

Special Ceremony in Preparation for the 7 Last Plagues

(vv. 5-8)

VERSE 5 After these things I looked (Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον [*conj kai + prep meta after* + *pro.acc.nt.p. touto “these things”* + *aor.act.ind.1s. eidon saw, look*], **and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened** [καὶ ἡνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. anoigo open* + *art.w/noun nom.m.s. naos shrine, inner sanctum* + *art.w/noun gen.f.s. skene tabernacle* + *art.w/noun gen.nt.s. marturion testimony* + *prep en in* + *art.w/noun loc.m.s. ouranos heaven*]]),

ANALYSIS: VERSE 5

1. It is now time for the angels introduced in v.1 to receive their bowls of wrath.
2. These plagues are in a category all by themselves as they constitute the door for the 2nd Advent to take place.
3. The verb “was opened” occurs at 11:19 as well.
4. There the heavenly temple of God was opened to reveal the Ark of the Covenant.
5. Rev.11:19 is in response to the song of the 24 elders.
6. Again, this scene will take place in heaven close to the time of the 2nd Advent, as does this scene.
7. Both scenes occur in connection with the 7th trumpet and the seven bowls of wrath.
8. The song of the 24 elders will take place in connection with the sounding of the 7th trumpet, and the song of the great multitude in chapter 15 takes place in connection with the introduction of the seven angels who administer the seven bowls of wrath of Rev. 16.
9. The scene beginning with Rev.11:15 is triggered by the sounding of the 7th and final trumpet.
10. The 7th trumpet with its seven bowls of wrath brings the tribulation to a close (cf. 15:1).
11. This opening of the temple as it is designated here is the very same opening that we find in 15:5 where the chronological progression/thread resumes.
12. In chapter 15 and 16 we have the revelation of the 7 bowls.
13. Chapter 15 presents activity in heaven in connection with the pouring out of the bowls of wrath, while chapter 16 presents the effects of the pouring out on men.
14. Chapters 12-14 are supplemental in nature.
15. The temple in heaven seen as opened here is the one presupposed in chapters 4 and 5 (cf. 3:12; 7:15; 15:5ff.).
16. This chapter begins with a look at the earthly temple (vv. 1-2) and ends with a look at the heavenly temple.
17. Apparently God’s throne and the temple in heaven are two related but separate entities.
18. This proves to be confusing since the golden altar of incense which sits in the holy place before the veil is seen before God’s throne in Revelation (cf. 6:9; 8:3,5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7).
19. Here for the first time the doors of the temple in heaven are opened.
20. Temple (*naos*) here refers to the inner most chambers as in the holy place and most holy place.
21. Its opening reveals the Ark of the Covenant.
22. This dramatic and most sacred piece of furniture is for the first time revealed to those assembled in heaven.

23. It is put on public display, something that was definitely not permitted over the course of its earthly sojourn from Sinai until it disappeared for good at the time of the Babylonian invasion.
24. A variety of traditions lay claim to its whereabouts on earth.
25. Whether or not this happening in heaven corresponds to the resurfacing of the earthly Ark of the Covenant we cannot say.
26. Its proper place was behind the second veil of the tabernacle (cf. Lev. 16:2ff.; Heb.9:3ff.; 10:20) and in the inner chambers of Solomon's temple (1Kgs. 8:6).
27. This scene is the heavenly counterpart of the earthly ark.
28. The Ark of the Covenant represents the person of Jesus Christ, who has been presented in heaven as a lamb.
29. A violent storm and seismic theophany closes the response to the sounding of the 7th trumpet.
30. The five-fold phenomenon signifies the divine presence (cf. Ex.19:16-19; Rev. 4:5; 16:18) and wrathful judgment of God (Rev. 8:5; 10:3; 16:18).
31. These combined with the first view into the temple in heaven signifies a decisive moment.
32. So, what we see in these verse and what we saw in chapter 11 is one and the same scene.
33. Actually, the scene has two parts, one is related to the song of the 24 elders and the sounding of the 7th trumpet, and the one here is in connection with the song of the Lamb and the manifestation of the angels of the wrath of God seen in the seven last plagues/bowls.
34. Very little time takes place between the ceremony of the 7th trumpet and the ceremony connected to the introduction to the seven bowls of wrath.
35. All takes place toward the very end of the tribulation (a matter of days).
36. Heaven is celebrating the decisive moment.
37. The sacred precincts in the 3rd heaven are described here by John as "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony."
38. The words "in heaven" makes is clear we are talking about the prototype of the earthly tabernacle/temple.
39. What John witnessed in his vision was along the same lines as the earthly tabernacle, later temple (cf. Ex. 25:16, 21; Heb. 8:5).
40. The term "temple" does not here refer to the outer structure, but rather to the inner sanctum or shrine.
41. The noun *naos* is used of the place where the pagan shrine was set up (cf. Acts 17:24; cp. 19:24).
42. The term is used of the Spirit-indwelt believer (cf. 1Cor. 6:19).
43. The word is used of the Most Holy Place in Matt. 27:51: "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...").
44. This is the place where the False Prophet will set up the idol of the Beast at the midpoint of the tribulation (cf, Dan. 9:27; 12:11; 2Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15).
45. In the Most Holy Place was but one piece of furniture, the Ark of the Covenant.
46. Note Acts 7:44 where the phrase "tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness" occurs.
47. The wooden rectangular box overlaid with gold we call "the Ark of the Covenant" was also called "the Ark of the Testimony" (cf. Ex. 25:22,33,34; 30:6,26; 39:35; 40:3,5,21; Lev. 16:13; Num. 4:5; 7:89; Josh. 4:16).
48. It bore witness via typology to the Person of Jesus Christ.

