

THE REVELATION

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Chapter 15:5 – 16:7

G. The Bowls of Wrath in Heaven (15:5-16:21)

1. The Angels from the Temple (15:5-6)

a) Seven Angels (15:5-6)

Rev 15:5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

The seven angels with the *seven plagues*, immaculately dressed in heavenly attire, exited the “temple of the “tabernacle of testimony in heaven.” What a title! From Genesis 1:1 to this verse, we have learned about the Temple, the Tabernacle, and the Testimony in Heaven separately. Still, we have never seen them all together in one title except here alone. Which came first? The Temple, the Tabernacle, or the Testimony? We have already discussed this order in the section of the *seventh trumpet*. Remember when the LORD began to show John the participants in the time of Israel’s trouble? He began with His original *testimony* stored in the Ark in heaven (11:19ff). In that passage, I said the following:

The One (*Ark*) that John was seeing was the eternal Covenant (*testimony*) of God, untainted by the world and all its ills. This Covenant (*testimony*) contained the whole plan of God, everything from eternity past to eternity future. It was put in place on the first day of creation before the LORD hung a blue water ball out in the courtyard of His home and called it Earth. (*See notes above for Revelation 11:19ff.*)

Do not be confused by the two words *testimony* and *covenant*; in the Scripture, depending on the translator, the words are synonymous. In Genesis, we see the first part of the LORD’s testimony being fulfilled by Adam in the garden. Then we see the LORD’s *testimony* with Noah followed by the LORD’s *testimony* to Abraham, then Jacob, then Israel, then David, and finally the Church. But it is the same *testimony* being fulfilled with all. Here in the REVELATION, the *testimony* is still being fulfilled.

In the story, after the Nation of Israel was birthed and then retrieved from Egypt, the earthly Tabernacle was introduced to hold the earthly replica of the *Ark containing the Testimony*. This earthly Tabernacle was a replica of the heavenly Tabernacle that Moses was allowed to measure. The earthly structure was also called the *tent of meeting* in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

A dozen years after King David moved the capital of Israel to Jerusalem, he asked the LORD if he could build a permanent structure to replace the Tabernacle that had been in use for about 460 years. The LORD allowed him to design it, but He would not let David build it. The LORD

designated the task for Solomon, and the work on the Temple began 480 years to the day (Nisan 15th) after the Nation of Israel left Egypt. The word “Temple” in Hebrew is *hekhal*, meaning *palace*. The tent of the Tabernacle was done away with, and the permanent *palace* took its place as the holder of the holy furniture, fixtures, and utensils of the worship of the LORD, including the earthly Ark replica.

Throughout the New Testament, from Matthew to Jude, the Greek word for “Temple” is *hieros*, meaning *sacred or sanctuary*. For the most part, this matches the intent of the Hebrew word selected for use with the Temple of David and Solomon.

However, in the REVELATION, every time the word “Temple” is used, the Greek word is different. It is *naos*, meaning *to inhabit*. It does not mean the *sanctuary* or *palace*; it means the *inhabitation* or the place in the heavenly *tabernacle* where the *testimony* rests (the “temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.”) In other words, that title means *the permanent home of the testimony in the Tabernacle*.

The seven angels come out of the *permanent habitation of the testimony in the Tabernacle* “clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.” They are dressed to the tee, righteous, pure, and holy, symbols of the righteous. Pure and holy wrath they are about to pour on the earth.

a) One Creature (15:7)

Rev 15:7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

We can only wonder which of the “four living creatures” had the privilege of handing the “seven golden bowls of the wrath of God” to the angels. Actually, the creature does not matter. More important is that these bowls of wrath belonged to “God, who lives forever and ever.”

2. The Smoke from the Glory (15:8)

Rev 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

John noticed that when the seven angels exited the *habitation of the testimony in the Tabernacle*, smoke filled the Temple room. Entrance to the room of the *testimony* will be blocked until the effects of the seven bowls are complete.

