

The Angels Having the Seven Last Plagues Revelation 15:5-8 The End Times

In my last post, we examined a **Revelation 15:1-4** to consider **The Song of Moshe and The Lamb**. In this post, we move on the **Revelation 15:5-8** to explore **The Angels Having the Seven Last Plagues**. This chapter is the shortest one in the book of Revelation; however, its brevity should not take away from the importance of its message, as it sets the stage for the final seven angels to pour out the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth.

⁵ After this I looked, and the sanctuary (that is, the Tent of Witness in heaven) was opened, ⁶ and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean bright linen and had gold belts around their chests. ⁷ One of the four living beings gave to the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the fury of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸ Then the sanctuary was filled with smoke from God's Sh'khinah, that is, from his power; and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels had accomplished their purpose. ~ Revelation 15:5-8 (CJB)

After this I looked, and the sanctuary (that is, the Tent of Witness in heaven) was opened. David Stern opines: ¹

*The word "tent" appears only here in Revelation. If there was a Hebrew original underlying our Greek text, this phrase, unique in ancient literature, could be explained as a corruption of "the Temple of God in heaven," which appears with the same verb (**was opened**) at 11:19. If the phrase stands as translated, the "sanctuary" is the Holy of Holies, which was also the location (or **tent**) of the ark of the Covenant (Messianic Jews [Hebrews] 9:4), called the ark of the Testimony throughout Exodus 25-40. Verse 8 supports this rendering, for we read that the smoke from God's Sh'khinah filled the sanctuary; in Exodus and Ezekiel God's glory inhabited the sanctuary. These final "bowl" plagues come from God's ultimate holiness.*

William Newell writes: ²

*There is a literal temple of God in heaven. Unless this is clearly seen and believed, much will be obscure. Was not Moses commanded when he was to make the tabernacle, "**see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount**" (Exodus 25:40)? Now these tabernacle things are distinctly called, in Hebrews 9:23, "**copies of the things in the heavens.**" We saw in Revelation 11:19, that "**there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant**"*

And out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean bright linen and had gold belts around their chests. ⁷ One of the four living beings gave to the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the fury of God, who lives forever and ever. The fact that the seven angels are ***they were dressed in clean bright linen and had gold belts around their chests*** (part of the attire of priests), would indicate that these are angel-priests. They also came out of the sanctuary. We know there are different ranks or levels of responsibility given to angels; therefore, it would seem that these seven angel-priests are of an extremely high order. Oliver Greene comments on these bowl (veil) judgments: ³

The vials of God's wrath are in a group all to themselves. Two things about the vial judgments differ from the seal and the trumpet judgments:

- 1. The throne in Heaven is the source of the seal and trumpet judgments. But the temple is the source of the vials. The temple takes the place of the throne in the vial judgments, introducing therefore an even more violent judgment than ever before witnessed on this earth. These vials, filled with judgment, come from God in His holy and righteous character.*

¹ Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.

² A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones

³ Ibid.

2. *These vials contain the wrath of God against the organized systems of evil, which are in power here upon the earth at that time; and the pouring out of these vials of God's wrath will mean the consummation of all evil power here upon earth. God's judgments upon evil men and their systems are being completed in order that the Millennium can begin, and there will then be peace on earth and good will toward men for the space of one thousand glorious years of peace.*

Then the sanctuary was filled with smoke from God's Sh'khinah, that is, from his power; and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels had accomplished their purpose. Messianic Jews [Hebrews] 9:5 understands "*the k'ruvim..., casting their shadow on the lid of the Ark,*" as "*representing the Sh'khinah,*" in the earthly Holy of Holies. Thus it is no surprise to find that in heaven *the sanctuary was filled with smoke from God's Sh'khinah.* At 13:6, *the beast* insulted God's "*name and his Sh'khinah, and those living in heaven*" and "*was allowed to make war on God's holy people and to defeat them.*" Now the tables are turned, with God's people victorious, and God's *fury* about to be poured out on those who follow the beast.

No one could enter the sanctuary may mean that none can enter His presence to intercede to avert the judgments. The day for intercession is past. The *sanctuary* is filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power - perhaps no created being could survive being in the presence of such extreme glory and power.

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 15:5-8 ⁴

The *seven last plagues* are contained within the *seventh shofar* of Chapter 8. The *bowls* given to the angels are to be poured out in Chapter 16.

Historicist Approach:

Historicists believe that the bowls are poured out over a period of two or more centuries, beginning with the French Revolution in the eighteenth century. They are designed for the punishment and destruction of *the beast*, papal Rome. They concur with my comment above on no one being permitted to enter the sanctuary.

Preterist Approach:

Preterists concur that the *smoke from God's Sh'khinah* harkens back to the dedication of the Tabernacle in Exodus 40:34-35 and to Solomon's Temple in 1 Kings 8:10-11.

Futurist Approach:

Futurists harken back to Revelation 5:8 where the bowls were full of the prayers of the saints and are now filled with divine retribution. This is the third *woe* of the *seventh shofar*.

Idealist Approach:

Idealists basically agree with what I have provided above.

In my next post, we will explore a **Revelation 16:1-2** to examine **The First Bowl**.

⁴ Material in this post is taken from "*Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated*" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.