MESSAGE SUMMARY
There has been an invisible war between satanic forces and God's purpose and people since time began. To fail to understand this conflict is to fail to understand both history and prophecy. Without the lens provided by Revelation 12, our vision of everything is obscured. We will never fully grasp the plan of God through the ages, the cross of Christ, the tribulation, and the future reign of Christ unless we can comprehend the cosmic conflict that is displayed in this chapter.

STUDY GUIDE
Connect Group Recap: March 6, 2016
Speaker: Skip Heitzig
Teaching: "Cosmic Conflict"
Text: Revelation 12:1-6

Path
Pastor Skip continued our study through the book of Revelation, discussing a cosmic conflict. Revelation 12 shows us things that are happening around us, unknown and unseen, and they can't be seen without the filter of special equipment. Revelation 12 is that special equipment, a briefing about an invisible war in the spiritual realm:

I. This Conflict Involves a People (vv. 1-2)
II. This Conflict Includes a Perpetrator (vv. 3-4)
III. This Conflict Entails a Pursuit (vv. 4-6)
IV. This Conflict Ends in Primacy (v. 5)

Points
This Conflict Involves a People (vv. 1-2)

- The Greek word for great is mega. John points out mega signs and symbols in this passage.
- These symbols point to a biblical reality: spiritual events on a huge scale.
- The woman symbolizes the nation of Israel (see Genesis 37:9-10; Jeremiah 30; Daniel 10).
- The Child is the Messiah (see Genesis 3:15; the Seed of the woman), the central person in this cosmic conflict who came from a central place: Israel.
- The conflict of the ages is geocentric because of God's unique promises to Israel.
- Probe: Discuss the importance of the Jewish nation throughout history. Why has Satan attacked it with such vehemence?
This Conflict Includes a Perpetrator (vv. 3-4)

- The dragon symbolizes Satan (see Revelation 12:9).
- This is a moral description, not a physical one: he is cruel, vile, and fierce.
- He has seven heads. Seven is a number that symbolizes completeness—Satan's intellect is comprehensive and vast.
- He has ten horns and seven diadems. These symbolize Satan's strength and authority in dominating the world.
- We see Satan as the dragon he truly is, not his deceptive disguise as an "angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- **Probe:** Discuss ways in which Satan disguises himself in our world today. What are some of the evil things happening in our culture that drive people from God's goodness?

This Conflict Entails a Pursuit (vv. 4-6)

- Why does Satan hate the woman? Because the Messiah will come through her—the Anointed One, the Christ who will crush Satan's authority (see Genesis 3; Isaiah 9).
- All of Israel's—and the church's—history centers on Satan's pursuit of God's people and his attempts to destroy them in order to prevent the Messiah's birth and stop His mission of salvation.
- Satan's quest began with the first murder: Cain killing his brother Abel. Satan further induces others to murder (see Genesis 4; Genesis 6; Genesis 27). All murder and hateful violence toward the Jews is a sign of Satan trying to rid the world of God's chosen people and, ultimately, the Messiah.
- Satan thought he won the ultimate victory at the crucifixion, but he neglected the prophecy: Christ would take up His life and rise from the grave.
- **Probe:** How can the church participate in crushing Satan in our society? What more can we do to proclaim the victory of Christ and His resurrection?

This Conflict Ends in Primacy (v. 5)

- **Primacy** means dominance and superiority.
- The Child will return as King, and He will reign (see Isaiah 9).
- Rod of iron: Christ will quell Satan's rebellion and rule absolutely, shepherding and guiding the Jewish nation.
- Jesus Christ is the tender enforcer and the gentle warrior.
- **Probe:** Christ is the shepherd and guide for Israel and the church. Share how Christ has guided you through a trial or tribulation in your life, showing His primacy for your benefit.

**Practice**

**Connect Up:** Pastor Skip reminded us that we are a part of the war that began in heaven and moved to the theater of the earth. How does this reality draw you close to God, knowing you are part of His purpose and plan on earth?

