***The Ark of the Covenant Today

RV197-01***

Please take your Bibles and turn to Revelation 15:5-8 as we continue our study on "The Seven Angels with the Seven Plagues." This is section number two on the final section of the large set of parentheses.

**The Tabernacle in Heaven**

After the vision of the heavenly choir of martyrs, the scene shifts for John to the tabernacle of God which is in heaven. This is a fitting object to come into view at this point in history, because God is, at that time, dealing with the Jewish people in the final seven years of history that God had set aside in bringing to fulfillment all the promises of God to the Jewish people. The focus in this heavenly tabernacle is the holy of holies section. What we are referring to is what was actually the tent that the Jews had for their worship in the Old Testament. Furthermore, John sees that it is called the tabernacle of testimony.

**The Ark of the Covenant**

The main item of the furniture in the tabernacle was located in the holy of holies, and that item of furniture was the ark of the covenant. That is because the ark of the covenant that the tabernacle is called the tabernacle of testimony. The ark of the covenant is called that because it is in memory of God's promise to Abraham, in the Abrahamic covenant, to make a great nation out of him; to bring salvation through his line; and, to create a dynasty (a kingdom and a people) which will forever possess a position of prominence in this world. So, it's called the ark of the covenant in reference to that Abrahamic covenant. The main part of the covenant, of course, was that the Jewish people would receive a future Messiah Savior whose work, in behalf of all of mankind, would extend also to the gentiles.

**Salvation**

Personal salvation then was at the heart of the covenant with Abraham. For this reason, the ark of the covenant is the main feature of the tabernacle. The ark of the covenant portrays, on the one hand, the sinfulness of man; and, on the other hand, the grace of God in providing a sacrifice in Christ to save a man, who in no way could save himself.

**The Ten Commandments**

The ark of the covenant conveyed the sinfulness of man through three objects which were stored inside of the ark. The first were the two tables of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments. This was an expression of God's absolute righteousness which is necessary for anybody to enter heaven. Everyone in the human race sooner or later breaks one of the moral codes of God. That in itself, apart from the fact that they're already born out the guilt of Adam, breaking any of these moral principles will doom one to the lake of fire.

**The Pot of Manna**

The second item in the ark, demonstrating the sinfulness of man, was the pot of manna, which was there to commemorate the provision of God concerning the food of the Jews in the wilderness travelings, and they complained about this provision. They revealed their sin of ingratitude because they didn't care for the manna, so God brought judgment upon them. This manna, of course, also had a secondary symbolic meaning in the fact that it stood for the Word of God, Bible doctrine upon which the soul is to be fed. They also held the Word of God in disdain. They preferred instead their human traditions.

**Aaron's Rod that Budded**

The third item demonstrated in the sinfulness of man, which was in the ark, was that dead stick of Aaron, the high priest, which budded into life to confirm that he and Moses were God's leaders. This was brought about at a point in time when the Jews decided that they wanted democracy in their religious and civil life. So, they attacked Moses and Aaron, and said, "Who are you to be leading this nation and to be governing it on the principles of rules that you get from God?" Moses and Aaron could not do whatever they wanted to do. They were restricted. That's what a Constitution does. It restricts those in positions of leadership so that you cannot vote an injustice and a tyranny on the rest of the people just because you outnumber them by a majority. That is why democracy's always degenerated into tyrannies. Of course, one of the greatest of all democracies in our day was the Soviet Union. That was very quickly degenerated to where it was under the control of an elitist group, because democracy becomes so violent that you have to have a strong hand thereafter to control the society.

So God demonstrated that Moses and Aaron were right. They were His people, and they were operating under His laws. They were a representative republican type of government. So, the rod of Aaron budded, and that cleared up the issue. However, God's anger against them brought again a judgment of death upon them.

So, the sinfulness of man is testified to by the contents of the ark, which was overcome only by the sprinkling of the blood of an innocent sacrifice on the top of that ark, the mercy seat, which symbolized the coming death of Christ.

So, we pick up the story now where John, in Revelation 15:5, says, "After these things (after the choir in heaven), I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was opened." This refers to the holy of holies, the sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony and heaven. Suddenly, John realizes that he is looking into the holy of holies of the heavenly tabernacle itself. This is, in effect, the third heaven, the very throne room of God. Now it is open to the view of all.

