelation, they sing, “And with Your blood You purchased men for God” (Rev. 5:9). Our redemption is not just freedom from sin; it has freed us from sin and purchased us for God. I now have new ownership and a new Master.

All Things Under His Feet

God is a covenant-keeping God, and down through history God has made covenants with His people. As we look at the Angel, it seems to me that He deliberately embodies the covenants of God that have been made in Scripture. For instance, when He comes down, He is a gigantic Angel. Firstly, He is huge because it appears that He straddles continents. He comes and puts one foot on the land and one foot on the sea in a dramatic pose that declares without a word this great truth: “All things are under My feet.” Later on, in chapter 13, we are going to see a beast coming out of the ocean and a beast coming out of the land. It is good to know that before either of them even raises their ugly heads, they are already under the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ! But this is a pose of the very covenant with which God began His purposes in our world. When He created

a man in His image, He said, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it and rule over all the works of My hands." David, when he walks out one night and gazes skywards, becomes amazingly aware of his own frailty and insignificance within the vastness of God's creation. He says:

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of Your hands; You put everything under his feet (Psalm 8:3-6).

David is recalling that first covenant relationship into which God moved with the man He had created and said, "Under your feet will be all things." When the writer of the Hebrews is speaking of what God has planned and purposed for man, he quotes this Psalm. What I like about him is that he quotes it but cannot remember where the Scripture is. That is very encouraging for some of us, who always have a problem with books, let alone chapters and verses. The writer of the Hebrews says, "Someone, somewhere said." Hallelujah, a fellow traveler! Then he says, "Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him" (Heb. 2:8). Now let me emphasize something here. He is not talking about Jesus; he is talking about man. He asks, "What is man?" God has not given angels the rule of the world to come, but men. And so he says, "What is man that You are mindful of him?" But at the moment we do not see all things under his feet, but we do see Jesus crowned with glory and honor. Why do we need to see Jesus? Because all things are under His feet. If you cannot see all things under the feet of Jesus, whose feet are they under? Not

everything knows it is under the feet of Jesus, but that is where it is. In Ephesians, Paul tells us, "God has put all things under His feet" and, because they are under His feet, God's intended will and purpose is that all things come under our feet. "All things" coming under our feet is demonstrated in how we confront and overcome the evil one. We bring him under our feet by crushing his head. We will look at more of that later, but this is the covenant that God made. This is a pose that demonstrates and speaks of the greatness of God who has put everything under the feet of Jesus.

A Covenant With Creation

Next we can note that above the head of this Angel is a rainbow. We know that the rainbow is God's sign of His covenant, not just with Noah and his descendants, but with all the creatures of the earth and with inanimate creation itself. There is a covenant that God has made with the fabric of our planet. When sin came into the world, it had universal repercussions. In an earlier chapter we considered the centrality of the throne, and we said that if you drop the pebble in the pool the ripples go out, and that is the picture of Jesus and the influence of His rule. But conversely that was also the effect of sin. When sin came into the world, it was like an evil stone had dropped into the beautiful pool of God's creation and set defiling ripples in motion that went to the furthest reaches of the universe. Sin did not just affect Adam. It did not just affect us as the offspring of Adam. God said, "Cursed is the ground because of you" (Gen. 3:17). And thorns and thistles are a sign of God's displeasure in a fallen world. It is an interesting study to follow the whole concept of thorns and thistles through the Scriptures. Here was a sign of a world in de-creation, a world in decay. It is not at all coincidence, nor is it for a moment just a

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mark of Roman cruelty, that when Jesus died they wove a crown of thorns and wedged it on His head. It was a dramatic demonstration that Jesus was not just taking your sin; He was carrying away the curse that is on the universe. That is why the whole creation is groaning, travailing up until now. It is looking to be released from its bondage to corruption. If we had ears tuned to hear it, the trees are groaning, the grass is crying, the desert is moaning. Why? Because they are waiting to be released from the corruption that came upon them because of sin. We look forward to a world restored and redeemed. You see the blood that was shed on the cross did not just bring us near to God. Paul writes to the Colossians and says,

For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on Earth or things in Heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:19-20).

I don't fully know what that means. I don't know what the full implications of that are. I just know that if there is anything in the vastness of God's creation that has been spoiled by sin, that has been moved out of harmony because of corruption, then the blood of Jesus is both sufficient and efficient to bring everything back into right relationship to Him. The rainbow says, "I am going to bring all things back into harmony. I have a covenant with inanimate creation. I have a covenant with the birds and the beasts. I have made a covenant with mankind and I will make all things new."

