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**DAY ONE**

1. What was most meaningful to you from the reflection, commentary or questions from last week?

**NOTE:** Chapter 19 detailed the fall of Babylon, Christ's return and the destruction of the beast and its allies, but the story of the defeat of humanity's most ancient enemy remains for this chapter. Rather than simply narrate the devil's end, Chapter 20 recounts this story in the context of a confusing salvation history. First the dragon is bound and confined; then comes the thousand-year reign of the martyrs and saints with Christ; then Satan is released to deceive and lead the nations in a final assault against God's people; finally, the serpent is destroyed forever.  
*Williamson*

**Read Revelation 20:1-3**

2. As we begin today, John had another vision and saw an angel come down from heaven. What did he hold in his hand according to verse 1?

**NOTE:** The word, *abyss*, means without depth, and is used seven times in Revelation to refer to the prison of demonic spirits. (see [Luke 8:31](#); [2 Peter 2:4](#))

3a. This powerful angel was charged with taking the ancient enemy captive. The four names given to the being are listed below (verse 2). Select one of these names and comment on your understanding of how it relates to the presence of evil in the world.

dragon

ancient serpent

Devil

Satan

**NOTE:** Most authorities interpret the binding of Satan to be that which Christ accomplished by his life, death and resurrection. (see [Matthew 12:29](#)) *Williamson*

b. According to verse 2, the angel seized the being and tied it up for a thousand years. This number is used multiple times in this passage. How would you explain its significance? Read and record Psalm 90:4 to help with your answer.

**NOTE:** The interpretation of the millennium (Latin translation combines *mille*, thousand, with *annus*, year) is one of the most complex tasks of study in Revelation. Like other numerical values in this book, the thousand years are not to be taken literally; they symbolize the long period of time between the chaining up of Satan (a symbol for Christ's resurrection-victory over death and the forces of evil) and the end of the world. During this time God's people share in the glorious reign of God that is present to them by virtue of their baptismal victory over death and sin.  
**NABRE**

The Catholic view of the millennium is that Christ's kingdom of love, justice, peace and salvation has already become available to believers through grace, faith and active membership in the church, sacraments and a moral life. *McBride*

4a. After tying up the dragon, what other things did the angel do to it according to verse 3?  
threw it

which he locked

so that it could no longer

until the thousand years

b. Like other visions in this book, this one repeated the defeat of the dragon from Revelation 12:7-18 but changed the imagery. Comment on a few of the ways the stories differ.

5a. According to the end of verse 3, what must happen at the end of that time?

b. Why do you think this is also a part of God's plan?

6. CONNECTION: Today in John's vision an angel seized the dragon and locked it in the abyss with a key. Its power to deceive was contained and its time would be limited. This assures us that even though evil happens in the world, God's power to lock and contain evil is more powerful. Keys are an important symbol in the Book of Revelation and are mentioned four times (see also 1:18; 3:7; 9:1). Keys literally open doors and symbolically open hearts. What special meaning or traditions do keys hold for you? Or is there something in your life right now that you would like God to chain and lock away with a key? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record Matthew 16:19. Reflect during your prayer time on how the symbols from this book can be important tools in your spiritual life.

## DAY TWO

Read Revelation 20:4-5

**NOTE:** Today's verses explain what takes place during the thousand years of Satan's confinement.

7. Today, John moves from the dragon to another vision. He saw thrones on which those seated were entrusted with judgment according to the first sentence of verse 4. Read and record a relevant phrase from one of the following verses that relates to their task of judgment.

Matthew 19:27-28

1 Corinthians 6:2-3

8. John further identified the group as souls. Why did he say they had been beheaded or martyred in some way in the second sentence of verse 4?

9. What was the result of being faithful to God (last sentence of verse 4)?

10. An explanation was given of what happened during the millennium to unbelievers who were killed in the great battle (See Revelation 19:21). Record their fate from the first sentence of verse 5.

11a. For the faithful who died, this was called the first resurrection (second sentence of verse 5). John was careful to distinguish this from the general resurrection of the dead that will occur at Christ's return (see verses 12-13.) How does this concept give hope and reassurance to Christians facing persecution during this time?

