

## **THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIALS REVELATION 15:5-8**

Let's turn, please, in our Bibles to the book of Revelation, chapter 15. We're going to read together the entire chapter, but the focus of our study today is going to be on verses 5 to 8.

“<sup>1</sup> And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. <sup>2</sup> And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. <sup>3</sup> And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. <sup>4</sup> Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

“<sup>5</sup> And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: <sup>6</sup> and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. <sup>7</sup> And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. <sup>8</sup> And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.”

Now we have said this before, but I want to say it again. The book of Revelation is the most Old Testament centric book in the entire New Testament. Revelation is rooted in the Old Testament, and Revelation is saturated with allusions and references to Old Testament symbolism and to Old Testament events. G.K. Beale states in his commentary on the book of Revelation that there are over 500 allusions to Old Testament passages in the book of Revelation. And as we have proceeded through the exposition of this book, we have repeatedly turned to the Old Testament to understand the meaning and the interpretation of various symbols and statements that are made by John as he writes this book.

Last week, we saw the saints in heaven, upon seeing the seven vials of wrath about to be poured out upon the wicked, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, reminding us that God's judgments on Pharaoh and his people are indicative of God's judgments about to be poured out on the beast and his people. As we see God punish and defeat and destroy the enemies of the people of God in the Old Testament, we see a foreshadowing and an example of how God will also defeat and destroy the enemies of the people of God in the New Testament.

These seven vials of wrath that are now about to be poured out are very similar to the ten plagues that Moses brought upon Pharaoh in Egypt. Just like the Egyptian plagues, these seven vials bring tremendous suffering upon those who willfully defy God. And just like the Egyptian

plagues, they culminate in the destruction of the willfully defiant in the final plague that is brought to bear at the second coming of Jesus.

Last week, as we began our study of the fifth parallel section of this book, we saw the prologue to the seven vials. We observed the glorified church in heaven praising God for the judgments that they saw were about to be poured out, when the seven angels with the seven last plagues were presented before them in verse 1. Sinless, glorified saints not only have no problem when they see God impose suffering on the wicked of this earth, they actually break out into praise to God when they see it, because they see the justice of it.

It has been well said that if God does not judge the wicked of this age, then He is going to owe an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah for pouring out His wrath upon them in a previous age. The people in heaven recognize this principle. They recognize that justice must be served, sin must be punished, and rebels must be subdued, and therefore, when God sets out to bring His wrath to bear upon the wicked of this age, the saints in heaven rejoice that justice is once again going to be upheld, and that the moral balance of the kingdom of God is going to be restored.

God has said in Romans 12 and verse 19, “Vengeance is mine; I *will* repay, saith the Lord.” And repaying is exactly what God is doing in pouring out the seven vials of wrath. God is exercising His justice, and it is the exercise of His justice that the saints in heaven are praising Him for. While they were on earth, these saints were severely persecuted by the beast and his people. These saints had gotten the victory over the beast by refusing to renounce Christ, even though the beast had relentlessly pressured them to do so, even to the point of death. And now, they see God obtaining the justice for them that they had never gotten while they were alive on earth, and they are filled with joy and with thanksgiving and with praise to God for the fact that they are finally getting the justice that they were owed for the evil that was done to them for simply serving Christ on earth.

Well, having heard the praise of the saints as they saw the seven angels come forth to exercise the vengeance of God, let us now observe the commission of these angels and the carrying out of this justice, as we examine together chapters 15 and 16 as we go along.

Having seen last week the prologue to the pouring out of the seven vials in verses 1 to 4, this week we want to consider together the presentation of the seven vials in verses 5 through 8, and then in subsequent weeks, God willing, we’ll see the pouring out of the vials, in chapter 16 and following.

So in the first place then this morning, let us consider together the source of God’s judgment. The source of God’s judgment is in verse 5. Notice it says, “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.” Now you recall that we were introduced in verse 1, in summary fashion, to these seven angels having these seven last plagues in which is filled up the wrath of God. Remember verse 1? “And I saw another sign in

heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.”

