

**DAY ONE**

1. What thought from last week's lesson made an impression on you or stayed with you throughout the past week?

**Read Revelation 13:1-3**

2a. As we begin today, the dragon was defeated in heaven and thrown down to earth where it stood by the sea. Then John had another vision of a beast coming out of the sea. How were the following features of the beast described in verse 1?

on its ten horns

on its seven heads

b. How did John further describe the sea beast in the first sentence of verse 2?

**NOTE: This wild beast, combining features of the four beasts from Daniel 7:2-28 symbolizes the Roman empire; the seven heads represent the emperors. *NABRE***

3a. In the second sentence of verse 2, the dragon gave three things to the beast. Describe what was given.

b. How would you characterize the relationship between the dragon and the beast? Give an example of another relationship that is similar to this.

4a. What was the unusual feature of the sea beast that John saw according to the first sentence of verse 3?

**NOTE: This may be a reference to the popular legend that Nero would come back to life and rule again after his death (which occurred in A.D. 68 from a self-inflicted stab wound in the throat.) *NABRE***

b. In the second sentence of verse 3, John revealed that the whole world followed the beast, fascinated. Look up the word, fascination, and record a definition that applies to its use in this verse.

5. In the two previous verses, what message do you think John was trying to convey symbolically about this terrifying beast?

6. CONNECTION: Today we read of John's vision of a terrible beast who rose from the sea to receive evil power and authority from the dragon. Fascinated, the whole world followed him. We too are often attracted to things of this world. But as followers of Jesus, we know that he is the ultimate source of real power and true authority and gives that to each of us through the grace of his love, mercy, acceptance and forgiveness. What act of God or small miracle fascinated you and brought wonder into your life at his goodness and gifts this week? Share a story with your group.

Read and record Luke 5:26. Let thoughts of being filled with awe by the love of God lead you into prayer today.

## **DAY TWO**

**Read Revelation 13:4-6**

7a. Today's passage begins with the shocking statement that the whole world worshiped the dragon because it gave its authority to the beast (verse 4). The people also worshiped the beast. Can you explain why in your own words (end of verse 4)?

b. In times of crisis or political unrest, people rely on charismatic leaders, good or bad. How do you measure the moral integrity of a good leader?

8. Look up one of the following verses and record what scripture teaches about true worship.

Psalm 95:6-7

John 4:24

James 4:8

9a. Describe what power the beast was given and how he used it (first part of verse 5).

b. Look up the word blasphemy and record a definition that applies in this context.

**NOTE: Domitian, like Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Daniel 7:8, 11, 25) demanded that he be called by divine titles such as "our lord and god." *NABRE***

10. Again we encounter a forty-two-month period. According to verse 5, what was allowed to go on for that time?

11a. Against whom or what did the beast utter blasphemies (verse 6)?

b. What does it mean to blaspheme against God? How would you react if you heard someone speak offensively about God, sacred things or our church?

12. CONNECTION: Today we read the shocking statement that the whole world worshiped the dragon or the devil and the beast. In today's world we have the same problems of the presence of evil and its worship. But true worship is based on the desire to honor God and helps us fulfill our Christian mission in the world. It reveals what we truly believe and how we view ourselves in relationship to God, and in community with one another. Share some thoughts with your group about what worship means to you or how your faith and your relationship with God grows through worship.

Read and record Romans 12:1. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

### **DAY THREE**

**Read Revelation 13:7-8**

13. Today we continue to learn more about the sea beast. Complete the following verses that describe its powers from verse 7.

It was also allowed to wage war

and it was granted authority

14. Notice that, in the previous verse, the beast was "allowed" and "granted" power. Comment on who or what you think granted this authority and why.

15a. Because of the authority given to the beast, all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it according to verse 8. Who were these people who worshiped the beast? (see [Revelation 6:10; 11:10](#))

b. What do you think the world was like at this time that would cause so many people to follow this terrible beast?

16a. The names of the inhabitants of the earth who worship the beast will be excluded from the book of life according to verse 8. What else do you learn about the book of life from that verse?

b. This passage reminds Christians again (see [Revelation 3:5](#)) to be faithful to the word of God and testimony of Jesus if they want to remain in the book of life. Look up and record one of the following verses that relates to this book.

[Psalm 139:16](#)

[Luke 10:20](#)

17. In today's passage, we read about the war being waged by beasts against the holy ones. What contemporary or mythical stories can you think of that are used today to explain the conflict between good and evil?

18. **CONNECTION:** Today we read again about the book of life, a metaphor for eternal life. God comforted his children who were facing a powerful enemy with the promise of eternal life where they will be reunited with their loved ones and find true peace. Our God is a promise maker. Time and again in the words of Holy Scripture, he assures us of his presence and abiding concern. What promises of God have brought you peace and wisdom or have you used to comfort the sorrowful or doubtful? Record some thoughts to share.

Begin your prayer time today by recording your favorite promise of God from scripture. Let that lead you into prayer.

#### **DAY FOUR**

**Read Revelation 13:9-12**

19. As we begin today, John warns "Whoever has ears ought to hear these words." (verse 9) Where did we read these words before and why do you think they are they so important?

20a. What will be the fate of God's people, his holy ones? Complete the phrases below from verse 10.

