

Session 11: The Song and the Bowls

What We Found

Beside a sea of glass mingled with fire stand those who conquered the beast, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb: the Red Sea shore restaged, with the beast as Pharaoh, and with the sea and the song, the Exodus pattern we have traced all study (Passover Lamb, plagues, eagles' wings and wilderness) stands complete. Unlike Israel's sea, theirs did not part; the vision suggests a crossing made through faithful endurance, conquering by the blood of the Lamb (12:11). The Church adds the personal key: your Red Sea was the font (CCC 1221). The song itself never mentions the singers: every line is God's deeds, God's justice, the nations coming home: victory, sung rightly, is doxology (and our RSV2CE reads O King of the ages at 15:3). Then the bowls: Egypt's plagues full, no longer warning thirds, and the moral logic said aloud: they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and a voice from the altar answers: true and just are thy judgments: the book's altar scenes (the martyrs' prayer beneath it, the incense rising from it) converging in one reply. The martyrs' how long? is answered: the bowls read as granted prayer, not divine temper: and still the refrain of unrepentance (twice) reads as a door standing open to the last. Armageddon can be read, as many interpreters do, as a symbol wearing history's battlefield as a name (a mountain of Megiddo where Megiddo has none), and in the middle of the muster our Lord himself interrupted: I am coming like a thief; blessed is he who is awake: watchfulness, not calculation.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Ambrose · *On the Mysteries (summary)*

St. Ambrose reads the Red Sea crossing, in substance, as the figure of baptism: the enemy drowned, the people brought through water to freedom and a song. The study's application: every font is a shoreline; Revelation 15 is the far shore.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine · *as quoted in CCC 311*

Almighty God, being supremely good, would never allow any evil in his works, as the Catechism quotes St. Augustine, unless he were so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself. Even the last plagues stand inside a providence that wastes nothing.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom · *homily before his exile (summary)*

Nothing is truly to be feared except sin, St. John Chrysostom preached in substance: not exile, not confiscation, not death. The real terror of the bowl chapters is not the plagues; it is the heart that endures them and will not turn.

Live It This Week

- Learn the far-shore song early: pray Revelation 15:3–4 aloud once each day, especially on any day something goes right.

- Choose one wakefulness practice against the sleep-habit you named (fixed prayer time, media fast hour, examen before bed) and do it daily this week.
- Memorize the memory verse.

Memory Verse

Great and wonderful are thy deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages! (Revelation 15:3, RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Revelation 17–18.

Catechism references from this session: CCC 268–271; 311; 1040; 1221.