In the Greek Bible, this indicates that this took place at a point of time, which was namely the death of Christ. It was in the passive voice, which means it is the result of this payment for sin by Christ on the cross. Now all the redeemed may indeed enter the very presence of God, the holy of holies. Born-again sinners are now qualified because they have imputed to them the absolute righteousness of God. This signals to all mankind what John already knew as he looked at that heavenly tabernacle, and saw himself peering into the very holy of holies. He realized that indeed it was another demonstration that God's throne of judgment had now become a throne of grace. The writer of the book of Hebrews, in Hebrews 4:16, makes that connection, when he says, "Let us therefore draw near with the confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

**Mercy**

A person through Christ, but only through Christ, may approach a holy God, and he can count on receiving mercy. Please remember that mercy is God's help for your misery. The word "mercy" is to be connected with human misery. God helps your human misery by exercising His grace on the basis of what Christ has done on the cross.

**Solomon's Temple**

The background, of course, of all of this that John is seeing here in heaven with the holy of holies open, and with the ark of the testimony there before him, is the earthly ark of the covenant that was originally built by Moses in the wilderness for the portable tent tabernacle. In time, under the reign of King Solomon, for a period of seven years, Solomon proceeded with expert craftsman of various kinds, drawn from different parts of the world, to use the materials which his father David had accumulated in an enormous amount. David had accumulated the most valuable of precious metals and various types of lumber (wood that was needed).

All of this was accumulated, and Solomon now proceeded to erect this magnificent, fantastically beautiful temple. It was so imposing that when it was finally destroyed by the Babylonians, and after 70 years, the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, they did rebuild the temple. And on the day that they dedicated that, the old timers, who had seen the original Solomonic temple, were in tears. As you read that in Scripture, you might think that it was just their joy over seeing the temple once more rebuilt, and the services resumed. But the reason that they were weeping, the Bible indicates, is because they remembered how far they had fallen from the temple that Solomon had built. Solomon's temple was one of the grandest structures that has ever been put together by the human race. Someone has calculated that in modern terms of the value of a dollar, the Jews spent something like $1 billion on building that temple, just to give you some idea.

So, over a period of seven years, Solomon proceeded to build this permanent place of worship. It was placed in the proper place on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem to replace the old tabernacle. The center position of this temple that Solomon built was on a hard rock outcropping on Mount Moriah on which the holy of holies has stood. Those of you who have visited Jerusalem, probably unbeknownst, have actually walked across the very ground on which the holy of holies was built in that temple. This is because the Arabs made a mistake in their calculations when they built the mosque of Omar, the Dome of the Rock, on mount Moriah, thinking that they were building it upon the same identical place where the temple of Solomon had been built.

In recent years, archeology has now discovered that they made a mistake of something like 150 feet from where the temple actually stood. Solomon's temple was 150 feet north. Those of you who have visited that temple mount will remember that there's nothing but a little cupola sitting out there. It's called the cupola of the tablets, incidentally, interestingly enough. Perhaps this was in connection with the fact that the holy of holies once was positioned there. But there's that rock outcropping. There's that flat, solid platform. Because of tunneling that they have been able to do, they have found the exact position from records going back to ancient times, and they have established the fact that the Jews could begin building their temple tomorrow without creating an outrage with the Arabs by having to tear down the mosque that sits there.

So, Solomon, on this spot selected by God, over this seven-year period, finally completed this dramatic temple. The tabernacle, in the meantime, had been moved over to Mount Zion, and was there in temporary position until the temple was completed. With the temple completed, they brought over all the utensils and all the other items of furniture (that we showed you in the previous session) that were in the various parts of the temple. The only thing that didn't bring over was the ark itself. Then finally, on the Feast of Tabernacles, fittingly, in the year 959 BC, with great fanfare, the ark itself was moved from Mount Sinai over to the new temple into the holy of holies.

