

Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church
Bible Sharing Program 2023-24
Session #14: Seven Angels Receiving and Pouring of the
Seven Bowls (Rev 15:1-16:21)

BSP04 = 2004-05 BSP notes SN = Special notes
 CCSS = Cath Commentary on Sacred Scriptures
 CSB = Ignatius Catholic Study Bible
 CSSN = Catholic Scripture Study notes
 LS = Dr. Hahn's Lamb's Supper
 NAB = New American Bible

<p>A</p>	<p><u>Overview of Chapters 15-16</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the seventh trumpet in chapter 11, an interlude of visions in chapters 12-14 recapitulate the history of salvation. The visions began with Israel before the birth of Christ, continued through Satan's war on the Church by means of the beasts, recounted the worship and witness of the Lamb's faithful followers of 144,000, and arrived at the final judgment. • Chapters 15 and 16 return to the promise after the seventh trumpet has sounded; the third plague of the seven bowls "coming soon" (11:14). Then, chapters 17-20 narrate how God will bring judgment upon his adversaries and salvation for his people. • The seven trumpets and the seven bowls bring similar calamities but the latter is more severe as they affect the whole world. The progression from seals, to trumpets, to bowls reflects an intensification of troubles affecting more and more people; just as Jesus' prophecy in his eschatological discourse also describes a worsening of conditions before the end. 	<p>CCSS p 254</p> <p>CCSS p 254</p> <p>CCSs p 260 CSB p 510</p> <p>Mt 24:22-30</p>	
<p>B</p>	<p><u>The Heavenly Temple before the Last Plagues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Then I saw in heaven another sign, great and awe-inspiring" - This is the third and final sign that John sees in heaven after the visions of the woman clothed with the sun (12:1) and of the huge red dragon (12:3). This "great and awe-inspiring sign" heralds God's acts of judgment (see v3-4). Therefore, the heavenly liturgy has proceeded to the liturgical act of judgment. • Some background about liturgy - the liturgy first appears in Rev 4 is the heavenly court. There is a "sea of glass" but "mingled with fire", signifying God's wrath and impending punishment. "Gloria" (Rev 15:3-4 + Lk 2:14) 	<p>15:1-8</p> <p>15:1 CCSS</p> <p>BSP 04-B1-6</p> <p>15:2-4, CCSS LS I.4.6</p>	<p>1Kgs 7:23-26</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb - both admonish Israel as the “faithless and perverse generation”. The song of Moses celebrates the deliverance of those among the nations who will yet come to worship and celebrates God’s triumph over his adversaries that is about to unfold. The holy ones sing this song because what was foretold has been fulfilled. • “After this I had another vision. The temple that is the heavenly tent of testimony opened” - one of the names used in OT for the tabernacle where the ark of the covenant was kept and where God dwelt among his people. After the seventh trumpet, God’s temple in heaven was opened, revealing the ark of the covenant, followed by a storm theophany; filled with “the fury of God ... divine judgment” is here. • The act of judgment in the heavenly liturgy unfolds. God’s fury contained in liturgical utensils (seven gold bowls), represents the judgment is just and holy, is different from human fury. The report that “the temple became so filled with smoke ... that no one could enter” recalls two previous moments in biblical history when the same thing occurred. Both are related to the completion of the holy temple, indicating an overwhelmingly powerful manifestation of God’s presence. Here it points to the completion of God’s judgment; the passing of the old temple and the dawning of the heavenly temple. 	<p>Lk 9:41</p> <p>15:5 CCSS</p> <p>11:18-19</p> <p>15:6-8 CCSS, CSB</p> <p>CSSN B8/2</p>	<p>Dt 32:20 Ex 15:1-21</p> <p>Ex 40:35 1Kgs 8:10</p>
<p>C</p>	<p><u>The Pouring of the Seven Bowls</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the first five bowls entail natural calamities that affect the whole world, the sixth bowl depicts events leading up to a final assault by God’s enemies against his people, and the seventh depicts God’s intervention with overwhelming power to judge Babylon. Chapters 17-20 detail the terrifying and definitive judgment. • The calamities released from the seven bowls share many similarities with the ten plagues in Exodus. Main message: 	<p>16:1-21</p> <p>CCSS p 261</p> <p>SN1 CSB p 510</p>	

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<p>the exodus of Israelites from Egypt foreshadows the exodus of the entire human race from the slavery of Satan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The first four bowl judgments form a set, like the events that accompanied the first four seals and first four trumpets. However, the bowl judgments are all-encompassing, in contrast to the seals and trumpets, which only affected one fourth and one third of the earth. Regarding the punishment the angels address the chastisers as the “just, Holy One, who are and who were” (v5), but does not mention “who is to come” (1:4) because he has already come. ● “Then I heard the altar cry out” - At last, God has avenged the martyrs beneath the altar (6:9-11). ● The fifth bowl “poured on the throne of the beast” depicts the kingdom suffers in the plague of darkness; possibly pointing to the chaos brought about by Nero’s death. ● The sixth bowl sees the forces of evil to mount a final attack, an assault that will lead to their final defeat. The “false prophet” will deceive people with their lies, leading kings of the world to Armageddon where they declare war on God’s people. The leader ridicules the Triune God with “three unclean spirits like frogs” coming from the mouth of the red dragon and the two beasts. The last battle of the apocalypse happens during Christ’s second coming and the last judgment. This final battle will see the definitive defeat of evil forces, fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel. ● The seventh bowl sees “the great city”, that is, when “the great Babylon” receives “the cup filled with the wine of [God’s] fury and wrath”. Despite the devastation resulting from the calamities, people are still reluctant to repent. ● Lightning flashes, peals of thunder, rumblings, a great earthquake - This is the last of the four theophany in revelation, echoing God’s appearance on Sinai, “a violent earthquake that there has never been one like it since the human race began on earth”. 	<p>16:1-9 CCSS</p> <p>CSB</p> <p>16:7 CSB</p> <p>16:10 CSB</p> <p>16:13-16</p> <p>19:19-21, 20:7-10</p> <p>16:17-21 CCSS 4:5, 8:5, 11:19</p>	<p>Ezek 38</p> <p>Ex 19:16-25</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Babylon portrayed in Revelation Rome? Jerusalem? Or other meanings? This is the focus in chapters 17-18. 		
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Special Notes:

- Similarities between the Seven Plagues and the Ten Plagues in Exodus:

REVELATION	EXODUS
#1 Bowl - festering and ugly sores (16:2)	#6 plague (9:8-12)
#2, 3 - the sea turned to blood (16: 3-4)	#1 (7:17-21)
#5 - darkness (16:10)	#9 (10:21-23)
#6 - three unclean spirits like frogs (16:13)	#2 (8:2-6)
#7 - large hailstones (16:21)	#7 (9:18-35)

Ref.: CSB p 511

- Battle of Armageddon

Historical background of Armageddon and Significance:

- In Hebrew, "Mount Megiddo. It was the site of a number of important battles (Jg 5:19, 2Kgs 23:29).
- The site where the righteous king of Judah, Josiah, perished in a battle against the Egyptian Pharaoh, Manasseh, a devastating loss to Judah (2Kgs 23:21-30).
- The Song of Deborah that celebrates God's victory through Deborah and Barak over a coalition of Canaanite kings near Megiddo (Jg 5:1-30).
- According to Hebrew traditions, Megiddo signifies profound and definitive battles.

Ref. Chinese Bible p 1967; CCSS p 266; NAB.