Chapter 16

3. The Command from the Temple (16:1)

Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

From the smoke-filled Temple, John hears the announcement, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

a) Bowl One (16:2)

Rev 16:2 So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

We have already clarified an important point about John's use of the two words *Earth* and *World*. When he speaks of the *World*, John means every square inch of the *World*. Sometimes, he uses the word *World* as a metaphor for every person who lives on the *World*, as in John 3:16, "For God so love the world . . ." However, when John uses the word *Earth*, he means a specific plot of land. In this case, when John sees the first *angel* pour "out his bowl on the earth," John means the land of the *Revived Roman Empire*. This is confirmed when the verse continues, "and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image." Everyone in the *Revived Roman Empire* must have the "mark" to buy, sell, or trade. That requirement will be empire-wide but cannot be mandated worldwide by these *beasts* because they will not control the world. However, anyone outside the *beasts'* empire who wishes to buy, sell, or trade with the empire will be required to obtain the same "mark." In short, no "mark," no business dealings. It will not matter how much money rests on the table for a purchase, no 666, no deal. It will be upon all who have the "mark" that this first bowl of wrath will be poured.

b) Bowl Two (16:3)

Rev 16:3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.

With the tipping of the *second bowl*, the "sea," the Great Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, will turn to blood. Before, in the story of the Revelation, a third of the creatures died. Here, every creature in that sea will die and its blood will permeate the waters all around the coasts of the ten nations of the *Revived Roman Empire*.

c) Bowl Three (16:4-7)

Rev 16:4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood.

With the pouring of the *third bowl of wrath*, all the freshwater, "rivers and the springs," will turn to blood. They were poisoned with hemlock before; they will be poisoned with blood here. Blood will be in the salt water and fresh water throughout the entire revived empire.

(1) The Angel of the Waters (16:5)

Rev 16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things;

What a wonderful addition at this place in the story! First, we see the "angel of the waters." Who would have known? For 65 books of the Bible plus 16 chapters of REVELATION and four verses, we have heard nothing about this angel and his job. No doubt, this angel was given this job on the second day of creation when the waters of the earth were divided to form the difference between the atmosphere and the oceans, sea, springs, and streams. Without this verse, we would never have known! Yet, it is amazing that the caretaker of the waters had the wherewithal to say, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things." An ecological disaster will occur on the land and waters controlled by the *Revived Roman Empire*, but the angel-given authority over

those waters will have absolutely no problem with the LORD's judgment. The angel will call them "righteous." That which he was entrusted to protect through the ages will be tainted and deadly, and he will call it "righteous."

Second, we see why the waters of the *Revived Roman Empire* will be being judged, and it has to do with what it had done in the past with the Nation of Israel, the Church, and its prophets.

(a) Blood of Saints and Prophets Poured (16:6a)

Rev 16:6a for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets,

The *Revived Roman Empire*, with *seven heads*, represents all seven empires that have wreaked havoc on all the saints and prophets of the LORD through all the ages. Of course, the word "saints" can rightly mean *Old Testament Israelites* and *New Testament Church Christians*. Notwithstanding, it will also mean all the blood of the "saints" of the tribulation days, new believers who were never part of the Church while it was still on earth. As for the word "prophets," we must clarify that the word used here does not mean those who can tell the future; rather, these prophets will be the ones who tell the message of the Gospel as recorded in the Word of God. In the Church, they are called preachers and ministers, but in reality, it should include all saints of all time who have died for being evangelists for the LORD.

Because of this empire and its ancestor empires' thirst for the blood of those who belong to the LORD, these first *bowls of wrath* will be poured out and devastate the water sources of the *Revived Roman Empire*.

(b) Blood of Saints and Prophets Drunk (16:6b)

Rev 16:6b and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it."

As in the days of the Exodus when all the water sources turned to blood, even the water stored in pitchers became blood upon the announcement of the plague. So, too, all the water sources for the *Revived Roman Empire* will be turned to blood. If anyone with the "mark" desires a drink, it will be blood and only blood. As the verse says, "They deserve it."

(2) The Voice of the Altar (16:7)

Rev 16:7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

With the *Revived Roman Empire* covered in blood from the judgment of the LORD through the first three *bowls of the wrath of God*, the voice of the altar says, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." In other words, the voice from the altar will act as a second witness to say about this Revived Roman Empire, "They deserve it."