That event is recorded in 2 Chronicles 5, and it was indeed a happy day: "Thus, all the work that Solomon performed for the house of the Lord was finished (seven years later). And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, even the silver and gold, and all the utensils, and put them in the treasuries of the House of God. David had collected so much wealth and so much material that they didn't even use it all. So, the first thing they did was brought all these valuable materials, and proceeded to store them in the various storage rooms that had been built as part of the new temple enclave:

"Then Solomon assembled to Jerusalem, and all the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes and leaders of the father's households of the sons of Israel, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is in Zion." This is the last piece of furniture to be brought in: "And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to the king at the feast that is in the seventh month, the Feast of Tabernacles. Then all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. And they brought up the ark and the tent of meeting, and all the holy utensils which were in the tent. The Levitical priest brought them up."

There was a special way that all these things had to be transported in the wilderness travel. Of course, it meant death to touch the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant had to be covered by the high priest alone before it was ever brought out where other people could see it. It was completely covered, and it could only be borne on the shoulders of priests through the poles, which went through rings on the side of the chest of the ark. So, all this had been carefully followed now:

"And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the Ark, were sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered." Solemn probably remembered how his father David had brought the ark after it had been out of the country, and in Pagan hands for something like 100 years. First, he tried to bring it on an ox cart like the Philippians would have done, and that caused Uzzah to get killed when he reached out to stabilize the ark, when he thought it was about to fall off the cart. Then David did it the right way – on the shoulders of the priest, and they went so many steps, then sacrifices were performed; and, so many more steps, then more sacrifices were performed, all the way to Jerusalem.

So, here Solomon is repeating the same thing now, removing the ark once more to its final home in the temple: "Then the priest brought the ark of the covenant of the law to its place into the inner sanctuary of the house of the Lord, to the holy of holies, under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark so that the cherubim made a covering over the ark and its poles. And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen outside, and they are there to this day."

What he is saying is that the curtain which separated the holy place from the holy of holies did not go wall-to-wall. So, as you stood in the holy place, you could see the poles that were sticking out at each end as they had been inserted in the ark. But if you were outside the precinct, you could not see that: "There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets which Moses had put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel when they came out of Egypt."

For some reason, by this time, the pot of many had disappeared, and the rod of Aaron was also gone. So, when the ark was brought into Solomon's temple, all that was left in it was the moral law. Of course, that was the foundational items, the two tablets of stone:

"And when the priests came forth from the holy place, for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves without regard to divisions, and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them 120 priests blowing trumpets."

This was quite a concert. You think the saints in Heaven were doing something. Can you imagine a concert of 120 trumpets all blowing at the same time? Talk about noise pollution. This place was a disaster that day. However, they were playing unto the Lord, and these were fine musicians. When you were born into the Levi family, you were born into certain divisions, and that's the duty you performed all your life. Some people were born into lines of musicians. They inherited musical ability, and that was their ministry in the temple service. So, these priests were all competent players:

"In unison with the trumpeters, the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice, accompanied by the trumpets and the cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord, saying, 'He indeed is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.'" The word "lovingkindness is the Old Testament word for His "grace:" "His grace is everlasting." Then the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the clouds for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."

The Ark was placed within the holy of holies, and above, the mercy seat between the two angels exploded the glory light of God, indicating the presence of God in this new structure for the worship of Him. With that came the cloud that simply drove everyone out of the temple as a cloud of smoke swirled around them in identifying the presence of God.

Well, the presence of God in this way certainly showed that God approved of what they were doing. It was indeed a very happy occasion.

The ark was important to Israel because it was such an instrument of miraculous activity. In Joshua 3:14-17, it is described as drying up the Jordan River so the people could walk across. In Joshua 3:12-20, it is used to walk around the city of Jericho, and on the final tour on the seventh day, the walls fall out. So, this was a powerful piece of furniture, and it was taken at God's command, on occasion, into battle itself, which is why the pagans feared to see the ark of the covenant. It was the prototype of the coming Messiah Savior Jesus Christ. And it was a powerful instrument in the hands of God.

The last clear reference that we have to the ark is in Solomon's own day, interestingly enough. It's in 2 Chronicles 8:11: "Then Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the city of David to the house which he had built for her." Solomon (of one of his many wives) married a lady from the royalty of Egypt, and he had brought her up to let her live in David's house. David's house there in Jerusalem was somewhat of a sacred place because the ark of the covenant had once resided there. It had once been located there. Solomon, with all his spiritual disorientation, realized that this pagan woman was not a fitting inhabitants of this house which had been made sacred by its association with the ark of the covenant.