A Covenant of Promise

The Angel of the Covenant stands then, and He raises His hand to Heaven and swears by Him who lives forever and ever

that there will be no more delay. Note that this is the very posture that God adopts in Deuteronomy: "I lift My hand to heaven and declare: As surely as I live forever" (Deut. 32:40); interestingly, it is also the stance of Abraham himself when he made an oath to God: "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath" (Gen. 14:22). This stance that He takes, the stance that Jesus adopts, is the same stance in many ways that He adopted when He made a covenant with Abraham:

When God made His promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for Him to swear by, He swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised (Hebrews 6:13-15).

And now the Angel stands in that same covenantal stance, and He swears by Him who lives forever and ever. He is swearing by Himself. There is no one greater for Him to swear by. And He promised, just as He promised Abraham, that there would be an heir, and Abraham waited patiently for the fulfillment. Now the Angel raises His hand to Heaven and swears by God that there will be no more delay, that the promise is about to be fulfilled, that the expectation is about to be met, that joy will break out on those who for many long years have waited to see the visitation of God. He takes a covenant pose, and He speaks into the Heavens and makes a promise to the world.

Led Into Covenant Blessing

He stands on two fiery pillars for legs. As soon as we see those fiery pillars, we cannot help but remember that is how He appeared to Israel in the wilderness. That is how He led Moses

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into covenant relationship. God walked before His people by night as a fiery pillar and by day as a column of smoke, the two great legs of God marching through the wilderness. Remember those other Scriptures that we thought about in Judges and Psalm 68, when God marched before His people through the wasteland: it was on two great legs of smoke and fire. He led them on two great legs visible in their glory that men had to follow and pursue to be safe and secure. The Angel comes down now with fiery pillars for legs, and He is saying, "I am going to lead you into all the blessings of God. I am going to lead you into the entire covenant that God has made for you. I am going to take you into the fulfilling of God's promise and all the blessings of the Lamb. Just follow Me. I am going to walk on covenant legs so bright and so shiny and so glorious that even in the darkest night you will see them. You will see and follow Me into all the blessings that I have ordained for you."

The Covenant and the Kingdom

One of the wonderful aspects of this Angel—and it is an aspect that we have met before with the Christ who manifests Himself to John on the Island of Patmos—is that His face shone like the sun. That is a wonderful picture of the covenant of kingship. There are five great covenants that God made in the Old Testament: the covenant with Adam, the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Moses, and the covenant with David. God's covenant with David was that they would never lack one to sit on his throne, for God wanted His people to be a ruled and a governed people. It is only those who are under authority who can exercise authority. This is the key to Kingdom living. This you remember from when the centurion

came to Jesus and surprised Him with his faith. The covenants are not unrelated; they are actually progressive.

Adam

The covenant that God first made with Adam sets the pattern for everything that God wants to do from that moment on. I teach students at a Bible school on the subject "What the Bible Is All About." I have sought to show them that in the opening chapters of Genesis you understand everything that God wants to do. The rest of the Bible is just working out the purpose of God. Right at the beginning we understand what God wants to do. He wants to fill the earth with people like Himself. That was His mandate to Adam. He wants to fill the earth with people like Himself, a people who will exercise authority and custodianship over creation and not only be confined to the garden; He wants the garden to become a garden without boundaries, to fill the earth just as the four rivers flowed to the four corners of the earth. That was God's plan. Adam sinned, but that did not mean that God had failed, nor did it mean that satan now took the authority. Later on the Psalmist can still say, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Ps. 24:1). It is still God's world.

Noah

When God made His covenant with Noah it was a reaffirmation of His plan and His purpose. It is very interesting that when Noah's father named him, he named him in light of the curse that was on the ground because of Adam's sin. It says, "He named him Noah and said, 'He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed'" (Gen. 5:29). So they saw the coming of Noah as giving them rest from the curse, no longer struggling, no longer striving, but resting in

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the grace and the goodness of God. Just as God had brought all the animals to Adam that he might name them, He brings all the animals to Noah that he might save them. When Noah comes out of the Ark, he literally and spiritually comes into a new Heaven and a new Earth. The flood has changed the whole of the Earth. This was not a little localized downpour. This was a cataclysmic, worldwide disaster. Everybody on Earth was removed, all the mountains were destroyed, and geography itself would have been altered because not only did the rains fall down but also the fountains of the deep were opened. There would have been earthquakes and volcanoes that totally disrupted the world as they knew it, and when he came out of the Ark, it was into a new world, a new Earth. What is more, he lived under new heavens because, before the flood, there was a firmament, like a great vapor that surrounded the earth and kept the climate constant and manageable, probably filtered out all the ultraviolet rays that caused aging, enabling people to live much longer. But now that was gone.