**NOTE:** With the use of the phrase, "the first resurrection," John introduces something new since it is the only place in Scripture that refers to two resurrections. Scholars have debated the meaning of this but the simplest solution is that the first resurrection refers to the life with Christ in heaven that the blessed, including martyrs, experience immediately after death (Luke 23:43; Phil 1:23; CCC 954). Although "came to life" and "resurrection" normally refer to bodily resurrection, in the context of a vision with many symbolic elements, a figurative use of these terms is not surprising. *Williamson*

b. Look up one of the following scripture passages and record a phrase that relates to the general resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

12. CONNECTION: Today we discussed two difficult spiritual concepts, the millennium and the first resurrection. These ideas are hard to understand and confusing to most people, and, despite scholarly writings, the details about them remain a mystery. Our religion is full of mystery because, ultimately, God is a mystery to us. Yet, he makes himself known to us through our faith, church and scripture, and we respond with reflection, study, and prayer. What are some ways we can develop an appreciation of mystery as a path to greater love and knowledge of God?

Read and record 1 Corinthians 13:12. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

### **DAY THREE**

**Read Revelation 20:6-7**

13. Today, we begin by reading the fifth of seven beatitudes in this book. What rewards will the one who has experienced the first resurrection receive as a result of his or her faithfulness (first sentence of verse 6)?

14. Another reward will be given to the faithful who share in the first resurrection. A second death, which occurs after final judgment, will have no power over them (second sentence of verse 6). This exempts them from fear of eternal punishment. How would you feel not to have to face a second death?

**NOTE: This refers to the eternal death when sinners will receive their final punishment. *NABRE***

15. The faithful who shared in the first resurrection also received a third blessing. They will be priests of God and of Christ and reign with him for the thousand years (end of verse 6). We too are called to be a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5) and a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6). What does it mean to you to answer this call?

16a. In verse 7 John returned to his previous vision and the story of Satan. What will happen at the end of that period of time when the thousand years are over?

b. In our commentary (page 84), the author explains John's literary technique used in this passage of sandwiching two visions together. Summarize what it means in a few words.

17. When Satan is set free to again roam the earth, believers should not be afraid but should be prepared for his evil ways. Look up one of the following verses and record the advice of holy scripture.

Matthew 4:10

Ephesians: 4:26-27

1 Peter 5:8-9

18. CONNECTION: We read today about the blessings for the faithful who will share in the first resurrection. They will reign in heaven with Christ. Each day we, too, journey nearer to our eternal life. We believe that as God's faithful children we have been redeemed by Jesus and that when we die in his grace, we will live forever. Does this belief give you comfort as you contemplate the end of your earthly existence or that of those you love? How does this take away any fear of death you might have?

Jesus tells us in John 8:51 "whoever keeps my word will never see death." Let this thought lead you into prayer today.

**DAY FOUR**  
**Read Revelation 20:8-10**

19. Today, the lesson covers what happens after the millennium ends and Satan is released from his prison. What activities mentioned in verse 8 will Satan resume?

20a. What phrase from the end of verse 8 indicated the enormous size of the army he will assemble?

b. The evil forces of Satan will be a number too large to count. Consider how much his evil forces accomplish in our world today. Name an act of evil you saw or read about in the world this past week.

21a. Who are Gog and Magog? Read and record Ezekiel 38:2 for your answer.

b. In apocalyptic writing, Gog and Magog symbolize the pagan nations or forces of evil that oppose the people of God. What does that idea suggest about the group Satan was gathering?

22a. Closely examine verse 9. What does it reveal about each of the following?

the place of battle

Satan's opponents

God's action

the outcome

b. Pick one of the phrases from verse 9 and describe what you think it means in your own words.

**NOTE: This is the battle of Armageddon which John first mentioned in 16:14-16 and again in 17:14 and 19:11-21. The name is derived from the Hebrew *har Megiddo*, which means "mountain of Megiddo." Historically, it was the location of some of Israel's fiercest battles.**

23. The battle between the forces of good and evil will be swift and decisive, and God will be victorious. The devil who had led them astray was thrown into the pool of fire and sulfur (verse 10). What will be his destiny and who will share it with him according to the rest of that verse?

