
DAY ONE

1. Share one thing from last week's lesson, talks or commentary that stayed with you or gave you new insights.

Read Revelation 17:1-3

NOTE: The concluding section of the Book of Revelation begins with Chapter 17. It describes Babylon the Great, symbolic of Rome, as a prostitute, and reveals its punishment and connection to the beast with fantastic imagery.

2a. Chapter 17 begins with one of the seven angels who held the bowls of fury calling John to come forward. Record what the angel says he will reveal (verse 1).

b. Read [Jeremiah 51:13](#) and comment on any similarity you find to John's message.

3a. Complete below why the kings and inhabitants of the earth will be brought to judgment (verse 2).

The kings of the earth have

the inhabitants of the earth became

NOTE: The Old Testament prophets described pagan capitals as harlots for the use of their excessive wealth and power to seduce other nations into corrupt economic, political or religious relationships. Thus, the images of prostitution and fornication became metaphoric terms regularly used to describe the material excesses and seductions of the Roman Empire.
Williamson

b. John borrowed from prophetic tradition whereby cities in the ancient world were commonly characterized as female. Read and record a phrase from one of the following scripture verses that describes one of these cities.

[Isaiah 1:21](#) (Jerusalem)

Isaiah 23:17 (Tyre)

Nahum 3:4 (Nineveh)

4a. The angel carried John away in spirit to a deserted place (verse 3). This is the third time John was carried away or found “in spirit” in Revelation (see 1:10; 4:2). What do you think this means?

b. Can you think of a time when you were spirited away? Share some details with your group.

5a. What did John see in this deserted place according to verse 3?

b. If you were depicting something evil today, what images would you use?

NOTE: The woman in John’s vision is in stark contrast to the woman of Chapter 12 who symbolizes God’s people. This woman’s appearance identifies her as the beast of 13:1-10 who is under the authority of the red dragon to be worshiped by the entire world and wage war against God’s people. *Williamson*

6. CONNECTION: In today's passage, John was taken to the quiet of the wilderness where he was given a closer look and a clearer vision of the great harlot and the beast. This was something John probably did not want to see, but God knew it was necessary. God lovingly shows us things we need to know, regardless of whether we like them or not. Have you ever been led to a place to see or be confronted with something you would rather avoid or deny? Have you brought someone you love to a similar place to reveal a hard truth? Share some details with your group.

Begin your prayer today knowing that God's love for you is often displayed by helping you see or become aware of things in your life that may not always be pleasant or comfortable. His love for you will always lead, guide and protect you as you grow in your faith journey.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 17:4-6

7a. We continue today with more details of the woman seated on the beast. What was she wearing and how was she adorned according to the first sentence of verse 4?

b. What do these descriptions imply on first impression?

8. The woman held a gold cup in her hand. What did it contain (second sentence of verse 4)?

9. A name that was a mystery was written on the woman's forehead. Record her full name from verse 5.

NOTE: The term mystery usually refers to something secret or hidden but is used here to emphasize that the name is symbolic rather than literal. *Williamson*

10a. John saw that the woman was drunk. What caused her to be in this condition according to verse 6?

b. To be drunk on blood is a metaphor for violence, bloodthirstiness and great wickedness. Babylon was the perpetrator of the worst crimes of idolatry, murder and immorality. Select one of these evils listed, and comment on how they are continuing today.

idolatry

murder

immorality

11a. How did John react to this vision of the woman (second sentence of verse 6)?

b. Compare or contrast this woman with the woman in Revelation 12. Briefly write one or two examples.

12. CONNECTION: When we think of evil, something ugly and unattractive comes to mind. Yet in this passage, we see a woman who is thoroughly evil covered over by beautiful clothes and jewels. John marveled at the sight of her. The evil around us is often well disguised. Name something that you encounter in everyday life that looks beautiful and inviting yet may cover up something less than desirable. Briefly explain.

Read and record 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. Pray today for God's vision of grace and goodness to bring clarity to all the deceptions you may encounter.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 17:7-8

13a. Today we begin with the angel questioning John's reaction to the woman on the beast. What did the angel ask John according to the first part of verse 7?

b. How would you answer this question?

14. The angel promised to explain the mystery to John. What was this mystery of which the angel spoke (remainder of verse 7)?

15a. As the angel explained the mystery, he spoke of the beast using three tenses, past, present and future. Complete the phrases below that indicate this (first two sentences of verse 8).

Past – the beast that you saw

Present – but now

Future – it will come up

b. Where will all this lead the beast (end of second sentence verse 8)?

16. In verse 8 John said the beast lived, died and would return to life. This resurgence of evil symbolizes its persistent nature. Give an example of a way you have seen evil appear, seem to disappear and then suddenly reappear.

17a. How were the inhabitants of the earth described according to the first part of the third sentence of verse 8?

b. How will the inhabitants of the earth react when they see the beast and for what reason according to the end of verse 8?