It had all fallen down onto our earth. So he literally comes out into a new Heavens and a new Earth. What is more, there is a new sign in the Heavens that had never been there before. There is a rainbow in a new Heavens and a new Earth. He comes out to be God's new Adam and receives the same commission. God says, "It does not matter who fails, it does not matter how many times they fail. My purpose and My plans will be fulfilled."

Abraham

Then God makes His covenant with Abraham because it is in Abraham that all the families of the earth will be blessed. It is in Abraham that God wants to release not just men and women who have been delivered from darkness, not just men and women who have been rescued from the curse, but men and women who know

the blessing of God in their lives, that blessing that makes rich and adds no sorrow to it (Prov. 10:22). In his seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed. There is a worldwide redemption set in motion through the faith of our father Abraham. It is through the seed of this one man.

Moses

When God makes a covenant with Moses, it is that He might have a people, a nation, who will demonstrate His goodness, walk in His ways, obey His Word, do His will, and, in doing it, get so blessed that they will be a provocation to all the nations around them. It is not at all coincidental that He established them on the land bridge that joins three continents, because God wanted them in the middle of the world so that all men could see and be provoked to jealousy. That is why Jesus speaks of the Queen of Sheba, who came to see the wisdom of Solomon. She only came from down the road, but Jesus says she came from the ends of the earth. That is what was supposed to happen. The ends of the earth were supposed to come and seek the Lord.

David

For God's people, a nation that was God's nation and a community that would be ruled by God's King, God chose David. The sun speaks of the rule and government of King David. Here is God's promised covenant to David:

*His line will continue forever and his throne endure before
Me like the sun (Psalm 89:36).*

His throne is going to be like the sun. His government will be like the sunshine. David's own testimony of God's dealings with him in life is recorded in these terms:

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*The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me:
“When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules
in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise
on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that
brings the grass from the earth”*(2 Samuel 23:3-4).

God told David what it was like to be a good king. What is it like to be a good king? What is it like to rule in righteousness? It is like the light of day at sunrise. The sun represents the Kingdom. When Jesus told parables of the Kingdom, with the removal of everything that defiles and the taking away of everything that spoils, He said, “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43). God’s Kingdom is a sunshine Kingdom because the King has a sunshine face. The sunshine face of Jesus, I believe, portrays for us very graphically the kingdom covenant that God made with David. Right from the beginning, before there was a man that ever walked on the earth, the sun shone as a sign of God’s government. God made a great light to govern the day, and so the sun in the sky was a picture and a communication of God’s Kingdom.

This world was not random. It was not a mistake. It did not happen by accident. Ours is a governed world. Ours is an ordered world. It is a world where things happen in almost predictable ways because God is a consistent King and a conscientious Ruler. We have no room for the idea that God is the celestial clockmaker who wound it up and then departed and leaves it going until it runs down. God upholds all things by the word of His power. He is still intimately involved in our world, and He has set signs in the skies. Everything in our world speaks to us about God. That is its prime purpose. Creation speaks to us of

God. Paul says that the things that are made clearly portray to us the invisible attributes of God. There is a visible and a vocal testimony of God in our world. We are without excuse if we neglect God. We are without excuse if we reject God. We are without excuse if we do not believe in God, for the evidence is on every hand, and the testimony rings out day after day, night after night, for the glory of God is seen and heard in all that He has made. Or in the words of the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands" (Ps. 19:1).

No Longer Strangers

The Angel of chapter 10 is dressed and positioned to communicate all of the past covenants that God has made. Now you might ask, how does it affect me? When Paul is writing to the Ephesian church, he is speaking to people who were Gentiles by ethnic origin. Because they were Gentiles, Paul says they were "strangers to the covenants of promise." But he continues: "Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). There are two important things here. First of all, all the covenants that God made down through history were covenants of promise. That is, they all looked forward to a fulfillment. All the covenants, actually, were facets and shadows of the ultimate covenant that was yet to come. So each of them promised something. Paul says this: once we were strangers to the covenants, but now in Christ we are no longer strangers. Therefore, every one of the covenants must be relevant to us. Every covenant finds its fullness in Jesus. That is why this Angel is Jesus. He is the messenger of the covenant who has suddenly come to His temple. He has arrived and is demonstrating all the promises of God through history because, however many promises God has made, however vast

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they are, however multitudinous, they are yes and amen in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20)! Do you know there is no promise outside of Christ? There is no promise of salvation outside of Christ. There is no promise of being useful to the Master outside of Christ. There is no hope for Israel outside of Christ. All the promises are yes and amen in Him. He stands as the great Angel of the Covenant. It is into this great covenant that we have come. For God sent Christ to be a covenant for the people (Isa. 49:8), and in Christ we are called to subdue our world. We look forward to new Heavens and a new Earth. It is through the Church that all the families of the earth will be blessed, for we now constitute God's holy nation of priests, and we are the citizens of the Kingdom that is destined to fill the earth.