Anyone destined for captivity

anyone destined to be slain by the sword

b. How do you think you would react during a time of persecution and spiritual conflict?

21a. According to the end of verse 10, what would be required of the holy ones during this time?

b. Was "faithful endurance" mere passivity on the part of the faithful? Was rebellion an option? Record a brief thought.

22a. More terror was in store for the Christians as John had another vision of a second beast which came up out of the earth. Who or what do the following features of the beast symbolize (verse 11)?

2 horns like a lamb's

spoke like a dragon

b. Compare the land beast to the dragon and the first beast. How was this one the same or different?

23. The second beast had the same authority as the first beast (first part of verse 12). Record its distinct power over the earth and its inhabitants according to the second part of that verse.

**NOTE: Without using the term "antichrist," Revelation speaks of two end-time adversaries of Christ: the first beast, who makes blasphemous claims, receives worship and wields political power to persecute Christians (11:7, 13:1-10; 17:3-4; 19:19-20); and a second beast (13:11-17), also called "the false prophet" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), whose specialty is deception, who appears to perform signs and who compels worship of the first beast and its image. *Williamson***

24. CONNECTION: Today we read that the early Christians were called to exhibit faith and endurance as they waited for the answer to their prayers. We too are called to be a faithful people and endure with joy and patience the challenges of true suffering as well as those of everyday life. Sometimes finding God and being present and faithful to him in the ordinary events of daily life are more challenging than during moments of crisis. How do you make the ordinary moments of your life sacred and not just part of a predictable routine? Share some thoughts or a recent story with your group on how you are able to draw joy and faith out of your normal day.

Write a prayer of thanksgiving to God today for the goodness and treasure of the ordinary in your life.

#### **DAY FIVE**

**Read Revelation 13:13-15**

25a. Today, John continued to learn about the second beast that came out of the earth. Describe its powers according to verse 13.

b. Signs hold great power and influence over people in this book. In what way do you consider your own life to be a sign?

26. We are warned against beasts or false prophets and their powers in scripture. Look up and record one of the following verses paying particular attention to the name given to the beasts in these verses.

Mark 13:22

2 Thessalonians 2:9

## 2 John 7

**NOTE: Before Christ's second coming, the church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers...The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and his Messiah come in the flesh.**  
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27a. What was the purpose of the signs the beast performed (first part of verse 14)?

b. To promote worship of the first beast, what were the inhabitants of the earth instructed to do by the second beast (the second part of verse 14)?

28. Complete the following phrases that describe the actions of the second beast towards the image of the first beast from verse 15.

It was then permitted

so the beast's image

and could have anyone who did not worship it

**NOTE: To promote worship of the first beast, the second beast directs the people to make an image in its honor and breathes life into the beast's image so it can speak. At the end of the first century, there was a tremendous proliferation of temples and images for the imperial cult including all seven cities to which Revelation is addressed.** *Williamson*

29. Our commentary suggests that the first beast symbolized the Roman Empire and the second, its representative, the emperor. Think of an example of a political system in the world today or from history where rulers could put anyone to death who did not follow them.

30. CONNECTION: Deception is the tool of Satan and his false prophet, the second beast who leads them to worship the first beast by means of great signs. To fight deception, we must learn to discern the truth and have courage to speak it in the face of the beast. We hear the voices of false teachers probably every day. When we watch television or read other forms of media or interact with others in our communities, we are exposed to some form of false teaching. How do you discern which messages are true? Share some thoughts with your group about how you try to be sure that you are following the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus teaches in John 14:6 that, "I am the way and the truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Let this thought lead you into prayer today.

## **DAY SIX**

**Read Revelation 13:16-18**

31a. Today we continue to read about the disturbing actions of the second beast. According to verse 16, what did it force all the people, small, great, rich, poor, free and slave to do?

b. In what way have you been marked as a faithful Christian that helps protect you from the actions of the beast?

32a. According to verse 17 and in your own words, what was the effect on those who did not receive the mark of the beast's name or the number that stood for its name.

b. What harm occurred when the followers of the beast refused to interact financially with those who did not have the mark? Give an example of this happening in the world today.

33. Look up and record one of the following scripture verses that relates to the importance of honesty and morality in financial matters.

Psalm 15:4-5

Luke 3:14

1 Timothy 6:10

34. The means to calculate the mark of the beast were given in verse 18. What clue was offered in the first sentence to explain the meaning of the mark?

one who understands

for it is a number

His number is



35. In verse 18 we are cautioned to use wisdom to understand the mark of the beast, which has a negative connotation in popular culture. In what ways do you find this number significant?

36. CONNECTION: In today's readings we learned that the beast exerts his power over people by manipulating and controlling their financial security. Not unlike the people of John's day, we all confront financial instability of some kind. Our fears may challenge our faith but through the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, we are called to conduct our affairs with generosity, fairness and integrity. Think of someone who was generous to you at a time when you were in need. How did being the recipient of generosity help you become generous towards others? Record some thoughts to share with your group.

In Luke 6:38 we are told, "Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing will be poured into your lap." Let thoughts of God's bountiful generosity to you lead you into prayer.

Read pages 56-61 in the New Collegeville Commentary, The Book of Revelation by Catherine A. Cory, Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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