**Connect In:** Pastor Skip reminded us that Satan took one-third of the angels with him, leaving two-thirds loyal to God in heaven. Imagine what the body of Christ could do with two-thirds of its people...
serving one another and the world. How is the church to participate in the drama of the end times? What role can we play now to minister in truth and love to those within the church?

**Connect Out:** How can the church better proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ as we enter the final stages of history? How can we declare the primacy of Jesus' victory to a world that is becoming more jaded to all things religious?

**DETAILED NOTES**

I. Introduction
   A. There are things happening around us that are unknown by us
      1. There has been a constant war since the fall of Satan
      2. The mutiny of heaven became the misery of earth
   B. Revelation is filled with symbols that point to reality
      1. Revelation 12 is one of those passages that connects past history and future prophecy
      2. By reading the Scriptures, we gain important knowledge about our Enemy (see 2 Corinthians 2:11)
      3. There are certain things we need to be aware of concerning this cosmic conflict

II. This Conflict Involves a People (vv. 1-2)
   A. **Megas** = great, massive
      1. A great sign
      2. Used repeatedly in this chapter (see vv. 3, 12, 14)
      3. Everything John saw in Revelation 12 is massive
   B. Who is the woman?
      1. The motif of the sun, moon, and twelve stars is only used one other time in Scriptures (see Genesis 37:9-10)
         a. Joseph's dream was symbolic
         b. Sun and moon symbolized Jacob and Rachel
         c. Stars symbolized Jacob's twelve sons and the twelve tribes of Israel that would descend from them
      2. The woman symbolizes the nation of Israel
   C. Israel plays a key role in the end-time events
      1. The tribulation period is referred to as Jacob's trouble (see Jeremiah 30:7)
      2. Seventy periods of seven of trouble (see Daniel 9:24)
      3. Jesus spoke about the end times as they relate to the Jews (see Matthew 24)
   D. Israel has been attacked, oppressed, and persecuted more than any other nation in the world, and yet it has survived
      1. Taken over by other nations
         a. Babylonians: 586 BC
         b. Romans: AD 70
         c. Romans: AD 135
      2. The nation was dispersed for thousands of years
         a. Spanish Inquisition
         b. World War II
      3. Israel just became a nation again
         a. A nation born in a day (see Isaiah 66:8)
b. May 14, 1948

E. The conflict of the ages is a geocentric conflict because of the unique promises made to Israel

F. The child mentioned in verse 2 is Jesus Christ
   1. The Jews have longed for their Messiah for generations
   2. The Seed of the woman was prophesied to crush the head of Satan (see Genesis 3:15)