Furthermore, we saw that when the glorified saints in heaven saw these seven angels with these seven vials of wrath, the saints burst out into a hymn of praise to God for the judgment and the justice He was going to carry out on the wicked for their persecution of the saints and for their defiance of God.

But now, in verses 5 to 8, we have much fuller description of these angels we were introduced to in verse 1, and we have a much fuller description of the presentation of these vials of wrath to these angels. Verse 5 says, “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.” We are told in verse 5 that the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. Now this is a very long, extended, and descriptive title, and we want to look at it in some detail for a few moments.

Notice it talks in verse 5 about the tabernacle. The tabernacle was the movable building that God instructed Moses to build in Exodus chapter 25 through Exodus chapter 27. And in this tabernacle that Moses was instructed to build were two rooms. The first room was called the holy place, and it contained the lampstand with seven lamps, the altar of incense, and the table of showbread. Those three items were in the holy place.

The second room of this tabernacle was called the holy of holies, and it contained the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular wooden box completely overlaid with gold that was about two feet wide, about three and a half feet long, and about two feet tall. On the top of this gold covered box was a lid, and this lid was covered with gold, and it was adorned with two upright sculptures of angels. This lid was called the Mercy Seat, and once a year on the Day of Atonement, this lid was sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificial animal to make atonement for the sins of the people.

Now the instructions for making the ark are contained in Exodus chapter 25, verses 10 to 21, and I’d like for us to turn there for a moment, if you would please. The children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, they had come to Mount Sinai, and they were now camped at its base. And of course, God appeared to them there and He made the Old Covenant with them. In order to execute and carry out the Old Covenant, God gave instructions for the establishment of the tabernacle and everything that was within it, and all the services that were to be offered in relationship to it. It says in Exodus 25, verse 10:

“<sup>10</sup> And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. <sup>11</sup> And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. <sup>12</sup> And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. <sup>13</sup> And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. <sup>14</sup> And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. <sup>15</sup> The

staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it.” Now I want you to notice verse 16: “And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.” Something called the testimony is going to be put inside the ark.

Keep reading, verse 17: “And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. <sup>18</sup> And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. <sup>19</sup> And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. <sup>20</sup> And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.” Now here’s our verse again, verse 21: “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.”

So in these instructions, specifically it says in verse 16 and in verse 21, Thou shall put *into* the ark the testimony which I shall give them. So clearly, God was going to give something to Moses to place inside the ark, and that something was called the testimony. And as a result of the placing of this testimony inside the ark, the ark was then referred to as the ark of the testimony.

Notice Exodus 25 and verse 22. It says, “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon”—here it is—“the ark of the testimony.” So because this item called the testimony is going to be put inside the ark, the ark is now going to be referred to as the “ark of the testimony.”

The question is, what was this “testimony” that was placed inside of the ark? Well, the Bible’s very clear to tell us what this is. In Exodus 31 and verse 18, it says, “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” So the Ten Commandments were the testimony. It says in Exodus 32 and verse 15 that “Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand”—the two tables were written on both their sides.

So this testimony that was placed into the ark, which was in the tabernacle, was the Ten Commandments that were written on the two tablets of stone, which were given to Moses on Mount Sinai by God. The reason why these Ten Commandments were called the testimony is because they gave testimony and they gave witness of God’s moral government over man. They were a witness of mankind’s duty to obey God, and they were a witness of what it was that God required of man.

These Ten Commandments testified to the fact that man had a duty to obey God, and they testified as to what that duty consisted of, and they testified to the fact that God had moral authority over man, and that man had a duty to answer to God for his moral behavior. These two tablets testified to all of those things, and thus they were called the Testimony. So these Ten

Commandments testified to God's moral authority over men, and they testified of man's obligations to Almighty God.

Now it goes on to say in Exodus 40 and verse 20, "And [Moses] took and put the testimony into the ark, . . . and put the mercy seat above upon the ark." So he took the lid off the ark, he put the two tablets of stone in the ark, and he put the lid back on.

Now as late as the building of Solomon's temple,—you remember that there was the tabernacle all these years, and then ultimately a temple was built to replace the tabernacle, which was called Solomon's temple. And it says in First King chapter 8 and verse 9, regarding the ark, "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt."