So, he built her another house and he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, King of Israel, because the places are holy where the ark of the Lord has entered." Any time the ark of the Lord came into any place, that place became holy. It became set apart to a special place with God because of what it represented – Christ the Messiah.

That's the last clear reference that we have in the Bible to the ark. Suddenly, it just disappears off the scene of history. When we come to Jesus' Day, the ark was completely gone. It was not in that temple that Herod was rebuilding and expanding. For 46 years, he worked on that temple. But the holy of holies was completely empty. The ark was no longer there. Religious rituals were carried on, but they were meaningless without the ark. The Jews, at this time, as you know, were in great apostasy. They were trying to get to heaven by keeping the Mosaic Law rather than by what the ark itself stood for, condemning man because of his evil, and facing up to the fact that man has no approach to God, and to accept the fact that God Himself, through the shedding of blood, must cover their sins. The ark told the whole story, but they were so far gone that all they want to do was to perform the rituals and the good works, as the Jews do to this day, to think that this is the way they will get to heaven.

Having said this, we should remind ourselves that Jesus himself, nevertheless, knowing that the ark was not in the holy of holies, respected the temple as the house of God, as indicated in John 2:16, when He drove out the moneychangers. The holy of holies, therefore, even without the ark, in the time of the Lord, was a very sacred place. It was still a place that only the high priests could enter once a year, and the general public could not look into that place. It still symbolized, by that very action, that God was saving people on credit. He had not yet covered the sins of mankind from Adam on, who had believed in a coming divine provision for their sins. So, God was not propitiated. Therefore, sinners could not come into His holy presence.

**The Tearing of the Temple Veil**

However, on the day that Jesus died, finally, on the cross, at 3:00 in the afternoon, a very dramatic thing happened that told all the world that something had now been met in the justice of God that the character and the righteousness of God demanded. Matthew 27:50-51: "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The Lord Jesus Christ died on that cross. His physical death passed. His spiritual death had already passed. That had come earlier, when He was separated from the Father, when He bore the sins of the world, from 9:00 to 12:00. Now that was passed, and He had one more thing to do: He had to die physically. The moment he was dead physically, the provision of death for human sin was completed. Both spiritual and physical death were required.

Then God, in heaven (not from the bottom up, but significantly from the top down) took His finger and ripped that curtain in two, and just flung it open. So, suddenly, everybody could look into the holy of holies. You could look into the holy place. If you sit outside at the brazen altar, you could look into the holy place because that was open. That was not shielded from view. You could see the shewbread; you could see the altar of incense; and, you could see the candelabra, but you never could see beyond that into the very presence of God.

Well, this indicated very significantly that something very dramatic had happened in the execution of this man, Jesus of Nazareth. Very wisely, the centurion (the Roman soldier) who was on duty recognized that a dramatic thing had happened, because as soon as Christ was dead, the veil was torn. Furthermore, there was an earthquake. Rocks split apart, and went popping and snapping open. Tombs were opened. And Old Testament saints, who were looking forward to the coming Messiah, were brought back to life. They were raised and coming out of their tombs. After His resurrection, they entered the holy city, and appeared to many. People looked at them and they couldn't believe their eyes: "Look here. Here's Joe Schlomo. He used to fix our shoes. He died ten years ago. He was a very godly man. Is that you, Joe?" Yeah, he came back to life.

Well, verse 54 tells us that the centurion had enough brains to put two and two together: "The centurion and those who were with him, keeping guard over Jesus, when he saw the earthquake and the things which were happening, became very frightened. And they said, 'Truly, this was the Son of God.'" How true! How true! But the Jews never caught on, and they haven't caught on to this day.

What had happened was that God's justice against the sin of mankind had now been satisfied, and the death of Christ had opened the way into the very presence of the throne of grace. The writer to the Hebrews, in Hebrews 10:19-22, makes reference to this: "Since, therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us, through the veil; that is, his flesh." That veil signified the flesh of Christ. When He was dead, the veil was ripped: "And since we have a great priest over the house of God (that is, Jesus Christ), let us draw near with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith, keeping our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

What is he saying? He's saying that since we now have access into the very holy of holies of God, because of Jesus Christ, let us be aware of the fact that we Christians must come with the same cleansed integrity that the priest had to when he had to stop to wash his feet and his hands at the laver before he walked into the tabernacle itself. God has been propitiated. Our access to God has now been established. But you better not come into His presence to try to serve him with unconfessed sins. That dirt of the world that we all pick up must be removed through that confession.