18. CONNECTION: Today we read of the angel's attempt to explain the mystery of the woman and the beast to John. The beast and the dazzling woman were evil yet seductive to both John and the inhabitants of the earth. The mystery surrounding them concerned their past, present and future status. We encounter many mysteries in our faith, things that we believe, but cannot explain or understand. God gives us grace to believe in these things. What mystery of your faith would you like explained to you? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read Colossians 1:26-27 and record God's mystery revealed to the holy ones. As one of God's holy people, write a prayer today asking for God's grace as you seek to understand the mysteries of your faith.

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 17:9-12

19a. As we continue to unravel the mystery of the woman and the beast, today's passage begins by offering a clue to one who has wisdom (verse 9). Read one of the following verses and record a phrase describing wisdom.

Proverbs 2:6

Daniel 1:17

James 3:17

b. The seven heads of the beast symbolized two things according to verse 9. Record them here.

NOTE: The “seven mountains” most likely refer to the seven hills of Rome where “Babylon, the great harlot” is seated. The seven kings would be the rulers (former, present and future) of the Roman Empire. *Navarre Bible*

20. We learn in verse 10 that five of the kings have fallen, one still lives and the last has yet to come. What is the fate of the one who is to come?

21. The beast that existed once but exists no longer was referred to as an eighth king. How was it further described in verse 11?

22. Complete below the angel’s explanation of John’s vision of the ten horns of the beast (verse 12).

represent ten kings who

they will receive

along with the beast

NOTE: The ten kings represent those whom Rome installed as kings in the nations it conquered, rulers who were subject to the emperor. *Navarre Bible*

23. The ten kings and the beast will receive authority for one hour. Why do you think they will be given power for such a short time?

24. CONNECTION: Today’s verses are difficult to understand, so much so that the first words of this passage call for a person with wisdom. The Book of James contains much about wisdom. James urged his readers to pray for and ask God for wisdom. Wisdom is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Is there a specific area of your life that calls for you to exercise wisdom? Can you think of a wise person who has impacted your life? Share some details with your group.

Remembering that wisdom is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, begin to pray, asking not only to receive wisdom, but also to learn how to use that God-given wisdom.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 17:13-15

25a. Our lesson today continues the angel's description of the ten kings. What do we learn about them in verse 13?

b. The ten kings were unified in their support of the beast, likely with an evil agenda. Can you make a comparison to an alliance of nations that worked together for a good purpose?

26. The ten kings will fight with the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them according to verse 14. Complete below the reasons the Lamb will be victorious (verse 14).

for he is

and

and those with him are

27. Those with the Lamb are called, chosen and faithful, words used to describe Christians in the New Testament. Choose one of these below and write how it has played a role in your faith life?

called

chosen

faithful

28. The angel spoke to John about his vision of the waters where the harlot lived. What did the waters represent according to verse 15?

29. Look up one of the following verses and record how God has plans for all his people from every nation.

Daniel 6:26

Mark 16:15

Acts 1:8

30. CONNECTION: The reality of John's vision of the harlot residing among throngs of people, nations and tongues is a harsh reminder of the evils that surround us. As God's called, chosen and faithful people we find ourselves in a continuing battle against attacks on our spiritual well being. The power of prayer can be our greatest weapon of defense in this daily battle. When we exercise our power and authority through prayer, we work together with God to help bring our faith life, community, city, nation and world to a future removed from evil. Share some thoughts on ways you can participate in the victory over evil through faithful daily discipleship.

Read and record 1 Timothy 2:1-2 and let that remind you that God calls you to pray for peace and for those who have authority in our world.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 17:16-18

31. Today we read that the angel interpreter delivered harsh words concerning the ten horns (ten kings) and the beast. Record their feelings and actions toward the harlot according to verse 16?

32. What might be some reasons the evil ten horns and beast would turn against the harlot?

33a. Record the words that indicate God can influence the thoughts of all creatures, even those who do evil things (first part of verse 17).

b. God is in control of all things and through his wisdom even uses evil for good purposes. Look up one of the following verses and record a phrase that illustrates this.

Genesis 50:20

Proverbs 16:4

Isaiah 45:7

34. What will they agree to as a result of God's influence (remainder of verse 17)?

NOTE: In this lesson we learn how God made use of the forces of evil to punish those very people who followed evil ways, drawing from the words of the prophet Ezekiel. "For thus says the Lord God: I am now handing you over to those whom you hate, to those from whom you recoil. They shall treat you with hatred, seizing all that you worked for and leaving you stark naked, so that your indecent nakedness is exposed. Your depravity and prostitution brought these things upon you because you served as a prostitute for the nations, defiling yourself with their idols."
Ezekiel 23:28-30 *Navarre Bible*

35. Record the final words of interpretation regarding the woman whom John saw (verse 18).

36. CONNECTION: Today we read that John's vision reveals how God acts purposefully even using evil to carry out his plans. It is hard to understand how suffering, injustice and violence may be part of God's plan. Our own worries and fears sometimes make it a struggle to see God at work in our lives. But when we are faithful and obedient, and trust in a loving God, he will take whatever was intended for evil and transform it for good. How have you seen that in your own life? Can you share some thoughts with your group?

Spend some quiet time today and reflect on the ways you see God working in your life, lifting away your fears and worries and shining his grace upon your spirit so you may feel his presence and inner peace.

Read pages 73-77 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.

©Copyright 2018. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study

thecornerstonescripturestudy.org