So then, because the ark contained the testimony, namely, the Ten Commandments, it was called the ark of the testimony, and because the ark of the testimony was placed in the tabernacle, the tabernacle then became known as the tabernacle of the testimony, and it was called that in Numbers 10 and verse 11. Now we know eventually the tabernacle of the testimony was replaced with Solomon's temple, the permanent temple made of stone, and thus the temple became known as the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony, which is of course the descriptive term that's used here in Revelation 15 and verse 5.

So, if you're still in Exodus, now is the time to turn back to Revelation chapter 15. Notice Revelation 15 and verse 5: "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." And now you know what the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is. Of course, the temple on earth is just a pattern of the true temple that is in heaven, which John saw in his vision. But the same descriptive terminology is applied to them both. The temple in heaven, as well as the temple on earth, are both known as the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony.

What John is doing in bringing forth the name of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is twofold. First of all, because this tabernacle was built during the exodus, and this testimony of the Ten Commandments was given during the exodus, it reminds us of the exodus and all that is involved in it, including the plagues that fell on Egypt that began the exodus. These Egyptian plagues foreshadow the plagues that are about to be poured out of the seven vials, which the angels are given.

So there are tremendous parallels, as we're going to see, between the plagues poured out on Egypt and the plagues poured out in these seven vials, in chapter 16. And what John is doing is, he's preparing us to see that the Old Testament foreshadows the pouring out of these vials in the New Testament.

But secondly, and far more importantly, this term "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony," reminds us of the Ten Commandments. They're the testimony, right? This term reminds us of

the Ten Commandments, which are a declaration of God's moral authority over men, and a declaration of the consequences of defying that authority. Sin is the transgression of the Law of God, and it is only sin—nothing else, just sin—that calls down and calls out God's wrath upon men.

So the wrath of God that is about to be poured out in these seven vials must be understood as fitting punishments for the violation of the testimony God gave to man of what He required of them when He gave *to* them the Ten Commandments. The wrath of God makes no sense apart from the Law of God, and therefore, the law is set forth in chapter 15 and verse 5 so that we might understand the wrath of God that is poured out in chapter 16, verses 1 to 21, and why it was poured out. It was poured out for the violation of that law, and poured out for no other reason. And so, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony becomes the source of the vials of wrath that are about to be poured out.

Now you're in Revelation chapter 15 and verse 5. Turn back, please, in Revelation to chapter 11 and verse 19. It says, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his"—what?—"testament," the ark that contained the Ten Commandments, "and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

Once again, the temple of the ark of the testimony is the source of the violent wrath of God against men. And it is precisely because men have thrown off the moral authority of God, and they have violated the moral laws of God, that God's wrath falls upon man. And so in Revelation 11, and in Revelation 15, we see the heavenly temple that contains God's law, which is the heavenly source of the earthly judgments that are about to fall.

Now by way of application, we need to understand from all of this, and we need to understand it very clearly, that God takes His moral law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, very seriously—and so should we. Four observations tell us that God takes the Ten Commandments very seriously:

First of all, Its violation brings down the worst expressions of God's wrath possible. Trumpets of judgments, vials of wrath, the lake of fire—all of this because of the violation of the Ten Commandments, and for this alone.

People say, Oh, how could there be a God with all this suffering in the world? He must be cruel somehow. You know, all this suffering in the world is God's punishment for the violation of His moral law. And you ain't seen nothin' yet. This is just a sample. It will get much worse when men are cast into the lake of fire for all of eternity.

And so all of this pain and anguish is designed to cause men to say, Why is this happening? And the answer is, because we are sinners, we have violated God's law, we are under God's wrath, we need to flee from the wrath to come, and by fleeing to Christ, finding in Him forgiveness and

redemption. And as we find forgiveness and redemption in Him, we find deliverance from the wrath to come, and ultimately, in heaven, we are separated from it forever.