This is the principle of 1 John 2:2: "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for those of the whole world." God is satisfied. His justice is satisfied against our sins.

Now we come to him on the basis of 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

So, the tearing of the veil indicated that justification had now been made available to the worst of sinners.

However, the ark was not in that room. Someplace along the line, after the dramatic delivery of the ark into the temple that Solomon had built, the ark disappeared. At this point, we fall back upon the Ethiopian royal records of the royal dynasty in Ethiopia, the longest one in human history, for 3,000 years.

The ark of the covenant, I remind you, once more, portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah Savior of Israel. It was thus the pivotal item in the temple worship system. Remember that the ark of the covenant must be present in the restored temple that the Jews are seeking to establish today. They cannot have a true restored religious system, even though they have prepared 60% of the instruments that they used to use. Though they have already reconstructed them in Israel, and though they have put together the procedures and the analysis of how they are to go about with the sacrificial system, one thing they don't have is the ark of the covenant. That is the pivotal factor in the whole system.

Well, the bible tells us that in Solomon's reign, another dramatic thing happened in addition to the temple that he built, and the bringing of the ark into the holy of holies. He was visited by a queen from the Arabian Peninsula. She was the queen of a territory down in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula called Sheba. She is referred to in the Bible as the Queen of Sheba. She later became associated, as many of these Arabians did, with the territory of Ethiopia in Africa. You may read about this in your own details in 1 King's 10:1-3 and in 2 Chronicles 9:1-12. This is the visit of the Queen of Sheba, because she had heard about Solomon, and she wanted to know: "Was he really as smart as people said he was? Was he that wise?" And the Bible tells us that he gave her everything she wanted, and she was impressed with him. She said, "You're everything people have said. In fact, the half hasn't been said about how wise and perceptive you are."

The Royal Chronicles of the Nation of Ethiopia record that on this visit, Solomon married the Queen of Sheba. This, of course, is easy to understand. Solomon had a lot of practice in marrying women. He kept trying to get it right. He married 700 of them, and he had 300 girlfriends on the side. It must have been devastating on him, but this was only one of the examples of how far this wise man had degenerated into apostasy. So, there is probably complete truth to this – that he married the Queen of Sheba, and gave her everything she wanted, which included himself.

**Menelik**

The result was that a son was born whose name was Menelik I. Prince Menelik was reared in Jerusalem. He was trained by the Jewish priests in Judaism, so that he grew up as a full-fledged son of the covenant. He was a Jew. At 19 years of age, it was decided that he was now to return to his own country of Ethiopia. There he was undoubtedly to become an agent for the Jewish nation; to be a promoter of Judaism; and, to be a representative of the true God.

Solomon, who knew that Menelik would never return to Jerusalem, decided that he needed some token of attachment to the system of religion, and to his spiritual roots. So, Solomon, the Royal Chronicles of Ethiopia tell us, had an exact replica made of the ark of the covenant. He had this made so that Menelik and the priestly group that was to escort him back to Ethiopia would carry this with them as a center for worship at that distance.

Because of Solomon's apostasy, he had a toleration of the religion of his pagan wives, which included taking their gods now and actually setting them up in the temple. Young Menelik was a godly boy. He had responded spiritually, and this deeply offended him. He saw that his father was going farther and farther away from the Word of God, and the priests that were with him were sympathetic to this concern. So, the result was that the group decided that when they went back to Ethiopia, they needed to do something for safekeeping, for they anticipated that there would come judgment upon the nation of Israel. You remember that the last stage of the cycle of discipline, spelled out in Leviticus 26, was always military conquest. So, they decided that they could not take a chance on letting the true ark of the covenant fall once more into pagan hands, and that they would take the ark of the covenant with them.

So, the night before they left, Solomon ran a big party. The wine was flowing freely, and when everything was jolly and carrying on in a high manner, the priests, who were qualified to be able to make this switch, took the true ark and swapped it for the replica ark. No one could tell the difference. And they put it in the holy of holies of the temple that Solomon had built. The next day, the party proceeded to Ethiopia, with Solomon thinking that he was sending the replica ark with his son.

