

DAY ONE

1. Recall an idea from the focus or reflection from last week that caused you to stop and think.

Read Revelation 9:1-4

2a. As we begin today, the first four trumpets have been blown and signaled natural disasters that affected large areas of the land and sea and even the earth's sources of light. John's vision of woe continued in verse 1. What did he see when the fifth angel blew his trumpet (first sentence of verse 1)?

NOTE: Late Judaism represented fallen powers as stars but a comparison of other passages in this book suggests that the use of the word star means an angel. *NABRE*

b. The star was thought to be a living creature (see [Isaiah 14:12-14](#)). What was it given according to the second sentence of verse 1?

NOTE: The passage to the abyss refers to Sheol, the netherworld, where Satan and the fallen angels are kept for a thousand years, to be cast afterwards into the pool of fire. The abyss was conceived as a vast subterranean cavern full of fire. Its only link with the earth was a kind of passage or mine shaft which was kept locked. The abyss is mentioned seven times in Revelation always in relationship to evil spiritual beings. *NABRE*

3a. The church affirms the existence of an eternal hell. It is not exactly the same concept as the abyss of today's lesson but shares some of its features. Immediately after death, the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell to suffer the punishments of "eternal fire." But the chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God in whom alone man can possess life and happiness (CCC 1035). Look up and record one of the following verses in which Jesus mentions hell in the gospels.

Matthew 13:49-50

Mark 9:47-48

b. From these descriptions of hell, what do you imagine it would be like?

4. The key opened the passage to the abyss. What came out of the passage according to verse 2, and what was the result?

5a. Locusts, with the same power as scorpions on earth, came out of the smoke onto the land according to verse 3. In what ways were the terrifying locusts restrained (verse 4)?

b. Who do you think gave the star the key to the passage and gave the locusts their instructions and why? See [Exodus 10:3-4](#) to help with your answer.

6. CONNECTION: We read today that the furious power of the underworld was unleashed on earth. That there is a hell can be one of the most terrifying teachings of our faith. It was clearly revealed by Jesus frequently in the gospels. Even so, the existence of hell can seem remote or unreal to us when we also believe that God is loving, merciful and just. How does your belief in hell affect your motivation for good behavior and your spiritual life? Record some notes to share with your group.

As you pray today, be thankful for a merciful God whose greatest desire is for you to join him in heaven.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 9:5-6

7a. As we begin today's lesson, the first woe has begun. Describe who "they" and "them" are from the first part of verse 5?

They

them

b. What were they allowed to do and not do according to the first part of verse 5?

not allowed

allowed

8. Comment on why you think limitations were imposed on the actions of the locusts.

9. To what was the torment of the locusts compared at the end of verse 5?

10a. How will the people react according to verse 6?

b. The people confronted a great evil and responded with despair. What other choices of action were available to them?

11. The locusts were given instructions and power to torment for five months. What can you infer about the origin of the judgment handed down?

12. CONNECTION: Today we read that the people who were not protected with the seal of God will suffer during the plague signaled by the fifth trumpet and long for death. All human life is accompanied by some kind of pain and suffering. While it can lead to despair, it can also lead us to search for meaning and help deepen our relationship and dependence on a merciful and loving God. Briefly describe a time when this was true in your life and some lessons you learned to share with your group.

Aware that your suffering can lead to healing and spiritual wholeness, read Deuteronomy 30:19 and let those words begin your prayer

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 9:7-12

13. In verses 7-10 of today's lesson, the locusts are described as hideous and terrifying warriors. What image were they trying to convey according to verse 7?

b. From your knowledge of horses, record some descriptive words that might apply in this context.

14a. The seer uses many similes to describe the locusts in verses 7-10. Complete the following phrases.

On their heads they wore what looked like

Their faces were like

they had hair like

Their teeth were like

they had chests like

The sound of their wings was like

They had tails like

b. The limitation to the power of the trumpet scorpions is repeated in verse 10. How long will they have the power to harm those who are not protected by the seal?

15. Symbolic descriptions in Revelation are not to meant be taken literally or pictured realistically. (*NABRE*) Select one or two images that describe the plague locusts and comment on what ideas you think they are meant to convey.

16. Similar images can be found in the Old Testament. Record a similar passage from one of the following verses.

Joel 1:6

Joel 2:4-5

17. From his vision, John named the king of the abyss (verse 11) and then pronounced that the first woe had passed (verse 12). What lay ahead for humanity according to the rest of that verse?

NOTE: Abaddon is Hebrew for destruction or ruin. Apollyon is Greek for the "Destroyer." *NABRE* It also sounds like Apollo, the pagan god, who was identified with the evil Roman Emperor Domitian who persecuted Christians.