So, the wrath of God occurring to men on earth now, in the present suffering that we see—far from that causing men to blaspheme God, it should cause them to recognize that God has authority over man, and that man is under the wrath of God. Man needs to flee to Christ to avoid that wrath, instead of doing what depraved hearts do, and that is, shaking their fist at God and becoming angry at God because He allows so much suffering in the world, as though they never sinned against the testimony of the Ten Commandments. And now you begin to understand passages like Isaiah 8 and verse 20: “To the law and to the testimony.” What’s the testimony? It’s the law, right? It’s the Ten Commandments. He’s saying, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

So when you run across this phrase, “the testimony,” that’s just a reference to the Ten Commandments. For example, Psalms 19:7 “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

The point is, God takes His moral law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, very seriously. Its violation brings down the worst expressions of God’s wrath possible.

Secondly, God is still punishing men for their violations of them, so clearly, they have not passed away. People say, Oh, you know, the law—it’s passed away; we now have Christ. But what do you see God doing during the New Testament era? Punishing men for the violation of the testimony; for the violation of God’s law, the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments have not passed away—not one of them. All of them are still in force, all of them have been in force and will be in force forever. Therefore, we cannot say, Well, we don’t have to live by the Ten Commandments anymore, because they’ve passed away. No. God in heaven still has the Ten Commandments there, and He’s still pouring out His vials of wrath in this age on people for the violation of them.

Thirdly, it is our violation of the Ten Commandments that Jesus saves us from, when He saves us from our sins, and it is the keeping of the Ten Commandments, that Jesus exhorts us to practice in our Christian lives. Far from the Ten Commandments having passed away, they are an essential part of the Christian life. When we want to know how we should show our love to God, He says, If you love me, keep my commandments. What are the commandments? The Ten Commandments.

Fourthly, for all eternity, the Ten Commandments are the laws that we will live by in heaven. In heaven, we’re not going to lie to each other, we’re not going to steal from each other. We’re going to worship on the Sabbath, every week. All of those things are still going to guide our moral behavior for all of eternity.

So when it talks about the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony, the testimony of the Ten Commandments are at the very heart of the tabernacle of the temple. And it is on the basis of them that the worst expressions of God's wrath are brought down. It is on the basis of them that God is still punishing men for their violations. It's on the basis of them that we live the Christian life. It's on the basis of them that we will be living for all of eternity.

Well that brings us then to our second major point this morning. Having seen the source of God's judgment is the violation of the Ten Commandments, notice secondly, the agents of God's judgment in verse 6. It says, "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles."

Now out of the temple of God in heaven come seven angels who have the seven plagues. When it says they have the seven plagues, clearly, it's speaking prospectively, because they are not actually given the vials of God's wrath which contain the plagues until verse 7, the next verse. So these are the angels which are commissioned to execute God's wrath upon an unrepentant people, and they are sent forth from the very presence of God, out of this temple where God dwells. They are sent forth out of the very presence of God to execute His wrath.

Now this sending of seven plagues upon those who willfully defy God, is spoken of in the Old Testament, in Leviticus chapter 26 and verse 21, where God says, "And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins." In fact, the twentysixth chapter of Leviticus is a warning of God's wrath and the woes that He will send upon Israel for her rebellion and for her idolatry. Four times in Leviticus 26, God says that He will bring a sevenfold judgment on Israel if they continue to rebel against Him. And that fourtime declaration of that sevenfold judgment He's going to bring, is stated in Leviticus 26, verse 18, verse 21, verse 24, and verse 28.

Now as God threatens Israel with this sevenfold judgment, four times, if they engage in idolatry and rebellion against Him, each of these sevenfold judgments becomes increasingly severe, so that if Israel does not repent at the first sevenfold judgment, an increasingly severe set of additional judgments are brought. This continues on, and if Israel still refuses to repent, then ultimately she will be destroyed as a nation and violently removed from the land.

This same pattern of increasingly severe, sevenfold judgments is what God is imposing on the beast and on those who are working with him in their persecution of Christians in their defiance of God. There are the seven trumpets, you recall. And then when men refused to repent at them, now we have seven vials of God's wrath that bring destruction upon them. And so this pattern of seven judgments coming with increasing severity, again and again, until Israel either repents or is destroyed, is exactly the pattern that we see in Revelation.