The plan was, the Chronicles tell us, that they would return the ark when spiritual stability once more came to the nation. But after Solomon, everything went downhill worse than ever. The nation split in two. The northern nation (the northern part of the country – the ten tribes of Israel) was completely in apostasy. Benjamin and Judah would have just moments of restoration, and then mostly they had terrible kings. So, the result was that, 400 years later, the nation of Israel was dispersed by God in worldwide judgment, so that there was never an occasion for bringing that ark back.

The Jews who had accompanied Menelik to Ethiopia remained intermarried, and they are referred to in Ethiopia as the Falasha Jews. "Falasha" means "exiles." The Falasha Jews have regularly been the ruling class in Ethiopia. Of course, when they intermarried with the Africans, they became the Black Jews. Israel, you may remember, has recently transported large numbers of these Falasha Black Jews, that they consider fully qualified, bonafide Jews back to Israel.

**Haile Selassie**

From the Queen of Sheba and Solomon through Menelik, there began what is now the oldest royal dynasty in history. It has extended 3,000 years down to Emperor Haile Selassie. Haile Selassie is a man that I remember from my teenage days. He was always in the news, and he came particularly into the news when Mussolini decided to invade Ethiopia. Haile Selassie, standing before the old League of Nations, pled for the nations of the world to come in and save his country. In 1974, the communists took over Ethiopia, and they put Emperor Haile Selassie and the royal family in prison. There, the emperor died, probably murdered by the communists. Some of the royal family, however, were outside of the country at the time, and they escaped the communist coup. They are still alive today with full knowledge and full access to the knowledge that they have about the ark of the covenant in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian treasure, which is described in Acts 6:26-39, which Philip the evangelist brought to the Lord, brought Christianity back to Ethiopia. So, the royal family of Haile Selassie was Christian. They are called Coptic Christians. Though they possess this sacred object of Judaism, they were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ – everything the ark stood for. So, Haile Selassie, while he called himself (and I remember as a teenager reading this in the newspapers) the lion of the tribe of Judah. And he was surrounded on his throne by real lions, because this was the symbol of loyalty. He was indeed a Christian (a believer), and so is the royal family. Those who are in exile now of the Selassie family are believers.

**The Ark of the Covenant Today**

Well, the Royal Chronicles of Ethiopia record that what they did with the real ark eventually in Ethiopia was to take it to the northern part of Ethiopia, in a province called the Tigray Province, which has recently been able to break loose from communist domination. It has been resisting the communist rules from the beginning. There, in the northern part of Ethiopia, in a city called Aksum, there has been a church called the Church of Zion. Under this church has been built an enormous vault. This vault has hidden the true ark of the covenant for 3,000 years from the time of Menelik, Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba. The underground vault is built with seven concentric circles. There are seven walls, and they get smaller and smaller until they get to the center. An Ethiopian Coptic priest may worship anywhere in the first four rings. Only the highest priests, and the high priest, and the emperor himself was able to enter ring five and six for worship. The innermost circle, the seventh ring, was the holy of holies, and that's where the ark of the covenant resides to this day.

There is with that ark a guardian. He is called the guardian of the ark, and only he is allowed to enter the seventh ring. He is chosen at the age of seven, which is considered the age when the person becomes accountable for his sin. He is chosen from the priestly family, and he is delegated all his life to do nothing but guard the ark. This has been going on for 3,000 years. He fasts regularly 225 days a year while praying. He never leaves the ark until he dies. Then a new seven-year-old is put in his position as the guardian of the ark. Each day, the Ethiopian high priest meets the guardian of the ark in the sixth ring to bring him food, and to take care of whatever needs he may have.

The Israeli government knows all about this. Back in the 1940s, before they had secured the temple mount, they immediately began negotiating with Emperor Haile Selassie for the return of the ark to Jerusalem so that they could rebuild and restore the worship. Emperor Haile Selassie said that the time was not right. So, the Jews were seeking to secure this ark. Since that time, they have even more reason because they have now secured the temple mount, and captured Jerusalem itself. However, the Emperor did not agree. Since then, the Emperor has been killed.