18. CONNECTION: Today's passage reminds us that life is full of battles and that all sorts of things are ready and able to war against us. We no sooner conquer one battle or "woe" than we have two more to face on the horizon. Evil can appear in many forms and lead us to believe that nothing can save us. But no matter how big, terrifying or stinging our opponent might be, God is always on our side.

Think of a time recently when you were up against something that seemed bigger and stronger than you. Describe how you and God together overpowered it and record some notes to share.

St. Paul reminds us, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) Let this thought lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 9:13-15

19. When the first five angels blew their trumpets, cosmic events occurred. Today as we begin our lesson, the sixth angel blew his trumpet and John heard a voice. Answer the following questions from verses 13-14.

From where did the voice come?

To whom did the voice speak?

What did the voice say?

NOTE: The sixth trumpet heralds a woe representing another diabolical attack symbolized by an invasion by the Parthians living east of the Euphrates. At the appointed time, the frightened horses act as God's agents of judgment. The imaginative details are not to be taken literally. Although John does not specifically mention it, this may be the vulture's second woe. *NABRE*

20. Read Exodus 27:1-2. Compare these verses to verse 13 and comment on what they suggest about who is in control of the forces unleashed by the sixth trumpet.

21a. What happened next according to verse 15?

b. Recall that in the earlier vision of the fifth trumpet, the plague locusts were not allowed to kill their victims. Why do you think that this trumpet has unleashed death for one-third of unsealed humanity?

22. What words from verse 15 suggest that this act concerns God's appointed time of judgment?

23. To these historic people, geography was important. In particular, the Euphrates River was significant in serving as a protective barrier from enemies and a source of life. Comment on a few geographic features that influence your life today and why they are meaningful.

24. CONNECTION: The four angels in today's Scripture passage were prepared by God to carry out his mission on earth, but it would result in the loss of human life. Like these angels, we too are prepared by God to carry out his mission on earth, and sometimes it is in ways that may be difficult for us. We may often struggle with the hard work that God calls us to do, but it is not for us to question his will. What do you think is your specific task in making the world a better place? What challenges do you confront to accomplish that task? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record Ecclesiastes 3:1. Aware that your presence on earth at this time is no accident, begin your prayer today

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 9:16-19

25a. As we begin today, John heard the number of troops in the enemy cavalry. How many were there according to verse 16?

b. Imagine hearing military troops of this number? What do you think it would sound like?

26. In his vision he saw the horses with their riders (verse 17). Describe their features below

riders' breastplates

horses' heads

mouths

27. What did John refer to as the three plagues that would kill a third of the human race in verse 18?

NOTE: Fire and sulfur are often translated as "brimstone" and are used to manifest divine judgment in scripture. *Williamson*

28. According to verse 19, in what two ways were the horses powerful?

29a. Look up one of the following verses and record the phrase that reflects the symbolic use of serpents in scripture.

Genesis 3:1

Matthew 23:33

Luke 10:19

b. What do you think John meant to convey by depicting the horses' tails as snakes?

30. CONNECTION: The demons of John's vision that we read about today killed with power that came out of their mouths and tails. The kind of power that demons and false prophets possess with their mouths includes lies and propaganda that can lead people to suffering and away from God. We also possess a kind of power with respect to our mouths, a power for good and for evil. The words we write or speak can have a lasting impact on the lives of others. Share a recent story that relates to this idea and how the grace of God saved you from making a mistake or helped you rectify one.

Read and record Psalms 141:3. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 9:20-21

31a. As we begin today, attention turned to the remainder of the human race who were not harmed by the first or second woe. What was their response to those terrifying and brutal plagues according to the phrases below from verse 20?

did not repent

to give up the worship of demons and idols

which cannot

b. Recall one example of the horrors they endured from the chapter this week. How could they still be so stubborn and hard hearted? Do you think this is a common human trait?

32. Think of idols that we hold onto today that fall into the categories described in verse 20 and give an example of each made from;

gold

silver

bronze

stone

wood

33. The pagan idols from verse 20 cannot see, hear or walk. Select one of these features of your living God and describe how it helps you grow in your faith.

see you

hear you

walk with you

34. In verse 21 John listed the sins of which they would not repent. What are they?

35. We read this week that the fifth and sixth trumpet plagues were supernatural and horrifying, but like the first four, were unleashed so that humanity might be challenged to repent. Why do you think these last two trumpet plagues have been considered woes?

36. CONNECTION: We read this week that the motive behind the punishment of the fifth and sixth trumpet plagues was to shock evildoers into recognizing their sinfulness and reforming their lives. But we learn that the rest of mankind that witnessed and survived this great horror did not repent of their idolatry, the works of their hands, and return to God. Consider all the works you do with your hands and that your hands can be tools for destruction as well as for blessing. Think of some good things and works you did with your hands this past week. Share some thoughts with your group.

Hold up your hands to God and ask him to bless them today knowing that they will be charged with his presence. Let this be your prayer today.

Read pages 44-46 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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