Now it says in verse 6 of these angels that they are clothed in pure and white linen and they have a golden band around their chests. This description of these angels being dressed in white with a golden band around their chest is almost identical to the description given of the Son of man in



chapter 1 of Revelation, in verse 13. The similarity of dress of these angels to Jesus indicates their closeness with Jesus, and their identification with Jesus, and their purity before Jesus. They are the righteous servants of God, and with utmost purity of motive and conduct they carry out the will of God.

These angels that are commissioned to bring these plagues have come from the immediate presence of God, and they come with the full authority of God to carry out the dreadful judgments of God upon rebellious humanity. These angels are clearly being sent out of the temple and are acting at the commandment of God.

That brings us then to our third major point. Having seen the source of God's judgment, in verse 5, and the agents of God's judgment, in verse 6, notice thirdly, the instruments of God's judgment, in verse 7. It says in verse 7, "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever."

So this beast in verse 7 is described as being "one of the four beasts." We were introduced to these four beasts, or living beings, in Revelation chapter 4 and verse 6 and following. There, as we looked at Revelation 4 and verse 6, we saw that these beasts were, in fact, seraphim. They were angels that had six wings, who were also spoken of in Isaiah chapter 6, verses 1 to 7.

So one of these four seraphim who was around the throne now gives to these seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. The word "vial" is a translation of the Greek word "phiale." All other translations translate this word as "bowl." Now a vial is a deep and slender vessel, while a bowl is a wide and shallow vessel. But the shape of the vessel is not really relevant. What is relevant is what is *in* that vessel and what happens when that vessel is upended and poured out. Since I am using the King James, I'm going to refer to them as "vials," though if you think of them as bowls, as is translated in the New King James, that is perfectly fine, and in fact, all other translations translate it as "bowl." But the idea is, it's a vessel that contains a fluid, and it is poured out. The shape of the vessel and the name of the vessel is really irrelevant to the interpretation of the passage.

Now many vessels used in the Old Testament temple were made of gold, and it's therefore fitting that these vials that come out of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony are also made of gold, since they come from the very altar of the temple of God in heaven. In Revelation 5 and verse 8, and in Revelation 8 and verse 3, we see golden vessels being used in the temple in heaven, and in particular, at the altar of the temple in heaven, where the prayers of the saints for justice are offered.

These judgments are God's answer to the saints' prayers for vindication, and they are conveyed from the altar in heaven to the angels in golden vessels. These vessels contain the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. Now people can often escape the wrath of their enemies by outliving their enemies, or by waiting for them to die, and thereby being freed from their wrath. But no one is ever going to outlive God or outlast God, and thereby escape the wrath of God. He lives

forever and ever. His wrath will last forever. And the objects of that wrath will never escape it, because they can never escape Him.

And this wrath of the eternal God is dreadful in its degree, because we are told that these golden vials were full of the wrath of God. The whole amount is there. Nothing is left out and nothing is held back. It is poured out to its maximum degree and to its full amount.

That brings us then to our fourth and final point. Having seen the source of God's judgment in verse 5; having seen the agents of God's judgment in verse 6; having seen the instruments of God's judgment in verse 7; notice fourthly, the glory of God's judgment in verse 8. Verse 8 says, "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

Now in the Old Testament, when God manifested Himself to men, He often appeared in such glory that they could not come near Him, or ever stand before Him. For example:

- In Exodus chapter 40 and in verse 35, it says that Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the meeting, because the glory of God filled the tabernacle.
- In First Kings 8, verses 10 and 11, when the priests dedicated Solomon's temple, they were unable to stand and minister because the glory of the Lord had filled the temple.
- In Isaiah chapter 6 and verse 4, Isaiah records that the foundations of the doorposts of heaven shook, and the house was filled with smoke when he saw his vision of the Lord sitting upon the His throne.
- In Ezekiel 44 and verse 4, it says Ezekiel fell on his face before the vision of the temple filled with the glory of God.

So here in these vial judgments, God is manifesting His glory and His power to such an intense degree that no angel and no glorified saint can stand in His presence.