III. This Conflict Includes a Perpetrator (vv. 3-4)
   A. The dragon is Satan (see Revelation 12:9)
      1. A symbol of a reality
         a. A moral description of Satan
         b. Cruel, fierce, violent
      2. Many people mistakenly believe this is a literal, physical description of Satan
         a. They discount him as not being real
         b. Most Americans believe in God, but do not believe in a literal Devil
      3. Two equal and opposite errors concerning the Devil
         a. Denial
            I. You cannot have a more powerful enemy than the one you don't believe exists
            II. He can outflank and outmaneuver you, simply because you don't know he is there
         b. Obsession
            I. Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (see 1 John 4:4)
            II. If you are serious about Christ, you can expect opposition
   B. Description
      1. Seven heads
         a. Seven is the number of completion, totality
         b. Comprehensive intelligence
         c. He can craft temptations specifically suited for a particular person
      2. Ten horns
         a. Symbol of strength, a weapon
         b. Satan has dominated the world
         c. Authority was given to him
         d. Ten world empires
      3. Crowns
         a. The earth has crowned him as its king
         b. Disguised as an angel of light
   IV. This Conflict Entails a Pursuit (vv. 4-6)
   A. The conflict between the woman and the dragon has to do with the male Child
      1. The dragon hates the woman because of the Child
      2. The Child would one day rule the world and take away Satan's authority (see Isaiah 9:6)
   B. Satan was in the garden of Eden after the fall, and he heard the prophecy God made (see Genesis 3:15)
      1. God said the Seed of the woman would crush his kingdom
2. Since that prophecy was given, he thought of a counterstrategy to make sure that did not happen
3. The cosmic conflict has been a pursuit to destroy the Seed that would crush Satan’s authority
C. Examples of Satan’s attempts to destroy God’s plan
   1. Satan inspired Cain to kill his brother Abel (see Genesis 4:1-16; 1 John 3:12)
      a. Abel was righteous
      b. Eve gave birth to another son, Seth, and the righteous lineage continued from him
   2. Satan caused such evil to spread across the earth that God destroyed it with a flood; all but eight people and an ark full of animals survived (see Genesis 6-8)
      a. The members of Noah’s family were the only righteous people to be found in all the earth
      b. The line that eventually led to Jesus continued from Noah’s offspring
   3. Esau tried to kill his brother Jacob (see Genesis 27:41-45)
      a. Jacob was Isaac’s son of promise
      b. From Jacob came the twelve tribes of Israel
      c. Jesus came from the line of Judah
   4. The Egyptian pharaoh ordered that all the male Hebrew babies be killed (see Exodus 1:15-22)
      a. An attempt to wipe out the entire nation of Israel
      b. An agent of Satan to destroy the Jews
   5. King Saul repeatedly attempted to kill David (see 1 Samuel 18-31)
      a. Like a madman, sometimes for no reason at all
      b. Jesus would be born from the royal line of David
   6. Haman devised a plot to annihilate the Jews (see Esther 3-8)
   7. As soon as Jesus was born, King Herod decided that every child under two years of age needed to be killed (see Matthew 2:16-18)
      a. He heard from the magi that Jesus was to be the king
      b. Another attempt by Satan to crush the Seed that would become the ruler of the earth
      a. Suggested Jesus throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple
      b. Hoped He would die in the process
   9. When Jesus claimed to be the Messiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, the people became so angry they tried to kill Him (see Luke 4:16-30)
10. Satan thought he won when Jesus’ lifeless body was taken down from the cross (see Matthew 27:50-60; Mark 15:37-46; Luke 23:46-53; John 19:30-42)
      a. He thought he had destroyed the male Child, the Seed
      b. There must have been a party in hell, as Satan thought he had been victorious
      c. He did not read the fine print
D. Jesus had the power to rise from the dead (see John 10:18)
   1. On that day, He defeated Satan
   2. On Easter morning, there was not an Easter party in hell
E. Satan then turned his wrath toward the early church
1. The new followers of the resurrected Messiah
2. The church has been persecuted throughout history
F. Israel has continued to be persecuted as well
   1. The fulfillment of the rest of God’s plan is contingent on the nation of Israel
   2. If Satan were to destroy Israel, he could thwart God’s plan
   3. There are many Old Testament prophecies that say the Messiah will reign forever from Jerusalem
      a. This has not happened yet
      b. Satan is trying to destroy Israel so God’s promises will not be fulfilled
V. This Conflict Ends in Primacy (v. 5)
   A. Primacy means dominance or superiority
   B. Whatever the conflict is, Satan will lose and Jesus will win
   C. Jesus will rule with a rod of iron
      1. In antiquity, iron was the strongest metal known to man
      2. An iron rule means absolute authority
      3. The word Greek word for rule in this verse is poimainó
         a. Poimainó = to act as a shepherd
         b. Greek word for pastor is poimén
         c. Poimén = a shepherd
         d. Peter instructed the elders to shepherd the flock (see 1 Peter 5:2)
   D. Satan will not be able to stop the eternal reign of Christ
VI. Closing
   A. Don’t let Satan stop Christ from ruling over you
   B. We have the power of choice
      1. We can say yes to Him or no to Him
      2. We can choose to reject Him or receive Him
   C. We are involved in this cosmic conflict, but we don’t have to be scared (see 1 John 4:4)
   D. Never forget that Satan’s army is outnumbered two to one
   E. Are you under the primacy of Christ?

Greek words: megas, poimén, poimainó


Topic: Spiritual Warfare

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