

DAY ONE

1. Recall an idea from the lesson last week that made you stop and think. Share some thoughts with your group.

NOTE: In this vision, John is talking symbolically about the eventual fall of Rome but prophetically, he is telling about the last Judgment when God's justice is ultimately revealed not just for nations but for each person who has refused the grace, love and forgiveness of God (*McBride*). It is presented as a stirring dirge of prophecy about the fall of Babylon using some vindictive language borrowed from Old Testament prophecies that portray symbolically the inexorable demands of God's holiness and justice. *NABRE*

Read Revelation 18:1-3

2. As we begin this chapter, John had a vision of another angel coming down from heaven (verse 1). What phrases indicated that this was a beautiful and particularly impressive angel?

3. According to verse 2, the angel cried out in a mighty voice. Complete the verses below that contain the message of his prophecy.

Fallen, fallen

She has become

She is a cage

a cage for every

4a. Select one of the phrases from verse 3 below and explain in your own words the reason for the city's desolation.

For all the nations have drunk the wine of her licentious passion.

The kings of the earth had intercourse with her.

The merchants of the earth grew rich from her drive for luxury.

b. Acquiring things is a necessary part of human life and not necessarily sinful but Babylon (Rome) encouraged a life of luxury for the rich and powerful. Look up one of the following passages and record what scripture teaches about focusing on the riches of the world while ignoring the true riches of heaven.

Ben Sira (Sirach; Ecclesiasticus) 27:1

Matthew 6:24

1 Timothy 6:10

5. In Colossians 1:16-17, Paul tells us "whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things..." Business and government are part of God's creation. Can you give an example of when you have seen them act according to the values of Jesus?

6. CONNECTION: Today's passage speaks of authority. An angel having great authority came down from heaven, and the earth was made brighter by his splendor. Since God is the source of all things, then all authority belongs to God. In daily life, all of us are under the authority of others, most of us have some authority and some of us may even have problems with authority. The Lord will hold leaders accountable for how they exercise their power over others. Share a story about someone you know who has exercised authority over a group to which you belong, with care, concern and love and who has illumined your life by his or her splendor.

Read and record Hebrews 13:17. Pray today that the Holy Spirit will guide our leaders with wisdom.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 18:4-8

7a. Today, John's vision continued. He heard another voice from heaven speaking that addressed, "My people." What were they asked to do (verse 4)?

b. Do you think this was a direction for physical removal from the city or a spiritual separation? Record the relevant phrases from one of the following verses along with your answer.

Leviticus 20:26

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

8a. According to verse 5, how were Babylon's sins described, and what was said about her iniquities?

b. What does it mean to you that God remembers your sins? (see also Isaiah 43:25)

9a. Complete the phrases below for verse 6.

Pay her back

Pay her back

b. According to scripture, God alone can avenge wrongs and administer punishment that accords with justice. This is not the same thing as taking personal, human revenge (*Williamson*). How would you describe the difference between divine and human retribution?

10a. The first part of verse 7 echoes the sentiment of verse 6. Explain in your own words what you understand that to be.

b. What did she say boastfully to herself (second part of that verse)?

11. Because of her arrogance, the woman, Babylon, would suffer complete humiliation and destruction in one day. What did the angel say would come to her because of the mighty Lord God's judgment (verse 8)?

12. CONNECTION: Today we read that a voice from heaven warned the faithful to depart from the faithless city of Babylon before God's judgment fell upon it. It is God's desire that we too separate from certain things that will adversely affect our spiritual lives. As God's people, we are called to be holy and set apart in a community of believers. What are the benefits of being part of a faith community? Share a story with your group that illustrates how being in a community of believers has helped you avoid the risks and traps of the modern world and affirmed your joy in following Jesus.

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 about how to live together in fellowship. Write a prayer today for those in your community who have inspired your faith.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 18:9-10

13a. We read today that the city will be mourned when God exacts his punishment. The voice from heaven predicted how the kings of the earth would react to Babylon's destruction. How were they described and how will they grieve (verse 9)?

b. This verse refers to corruption between political and business entities that led to oppression of the poor in this society. Can you think of a current or historical example of a government that has done this?

14. Where did these mighty men of power stand and why according to verse 10?

15. Record the words of their lament from the end of that verse.

16. Do you think they were genuinely distressed? Comment on whether you think their concerns were out of love for the city or something else.

17. What point do you think John was making by stating that a great and mighty city can be destroyed in one hour?

18. CONNECTION: Today we read that the kings and rulers of the earth loved Babylon and pledged their allegiance and loyalty to her when she could make them rich and powerful. But when she fell and needed their support, they kept their distance because they were afraid that they, too, would be caught up in the torment inflicted on her. Think of a time when you needed help or faced a crisis. Who stood by you without caring about the trouble or cost to them and who kept their distance? Or whom did you support at some risk to you? Record some details to share.

Money and power cannot buy enduring love and loyalty. Read Ben Sira (Sirach; Ecclesiasticus) 6:14-17 and record a verse that speaks to you about the meaning of friendship. Let that lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 18: 11-14

19. Today, we learn that a second group, the merchants of the earth, will also weep and mourn when evil Babylon is destroyed. According to verse 11, why will they miss her?

20a. List a few of the goods that will no longer be traded from verses 12-13.

b. In this materialistic society, even human beings had become articles for trade. In our modern world, human trafficking is a close equivalent to this immoral act, yet there are other ways we continue to subtly devalue human life. Record one example of this.

21a. From this list of cargo, what items were essential or necessary for life? What does the absence of many basic necessities suggest about the way they lived?

b. List a few of the luxury items from these verses or their modern counterparts that you might have in your home. How does that make you feel?