In First Timothy chapter 6 and verse 16, it says that God dwells in the light, which no man can approach unto. God can only be approached when He wills, at His pleasure, and only by the means that He has appointed. The inapproachability of God is the result of the awfulness of His presence when He fully manifests His glory and His power, as He is doing in the work of judgment. And until that work of judgment is finished, and the degree of the manifestation of His glory and power in the execution of that judgment has subsided, no man is able to be in the personal presence of God. No one can approach to stay His hand of judgment by way of intercession, once that judgment is determined to be carried out.

Verse 8 tells us of the dreadful irreversibility of God's judgments once they are set in motion. No intercessor can now approach Him and say, Please, stop! God is all done, at this point, showing mercy and patience and goodness to these people. For them, the day of grace is over, and wrath is all that is left to them. The door of the ark, as it were, is shut. And now it's just a matter of time before the wrath of God falls and carries them all away.

This, then, is the presentation of the vials of judgment. What is the source of this judgment? It is the violation of the testimony, the Ten Commandments, the Law of God.

Who are the agents of God's judgment? It is these holy angels that come from the very presence of God, with the commission of God, to execute the wrath of God.

What are the instruments of God's judgment? They are these golden vessels that come from the very altar of God, where the prayers of the saints for vindication and for vengeance for the wrongs done to them are offered to God, and this is God's answer to those prayers. He is sending forth, straight from the altar, golden vessels filled with His wrath. The seraphim then give them to the angels, and the angels are prepared to pour them out.

And then, once this transaction has taken place and these vials of wrath are handed to these angels, What is the effect of this judgment? The glory of God so fills the temple that no man can come into the temple or approach God. The execution of His wrath has been set in motion, and it is irreversible. So thus, the presentation of the vials.

Now the thing I want us to take away from all of this is the significance and the centrality and the importance of the Law of God. All of this—all of this wrath and this judgment—is because men have sinned against God. The Bible says sin is the transgression of the law, and God has given us that law in his Ten Commandments. When men break those laws, it brings the wrath of God against them. We see that wrath in the seven trumpets of warning, we see that wrath in the seven vials of anger, and ultimately, we see that wrath in the lake of fire consisting of permanent, eternal, irreversible judgment. And all because, why? Men broke God's laws.

Therefore, people, take God's law seriously. Learn the Ten Commandments. Recognize them as God's will for your life—not that by living according to them you're going to get saved. No one is saved by keeping the Ten Commandments, because no one has kept them. Jesus saved us from God's wrath for the violation of those Ten Commandments. But Jesus, having lived them perfectly and saved us from the penalties that they require of us, now says to us, Here's how, as saved Christians, I expect you to live in your personal lives. Live by the commandments of God.

And it is precisely because of the violation of those commandments that all of the suffering in this world exists, brought to us by Adam, and then perpetrated by ourselves in our own evil moral choices.

And when you see this horrible wrath that's going to be poured out in these seven judgments, you will say to yourselves over and over again, Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me from my violations of your holy law—your testimony. You gave testimony of your authority over me and my duty to you, and I defied that. I repent of that, Father. Forgive me for my violation of your commandments, and save me through your Son from the penalty they require of me.

And the Bible says, whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. That's the good news of the gospel, and that's what we celebrate in the Lord's Supper. We celebrate in the Lord's Supper Jesus saving us from the wrath of God for our breaking of His Ten Commandments. Thank God that a provision of salvation has been made. And the degree of the wrath God pours out on sinners tells us something of the degree of the evil that is involved in breaking God's law, and thus the value and worth of the sacrifice Jesus made in saving us from it.

Well, let us rejoice that we have a Savior who fulfilled the law and saved us from the penalties of the law so that we might then live the law, as we walk with Him in our Christian lives. Shall we pray together.

Our Father, we thank you for this blessed warning and this very clear declaration of how seriously you take your Testimony, your Ten Commandments. Father, I pray that you would cause us to be filled with gratitude for the saving work of Jesus. And Father, may we be filled with zeal in showing our love to Him by keeping His commandments. And indeed, His commandments are not grievous. They bring blessing in our lives.

Help us then, Father, to be blessed as we, by faith, live different from the world, live according to the law of God, and thereby attain blessing from God, and show love to God, and are a testimony to the world of the moral authority of God over us, and indeed, over them as well. Father, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.