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Sermon Notes

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Christmas in the Heavenly Realms

Revelation 12:1-12

Heavenly invasion into five-sense world

The glory of a single angel... shepherds guarding flocks from predators

True predators were invisible:

Matthew 9:36 ... harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Two-fold Satanic assault: TEMPTATION and ACCUSATION

the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night

We were all like sheep without a shepherd, helpless...

First, a single angel comes with a display of heavenly glory:

Luke 2:9-12 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Then, an entire army of angels came to join with this single angel

Luke 2:13-14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

This was a heavenly invasion... not to fight but to worship

Christmas saturates our senses with input: sights, sounds, smells

Reality is different: ***dead in transgressions and sins under the sway of the evil one***

Revelation 12 gives us a very unusual glimpse into the heavenly realms connected with the coming of Christ.

Revelation 12 also takes us back in time to the defeat of Satan

And Revelation 12 takes us up into the presence of God to see the final outcome of Christ's victory on the cross

Context: Revelation = the unveiling...

I. A Heavenly Sign: The Wartime Birth of Our Savior (vs. 1-6)

Revelation 12:1-2 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ² She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

A. A Glorious and Pregnant Woman

1. WHO IS SHE? WHAT IS HER CONDITION?
2. The One to whom she will give birth physically is the same One who gives birth to her spiritually

John 3:3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

3. From her, Christ gets a human body that can die... from Him, we get a resurrection body that can never die

B. A Terrifying, Vicious Enemy

Revelation 12:3-4 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴ His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.

1. How is the enemy described? Enormous. Red. Dragon. Seven heads. Ten horns. Seven crowns.

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray

2. Vs. 4: A third of the stars swept from heaven

3. Standing in front of the woman to DEVOUR the child. HE KNOWS WHO HE IS

John 8:44 He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.

4. BUT the angelic army was there that night to stop him!!
5. Idyllic scene, so peaceful and serene!!!!

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, The silent stars go by.

O holy night... the stars are brightly shining; it is the night of our dear Savior's birth

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace

6. But behind all of this was a terrifying spiritual reality

C. The Genesis 3 Prediction

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel

D. A History of Satanic Assault on the "Seed of Woman"

1. Exodus 1: Pharaoh's wicked command
2. 2 Kings 11... Athaliah: Joash hidden by Jehosheba with his nurse
3. Herod the Great at the time of Christ's birth

Matthew 2:16-18 Herod was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under

Revelation 12:4 The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.

E. The Birth of the Son Who Will Rule the Nations

Revelation 12:5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.

1. Satan thwarted; the baby was born
2. the one who will RULE ALL THE NATIONS with an iron scepter

Psalm 2:8-9 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.

3. Iron scepter: Christ's unbreakable power; crushes His enemies

Revelation 19:15-16 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

4. Iron rule could imply tyranny... vicious domination... BUT:

Hebrews 1:8-9 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness

5. So, Christ's rule is unbreakable but also perfectly RIGHTEOUS
6. "What child is this who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?" The KING of KINGS and LORD of Lords
7. Satan sought to devour Christ; now he is terrified of the final end

F. The Ascent of the Son

Revelation 12:5 And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

Psalm 110:1-2 "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ² The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies.

Hebrews 10:12-14 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

G. The Protection of the Woman

Revelation 12:6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

Christ ascended, we are still in danger

Desert = place of protection but also where only God can provide

II. A Heavenly Warfare: The First Defeat of Satan (vs. 7-9)

Revelation 12:7-9 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

A. Back in Time: How Satan Fell Before History Began

1. Going back in time
2. Archangel Michael initiated attack and pressed it through to victory
3. Satan's limitations: insufficient recruiting, insufficient power
4. Verse 9 proves the "ancient serpent" (of Eden) was Satan
5. "leads the whole world astray..."

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

6. He is the reason why the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, was needed

B. The Lessons of the Defeat

1. Satan awesomely powerful, but still couldn't win
2. God allowed the angels to fight it out on more or less equal terms
3. Satan was cast down to the earth, and this began his earthly reign which Christ invaded the earth to defeat
4. Satan and his angels still very powerful, but Christ infinitely more

C. The Terrible Consequences for the Earth

1. Satan both LEADS PEOPLE ASTRAY and ACCUSES THEM
2. The "world" appeals to the flesh by Satan's schemes, leading to hell, Satan's punishment
3. Therefore, Revelation 12 says this:

Revelation 12:12 woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

4. the devil KNOWS HIS TIME IS SHORT!! Christ is coming!!!!
5. WOE TO THE EARTH... without Christ, we lose!!

III. A Heavenly Victory: The Conquering Joy of the Saints (vs. 10-12)

Revelation 12:10-12 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

A. The Victor's Cry!!

1. "loud voice in heaven" proclaims the victory of Christ over Satan
2. "Now" = specific event in space and time... the Christ event!
3. Christ has conquered!!! The Kingdom of our God

B. The Spoils of the Victory: salvation, power, kingdom, authority

C. All of these Flow from One Source: the Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross

D. The Victory of the Saints in Heaven: Overcoming the Accusations by Faith in the Blood of Jesus

Revelation 12:11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony

John 1:29 the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Revelation 5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

E. Courageous Living Makes Up their Testimony

Revelation 12:11 they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

F. The End Result: Temporary Pain on Earth, Eternal Joy in Heaven

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.

IV. Applications

A. Come to Christ!!

1. Sights and sounds of Christmas are often Satan's alluring trap
2. Satan is still free, roaming, assaulting your souls... alluring then accusing
3. Only by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony

B. Celebrate God's Total Victory Over Satan (Rev. 12... five-time loser)

1. Satan attempted to devour the male child, but God snatched him up to His throne (vs. 5)
2. Satan fought against the archangel Michael in heaven, but he lost and was cast down to the earth (vs. 7)
3. Satan pursued the woman, but God protected her and prepared a place for her in the desert (vs. 6, 14)
4. Satan tried to swallow the woman up in a torrent, but the earth swallowed the river instead (vs. 15-16)
5. Satan lost when he waged war against the woman's offspring—the children of God—who kept on obeying God's commands and holding on to Jesus' testimony

C. Understand Christ's Rod of Iron

D. Rejoice that, If you are a Christian, Your Time is NOT SHORT

E. Do Not Love Your Lives So Much as to Shrink from Death