THINK: The city of Rome was a voracious consumer and the largest market of the first century. By some indices, the United States is currently the world's largest market. Spend some time thinking about what the challenge and responsibility of Catholics are regarding this issue.

22. The merchants' lament in verse 14 was directed at Babylon and repeated the same thought three times. Complete the verse below.

The fruit you craved

All your luxury and splendor

never again

23. The people of Babylon have been judged for being materialistic and self-indulgent. In thinking about your activities in a normal week, what is one thing you could go without?

NOTE: Christian consumers need to pay attention to the ethical practices of the companies with whom they do business to avoid participating in injustices or promoting values and lifestyles contrary to God's word. (*Williamson*) See CCC 2402-6, 2436-49 for the Church's position regarding Catholic Social Teaching and the ownership of the world's resources, and the responsibility of rich nations for the welfare of poorer nations.

24. CONNECTION: Babylon/Rome created a life of splendor for the powerful and rich while ignoring the true riches of heaven. Its luxurious lifestyle was excessive to the point of idolatry. Luxury is frequently a sign of power and wealth gained at the expense of what is necessary for others. Our society is also susceptible to the trap of luxury. We desire luxury items we don't really need, and it becomes a habit to pursue and acquire them. As God's people, how can we make better choices as consumers so more resources are available for his mission to serve all people on earth? Record some thoughts to share.

Read and record Luke 18:22. The more things we have, the more we are tied to them because they require our time, money and effort to care for. As you pray today, ask God to help you eliminate material things from your life that keep you weighed down on the earth.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 18:15-19

25. As we begin today, John continued to describe the mourning of the merchants who grew rich dealing with Babylon as they witnessed her destruction. According to verse 15, what will they do and why?

26a. In the following verses, the great city was personified as a wealthy woman adorned exquisitely in fine jewelry and garments. Summarize what the merchants cried out to her (verse 16 and the first sentence of verse 17).

b. One lesson the Book of Revelation teaches is to be able to tell the difference between lies and the truth. Everyone was deceived by the fine appearance of the woman, Babylon. What is one method that you use to discern the truth from error and how has that helped you?

27a. As verse 17 continued, a third group of mourners stood at a distance. They included every captain of a ship, every traveler at sea, sailors and seafaring merchants. What will they cry out when they see the smoke of her pyre (verse 18)?

b. How would you describe their emotions? Have you ever felt this way about a modern city that was once thriving but suffered economic or social crises? Comment on your reaction.

28a. According to verse 19, they threw dust on their heads to show their distress (see Ezekiel 27:29-30). Record the words of their lament from the rest of that verse.

b. The seamen lamented that the great wealth of the city has been ruined. Think of a material thing in your life that once meant very much to you but now is gone or holds little or no value. What changed your attitude towards that thing?

29. Over and over in scripture, we are urged to take care of the poor and honor God with material possessions. Read and record one of the following verses.

Proverbs 19:17

Luke 12:33

1 John 3:17

30. CONNECTION: Today, as the people lamented the destruction of the city, they realized how temporary and meaningless wealth could be. In the gospels, Jesus does not speak against material wealth but warns against its obsession. It is a blessing when it is shared with others but an obstacle if it is not. We are not owners but rather, stewards of the goods we possess which are the means through which the Lord calls us to act for the good of all.

How can we prevent our material wealth from getting in the way of our spiritual health? Share with your group some concrete ways we can live every day recognizing God's ownership of our material possessions.

In Luke 12:34, we are reminded to build up a treasure in heaven, "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." Spend time in prayer today thinking about where your treasures, and your heart, truly are.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 18:20-24

NOTE: Judgment on Babylon does not merely represent judgment on Rome or ancient Babylon or any other particular culture that attacks God's people. Babylon is a symbol of every nation that has harmed God's people through all of history against which God will render just judgment in favor of his covenant people. *Williamson*

31a. In contrast to the previous days' readings, today we begin with rejoicing. What four groups were called to rejoice (verse 20)?

b. Why were they celebrating according to that verse?

32. In verse 21 a mighty angel symbolically threw a stone like a huge millstone into the sea. What did he say according to the rest of that verse?

33. A millstone was a circular stone used for grinding grain. What was it supposed to symbolize in this context? Refer to Jeremiah 51:63-64 or Mark 9:42 to help with your answer.

34a. Verses 22-23 described the quality of life in Babylon after its destruction. Select one or two items that will no longer exist and comment on how its loss would affect life in the city.

No melodies of harpists and musicians, flutists and trumpeters, will ever be heard in you again.

No craftsmen in any trade will ever be found in you again.

No sound of the millstone will ever be heard in you again.

No light from a lamp will ever be seen in you again.

No voices of bride and groom will ever be heard again.

b. Select one item from this list and comment on what you would miss if this happened in the city in which you lived.

35. Complete below the reasons why God has judged Babylon from the last sentence of verse 23 and verse 24.

Because your merchants were

all nations were led astray

In her was found

and all who have been

36. CONNECTION: According to John's vision, the destruction of Babylon would include not only music but also the daily work of its craftsmen and the light of lamps. Our daily encounters in the modern world including music, craftsmen, weddings, grocery or post office clerks are an occasion for sin or grace, and are significant in our life of faith though we may not always be aware of it. Unless we are facing a crisis or are at prayer, we are usually not conscious of our need for God. Yet all day long, we are doing eternally important things without knowing it, like speaking or acting in ways that affect the lives of others in some way. Record some ideas about how we can become more intentional or aware of God's presence.

Gratitude reminds us of God's presence because he is the giver of all good gifts ([James 1:17](#)). Write a prayer of thanksgiving today asking God to be present with you in every moment of this day.

Read pages 77-80 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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