No Longer Observing

There are further things that relate this Angel to Jesus. In chapter 5, a mighty Angel comes down from Heaven and says, "Who is worthy?" Now this chapter begins, "And I saw another mighty Angel." So immediately he is relating us back to chapter 5. The one whom he saw worthy to open the scroll was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Now this Angel comes down and cries with a voice like a lion. He takes the scroll, He opens all the seals and looses the purposes of God. He has set into motion all that God wants to do. Someone will say, "But this one specifically says it is a little scroll." It looks like a little scroll because He is such a big Angel!

Up until now John had been taking notes. John has been writing, recording everything. Everything at this moment is going to change. He is not going to write, he is going to eat. He is going to take the scroll and eat the scroll and fill himself with the scroll. It is important for us that we do not just note the

Word, give mental assent to the Word, or think about the Word, but that we devour the Word, eat the Word, that we fill our hearts and our lives with the Word of God. John is going to pass from being an observer to being a participator in all that is going on. Something is going to change. John's ministry up until now has been to be a recorder; now he is going to be a worker in the purpose of God. And when we look into the next chapters, we are going to find that is exactly what he is going to do. The Angel tells him, "You need to eat this book because you are going to prophesy again" and then we move into chapters all about God's prophetic people.

God does not want to inform us. He wants us to be filled with the word that will change us, that will equip us, and that will enable us to take the message of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth. And the Angel of God, the Angel of the Covenant, stands in our midst with a book open in His hands and He says, "Get that inside you and see what will happen!"

Concluding Remarks

Let me first bring a conclusion to the last chapter regarding this Angel of the Covenant. He gives John the scroll to eat, and in many ways it is a reenactment of what happened to Ezekiel at the beginning of his ministry, where he is given a scroll not by an angel but by the Son of Man, who is seated upon the throne, again a strong indication that this Angel is our Lord Jesus Christ. He gives him the open scroll, and upon the scroll are written calamities and woes. He eats the scroll, and in eating it he finds that it is sweet to taste. We will always have that enigma and that dilemma if we are to be the true servants of God. To us the Word will always be sweetness. It will always be a delight. But to those who hear it from us, it will sometimes be bitter. It will sometimes

be difficult. And so we identify in some ways with those to whom we have to take the Word. Every word of God has two sides: blessing or curse, life or death. And to some of those to whom we speak it, it will be the Word of life, but to others it will be the word of death. So, although we delight in the Word ourselves, we understand that to many it will be bitterness and therefore, in a measure, we identify with their bitterness. We feel the burden and the responsibility of those who carry the Word of God. Jeremiah was, of course, a man who had, one could almost say, a failed ministry. He was faithful to God, but he did not see people turn to the Lord. He did not see the acceptance of his word, although he preached it in obedience to God and he preached it with the anointing of the Spirit. But people did not respond. Those he addressed were not those who would listen and take to heart the Word of God from His mouth:

When Your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear Your name, O Lord God Almighty (Jeremiah 15:16).

This is an expression of Jeremiah in his relationship with the Word. But we cannot just have relationship with the Word; we have to have relationship with the Word *and the world*. It would be nice to be cloistered away, secreted somewhere in some monastery, and just give ourselves to the Word. But God wants to give us to the world. The Word that is in us brings life to the world or, conversely, death to the world. So Jeremiah gets to that place where he says, "I am tired of this. I'm not sure if I can cope with this anymore. I don't know if I can stand another rejection. I don't think I will speak in His name anymore." He comes to that place and he says, "There is a fire in my bones that I cannot quench and I have to speak." There is the delight, but there is a

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struggle that goes on inside. This Word is not just for you and your devotions or your personal inspiration or your growth in God. The Word is given to you that you might give the Word to the world, and the world is not going to delight in it in the same way you do; therefore, it is sweetness but bitterness, too. The Word of God is always a sweet thing, sweeter than honey from the honeycomb the psalmist said. It has bitter repercussions at times, but we must be a people who delight ourselves in the Word of God and fill ourselves with it. We too must eat the scroll as John did, for it is the "the Word planted in you" (James 1:21) that produces salvation; it is the Word of God that "lives in you" (1 John 2:14), that makes you strong and causes you to overcome.