49. He is both God (gold) and man (wood) and on the inside He is the resurrection and the life (Aaron's rod that budded), the truth of BD (pot of manna), and He is perfect righteousness (tablets of the Ten Commandments).
50. The source of the wrath connected with the last seven plagues is Jesus Christ and that which symbolizes Him in heaven.
51. In chapter 11 we saw the heavenly Ark of the Covenant revealed.
52. The wrath that comes upon sinners at this time comes from the One who is perfect righteousness.
53. The existing peoples earn the wrath they come under.

Presentation of the Seven Angels (v.6)

VERSE 6 and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple (καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι [οἱ] ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ πληγὰς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. exerchomai come out + art.w/noun nom.m.p. angelos angel + adj.nom.m.p. hepta seven + pres.act.part.nom.m.p. echo have + art.w/noun acc.f.p. plege + adm.acc.f.p. hepta seven*], **clothed in linen, clean and bright** [ἐνδεδυμένοι λίνον καθαρὸν λαμπρὸν [*perf.mid.part.nom.m.p. enduo clothe + noun acc.nt.s. linon linen + adj.acc.nt.s. katharos clean + adj.acc.nt.s. lampros bright, shining*], **and girded around their chests with golden sashes** [καὶ περιεζωσμένοι περὶ τὰ στήθη ζώνας χρυσᾶς [*conj kai + perf.mid.part.nom.m.p. perizonnumi gird, fasten + prep epi + art.w/noun acc.nt.p. stethos chest, breast + nou acc.f.p. zone belt; "shases" + adj.acc.f.p. chrusous golden*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 6

1. Emerging from the inner sanctum comes seven angels having in their possession the seven plagues.
2. The perfect participles describing the dress of the angels are the same two perfect participles describing the Son of Man in John's vision of 1:13.
3. The "linen" worn by the angels represents perfect and absolute righteousness as it does with the bride of the Lamb in 19:8.
4. Both adjective describing the linen as "clean" and "bright" appear in connection with the garments of the bride of Christ (19:8), who compose His army when He returns (19:14).
5. The purity of their clothing represents the character of their mission, which is preparation for the 2nd Advent.
6. "Bright" and "glistening" is a way to describe angelic dress (cf. Acts 13:10).
7. The golden girdles are the same as the one Christ wears in 1:18.
8. They are a breastplate made of gold and signify the perfect essence of God on whose behalf they act.
9. In this case their mission is punitive.

"Arming" the Seven Angels (v.7)

VERSE 7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels (καὶ ἓν ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων ἔδωκεν τοῖς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοις [*conj kai + adj.nom.nt.s. hen one + prep ek + art.w/noun abl.nt.p. zoon living creature + adj.abl.nt.p. tessares four + aor.act.ind.3s. didomi give + art.w/noun dat.m.p. angelos angel + adj.dat.m.p. hepta seven*] **seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever** [ἑπτὰ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων [*adj.acc.f.p. hepta seven + noun acc.f.p. phiale bowl, shallow cup, a broad vessel and flat in shape + adj.acc.f.p. chrusous golden + pres.act.part.acc.f.p. gemo be full of, contain + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thumos anger + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + art.w/pres.act.part.gen.m.s. zao live + prep eis into + art.w/noun acc.m.p. aion age + art.w/noun gen.m.p. aion age*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 7

1. The angels upon emerging out of the temple move into a position where they can individually receive the seven bowl's of God's anger.
2. The part of one of the living beings distributing the seven bowls to the seven angels recalls the four in the imposition of the first four seals (cf. 6:1-8).
3. In 5:8 we encounter bowls (24) full of incense, but these are full of the anger of God.
4. The word translated "bowls" refers to a shallow saucer-like dish and occurs 12x in Revelation (5:8; 15:7; 16:1,2,3,4,,8,10, 12,17; 17:1; 21:9).
5. The bowls are portrayed as full to the brim with the anger of God.
6. The phrase "who live forever and ever" differentiates God from the image of the beast and all mortal beings.
7. It adds solemnity to the scene as in 10:6 and gives a very serious cast to the wrath about to be inflicted.
8. One of the four cherubs or living creatures distributes to each of the seven angels the particular ingredients associated with each of the successive bowls of wrath.