In 1965, Haile Selassie was still alive, and he escorted the Queen of England, Elizabeth, and her husband Prince Philip, to Aksum, and brought them down to show them the ark of the covenant, as it was covered in this site, and where it was kept.

The communist government knows this too, but they fear the ark, and they also fear the general population. So, they have made no moves against the ark of the covenant. The movie Raiders of the Lost Ark is based on this chronicle of the Ethiopian Royal Chronicles of the existence of the true ark in Ethiopia. In the movie, they have an archaeologist named Indiana Jones who is seeking to find this ark from information he has received from the Ethiopian Royal Chronicles. However, they switch it to Nazis as the ones who are looking for the ark, as those who are trying to beat Indiana Jones to the action, and they shifted the scene into Egypt.

However, it is true that one of the war aims of the Italian dictator, the fascist Mussolini, when he invaded Ethiopia in 1935, was explicitly to capture the ark. He went for it at Aksum. The Germans themselves formed a special unit which was dedicated to searching conquered territories for sacred objects such as the Holy Grail, the cup from which the first Lord's Supper was served, and also the ark of the covenant. This was from the 1930s on that they had this division. The Nazis, too, were interested in the arts in Ethiopia.

Because of these threats, during World War II, the ark was moved for safekeeping into the mountains of Ethiopia. When Mussolini invaded, it looked very bad for the Ethiopians. And Emperor Haile Selassie fasted for three days, and he prayed that God would once more grant victory to the Ethiopians, and to protect the sacred ark. Indeed, that is exactly what happened. Once the Italian army had retreated from Ethiopia, the ark was returned to its underground temple in Aksum, and that is where it remains to this day, waiting for that temple to be built, and waiting for, indeed, that moment to be transferred back into the holy of holies. It probably won't be done during the temple that the Jews will build during the tribulation. They will probably make some substitution. But this ark is the one that will indeed, in all likelihood, be in the millennial temple. In any case, all of history has demonstrated how sacred and how important an object this is because of what it represents.

**The Seven Angels with the Seven Plagues**

All of that is the background, in the past, and updating the picture to this day that is behind Revelation 15:5, where John looks into the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony (the testimony given by the ark of the covenant). He says that it is in heaven. In verse 6, he then observes the angels from the holy of holies. He sees seven angels who are acting as God's priests, so they come out of the holy of holies. They are sent by God on a divine mission. That mission is to execute His final judgment on the tribulation world. He observes that these angels possess seven plagues, each of them possessing one plague. These seven plagues are the final judgments of God on mankind before the Second Coming of Christ.

It is interesting, as we get into the bowl judgments, you will see that each of these plagues has to do with some feature of nature. They attack some feature of nature. I think that God, the great humorist, is going to get a great kick, as all as we all will, out of this, because the evolutionists claim that these processes of nature are the product of chance over a great period of time. The New Age religion is returning to mother goddess earth, and the environmental fruits and long-haired maggot-brained dope-addicted crowd of the environmental movement are reaching out to bring us into this alarm that the sky is falling; the ozone is going; and, the earth is getting warmer; and none of that is true. The majority of American qualified meteorologists have all said that is not true, and we don't have evidence. NASA backed off, and said, "We were wrong in what we said about the ozone hole. We know now that the sun does that. It goes, and it comes. It depends upon how the earth is moving through, and then the ozone changes. It doesn't mean that there's a hole. It just means that it thins out."

Some of you have thin hair on top. You don't have a hole in your head. You just have a little thinness. That's all that the ozone hole does. So, all of this, you must understand, is not ignorant people saying this, but people who are socialists, and they want to impose controls over the lives of people. And nobody goes in his right mind into social programs of socialism unless he's forced to it. History has demonstrated that. So, I think that the evolutionists are in for a big surprise when they see these bowls poured out, and they're going to hit every one of the environmental concerns they had.

Well, John says that these seven angels with these plagues come out of the temple, and here it's the "naos" that we looked at in the previous session. This is the inner shrine area, the holy of holies. They have received a mission, obviously, directly from God. What mission is that? Well, God's anger has reached this intense hot level, and He's going to explode now. Personal integrity is characteristic of these angels, as it must be of all of us if we're going to deal with God.