24. CONNECTION: Again, we read today about a great battle which will be fought at the end of a thousand years, symbolic of the on-going contest between good and evil, God and Satan. God's plan ultimately includes the destruction of his archenemy, Satan. Although he roams the world now, his time is limited and doom certain.

Think of someone you love who has suffered or been deceived by evil. What comfort does it bring you to imagine a time when evil will no longer exist? Share your story with your group.

Read and record Isaiah 41:10. Write a prayer today in gratitude to God who will heal, guide and strengthen you as you face your battles and lead you to triumph over evil.

#### DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 20:11-12

**NOTE:** This vision focuses on the final judgment of the dead. An earlier vision of final judgment, that of the harvest of the earth (Revelation 14:14-20), focused on the judgment of those living on the earth at the end of history. After the intermediate reign of Christ, all the dead are raised and judged thus inaugurating the new age. *NABRE, Williamson*

25. Today the vision changes from a hellish one to a heavenly one. What did John see next in the first sentence of verse 11?

26a. What gave him the idea that this was one with great power (second sentence of that verse)?

b. Why do you think the natural world acted in this way?

27a. According to verse 12, who did John see standing before the throne?

b. John saw those awaiting judgment as the scrolls were opened (first sentence of verse 12). (The Commentary refers to this as the book of deeds.) The dead were judged according to their deeds that were written in the scrolls (third sentence of verse 12). The record of a person's actions, both righteous and unrighteous, will be used for judgment. Look up and record one of the following verses relating to the book of deeds.

Jeremiah 17:10

Daniel 7:9-10

Matthew 25:34-36

28. Then another scroll was also opened, the book of life (second sentence of verse 12). The misdeeds of the dead were confirmed by their names *not* being written in the book of life. What do you think it meant to the early Christians that God's final judgment would be based on actions recorded in these books? What does that mean to you?

29. Today we read about the final judgment by God. But when, in our lives, are we called upon to justly judge another, and when should we refrain from judging others? Record an example of each to share with your group.

30. **CONNECTION:** Today we read about the scrolls or books that symbolize how our actions on earth will be considered at our final judgment. In John's vision, each of us has a small scroll or book detailing our actions during our lives. In his book, *The Wisdom of Revelation*, Father Richard Veras says that your scroll is your own and you are responsible for it. This image shows us how God loves us. Not as one of millions but personally with a love we cannot imagine. The book of life is a unity of individual books that tell God the personal stories of our faith: background, ancestors, times, places and special circumstances. Share with your small group one story from your book of life that has recently led you to a greater faith.

St. Paul reminds us that together we make up one body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27). Pray today for those who have come before you and who will come after you in your book of life.

#### **DAY SIX**

**Read Revelation 20:13-15**

31a. As we begin today, the resurrection of the dead at the end of time continued. Describe the locations that were called upon to give up their dead according to the first sentence of verse 13.

**NOTE: The general resurrection will occur when Jesus summons all the dead: John 5:28-29 "the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out..."**

b. What statement from the second sentence of verse 13 (repeated in verse 12) indicates how the dead were judged?

32. What happened to Death and Hades according to verse 14?



33. Comment on the final lines from the poem by John Donne, "Death Be Not Proud" (1633). "One short sleep past, we wake eternally, And death shall be no more, death thou shalt die."

34. According to verse 15, who suffered the same fate as Death and Hades?

35. The reality of hell and final judgment for all are somber beliefs of our Catholic faith. This ought to motivate us to pray for and reach out to others who might be willing to hear the words of the gospel from us. What is one idea that might reach someone in your path who has ears to hear the word of God?

36. CONNECTION: Although genuine faith must include strong beliefs, it is also revealed through the actions of believers. We are again reminded today that our works and deeds are important and will be assessed by God at the final judgment. We will be held accountable for our actions, good and bad. Do you view the final judgment by God as an act of love or justice? Can you think of an example of how contemplating judgment might lead you or others to conversion or greater holiness? Share some thoughts with your group

As you pray today, consider what works you have done this week that show how your faith in God is lived out in your life.

Read pages 84-87 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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