Furthermore, it tells us that these angels are clothed in something significant. They're clothed with linen. This has been garments which they have received from the past. It is the result of their holy character that has given them this linen garment which is characteristic of holiness. Furthermore, it is described as clean and bright. It is clean because they're sinless; and, it is bright, indicating their personal, absolute righteousness. These angels are fully qualified to do the job, and they come out of the holy of holies with a mission committed to them.

We are further told that they are girded about their breasts with a golden girdle. The golden girdle stands for the glory of God. These angels in the past have been honored with the glory of God surrounding them. They no doubt are angels who stood and listened to Satan's proposition, and they said, "No" to him at the original rebellion. They are the true spirits of God.

Your newspapers have been full of Indians with indignation over the Columbus celebration. One man dedicated a monument, and he said, "We are calling the spirits to bless this monument, and what Columbus did was took away from us our spirit gods." How true that is, because those spirit gods were demons, and it was because they served demons that they were in such throes of corruption and vileness that even the worst of Spaniards recoil from what they saw in the lifestyle of the Indians. Indeed, Christopheros the Life Bearer was one of the greatest things that have ever happened to the Indian population.

The true spirits of God are the angels of God that are represented here, in full holiness to execute God's hot wrath, because the earth in the tribulation will have returned to the condition of Noah's day. It will have become a sordid place of gross evil compared with the beauty of God's holy of holies and His righteousness? The cancer of human sin is about to be cut out from mankind, and the healthy body of believers ushered into the Millennial Kingdom of God. John sees it, and John is happy.

Today, you and I, I repeat, live in the most exciting, dramatic time of all history. But as the Bible says, we also live in the most perilous of times, because it is a time when the Word of God is being rejected, and human freedom is being undermined with socialism economically, and with the new age religion religiously. But God has revealed that when He is ready to punish a nation, He does two things. He puts the worst of rulers over them, and he puts women to rule over them. This, you may not be aware, is the year of the woman. Huge numbers of women are running for political office. It's going to be interesting to see how many win. It will be a signal to us of where God is in His plan.

**Abortion**

The number one reason, however, perhaps, for the destruction of the United States is the 28 million unborn American children murdered by abortion. Their blood has been spilled on the ground and cries for vengeance, and God will not ignore them. Historically, God's judgment has come upon nations like the people that Columbus found here, who are engaged in the brutal practice of human sacrifices (and I mean, like 10,000 people at a time) to please their spirit gods. The Supreme Court today is no better than the Warren Court that turned loose that flood of blood. The Supreme Court today, which had a chance to stop this, has decided to be just as evil, and did not respond.

Every Christian must decide a basic issue. And you decide it before a holy God, as these angels decide their holy mission. These angels in heaven, I remind you, have no feelings about this. They have listened to their orders that they have been given, and they're not emotionally involved. They're executing the ministry of God. On what? On the basis of the Word of God. Every believer has to decide whether that conception in the human body, however it's brought about, has set in motion a creature made in the image of God. Only the most mindless person would deny that fact – that what has been set in motion from the moment of conception is something that is destined to be a human being in the image of God. It doesn't matter whether it's in the mother's body – it's in the image of God. It doesn't matter if it's outside the body – it's still in the image of God.

In China, they have made the rule that you can have one baby, and you kill all your other pregnancies. They have now found themselves with nine men to one woman. And now there are ads all over China (this backward, pagan, bestial country, who has aborted its children left and right) because Chinese want a son to care for them in their old age. So, they abort when they find they have a baby girl on the way (and they can tell that). They kill it. They abort it. They have public signs saying, "Girls are nice too." Are you just now finding that out? Not only are they nice, but they're necessary. They have nine men to every woman. And do you think that the Chinese are going to stop that? Not if they tell them, "We'll kill your second baby. And if you get pregnant a third time, we're going to sterilize you. That is socialism in its most magnificent moment. It cares for you, and decides for you, from the cradle to the grave. Do you think that God is going to let China get away with that? It has spilled more blood than we have.

In any case, God is going to bring judgment on this nation. And these angels are standing by to turn it loose. Isn't it nice to be in a church like this, where you have the straight story; you have the straight scoop; you know what it's all about; and, you are nobody's fool?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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