



REVELATION

Session 5

October 10, 2021

“Cosmic Conflict”

(Between Christ and Satan)

Revelation 12:1 –14:20

BIG IDEA

There is a great conflict at play in our world between those sealed by God and those deceived by Satan. Satan, like an enraged monster, will not win but will hurt many people in the process.

BIBLE CONVERSATION / GENERAL INFO

In many ways, Revelation is the final wrapping up of the whole bible story. A story primarily depicting the ongoing cosmic conflict between God and Satan. This conflict started in Genesis and is then painfully showcased by the OT stories and prophets. We then saw Jesus come and inaugurate His people and strengthen them with the Holy Spirit so that they could take their stand in this war which still plays out in our own lives. In Revelation, however, we see the final conclusion to all conflict. The last of the seven trumpets shows us that the kingdom of the world will be the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ and He will reign forever and ever. In other words, God will bring justice. God wins!

Now, if God wins, the question is what sort of conflict is He victorious in? That is what these chapters of Revelation tell us. They reveal to us what sort of cosmic conflict is currently affecting us and our world. Together they form a short narrative interlude depicting, in spectacular fashion, the important struggle between God’s purposes and plan and Satan’s trivial attempts at thwarting that. Revelation Chapters 13-14 is a micro-story that uses vivid images and key symbols like crowns, dragons, beasts, and numbers to show us the important and threatening nature of this cosmic conflict. We need to take this seriously.

Note: When it comes to what all the symbols mean, let’s think about them in terms of what they are doing in the passage. For example, what does a crown tell us about the things wearing it in the story? Most of the time we try to figure out what the symbol stands for outside of the narrative. Let’s try to understand what the symbol is telling us about the things in the narrative.

In this session, we continue within the fourth section of Revelation which is the admonition section and is concerned primarily with warning us to repent. This section is comprised of the trumpets warnings we saw last week and is also comprised of this cosmic struggle narrative

which we will see this week. So, our goal is to be warned. We should try and approach this section of Revelation by asking the question: "What is God warning us of?"

Short Synopsis of Revelation 12-14

A woman (Israel) who is depicted with royalty and splendor is suffering labor pains. The great red dragon (Satan) is then depicted attempting to devour Israel's male heir who will one day rule all the nations, but he fails. How did this happen? He first tries to fight a war in heaven but, even as mighty as he is, he is not strong enough and is cast out. He then, filled with fury, pursues Israel out of spite but she is moved out of his reach. Satan then tries to sweep her away with a torrent, but the earth steps in to help. Now, even more enraged, he turns his attention to the woman's offspring (those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus). He goes to make war on the church.

So, what will this conflict look like for us? How will the dragon try to make war on the church? He will operate through beasts. Either a beast of chaos and conquest (sea) or a beast of structure and authoritative control (land). In other words, Satan will give his power and wicked nature to real conduits in our world. These beastly people and forces will slander God and make war on the saints – which calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on our part, or they will order us to worship them by threats and restrictions – which calls for wisdom. Both beasts are associated with the number 666. A number referring to man. In other words, 666 is a symbolic way to tell of mankind and our nature. It is the trinity of man, so to speak. It is us as god.

Lastly, we see the 144,000 sealed of God because they did not defile themselves and instead follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased and belong to God and the Lamb. Those sealed by God are contrasted with those who defile themselves with Babylon the Great and the maddening wine of her adulteries. Those sealed by God are contrasted with those who have chosen the seal of the beast. Finally, there will be a harvest of these two groups. One group will be kept and one will be trampled in the great winepress of God's wrath.

Read Revelation 12 and 13

Question #1 Why do you think Satan is described as a dragon? Why use the language of beasts? What does this tell us about him and those things which he operates through?

Question #2 How do we overcome these ferocious enemies? [Revelation 12:11, 12:16] What are we constantly told to do as we face these enemies? [Revelation 13:10, 14:12]

SERMON OVERVIEW

Oftentimes we get distracted. Sometimes it is because something new or novel catches our eye. Sometimes it is because of our minds being stuck on all the concerns of life that we fail to be present in the moment. And sometimes it is because we go looking for things to distract us from reality. Whatever the case may be, let's remember to not get distracted away from Jesus.

Revelation is a wonderfully rich book with lots of things that can distract us. Our lives are filled with a thousand little tasks and activities that can distract us and sometimes the pain, hurt, or frustrations in life can distract us and even lead us to search for a coping mechanism to further distract us. When it comes to this latter category, **remember to stand firm in spiritual warfare**. Satan, the deceiver, is at work and at war in the world today. He is actively trying to break our world apart and fracture it. This is not a fantasy. He may not be an actual dragon in a cave or jungle, but he is a real force in our world that operates in and through people to bring suffering and destruction. So, we need to live prepared. We need to live sober and upright lives as best we can. Ephesians 6:10 tells us to be strong in the Lord and put on the armor of God so that we can take our stand against the schemes of the devil.

So, **be on your guard against Satan's deception**. He knows he is doomed but he will try hard to take you down with him. How then do we do this? How do we guard against deception?

We refresh our view of God's holiness and His wrath daily. We turn our eyes to who God is and what He has done. We look to the cross. We focus our attention on Jesus: His life, teachings, promises, death, and resurrection. We fear God and give Him glory as we hold to the gospel. For we saw in Revelation Chapter Seven that He will put his seal of ownership on those of His company. We are reminded of that same seal here again in Revelation 14.

But, because Satan is the deceiver, he will try to deceive people into getting his seal. His seal however leads to hell, suffering, and eternal separation from all that is good and holy and righteous. Remember God is on the true throne and a judgement is coming! Which side will you be on? Which seal will you have on your forehead? Will you follow Jesus or Satan?

Question #3 What are moments in your life when you feel the most distracted?

Question #4 What might it look like for you personally, and for those of your group, to guard against Satan's distractions? What is one practical step you can take today?

OPTIONAL EXERCISE

Option 1	Option 2
<p>Satan Counterfeiting God: We see Satan regularly counterfeit what God has done. He is the great deceiver who twists God’s very words and masquerades as an angel of light. (2nd Corinthians 11:14)</p> <p>Think about why Satan might do this. What are some examples where we see Satan intentionally try to counterfeit what God has already done?</p> <p>Examples: God sealed His own in Revelation 7:3-4 and now Satan seals those of his own in Revelation 13:16, 14:9.</p> <p>Jesus bears the wounds of His crucifixion on His body and now the beast in Revelation 13:3 also tries to look like that.</p>	<p>Personal Questions:</p> <p>Electricity is good if for us and lets us do many things but it is dangerous if violated. What are similar things that come to mind?</p> <p>How does this micro story in the middle of Revelation help you understand the whole of Revelation?</p> <p>What sort of tactics do Satan and his forces seem to employ against you? Are they blatant or subtle?</p> <p>We are told to fear God and give Him glory in Revelation 14:7. What might that look like?</p>

PRAYER

- Intentionally Specific Prayer for this week:
 Pray that you will take these chapters as the warning they are to repent and hold to our testimony in Jesus. Pray that we are not distracted by Satan or his schemes. Pray for your brothers and sisters around the world who might be at the mercy of a great beast right now.

DIGGING DEEPER	Daniel 7 and 8
<p>Read Daniel Chapters 7 and 8. How do these match on to Revelation 12 and 13? What parallels to you see? What common language do you see? Again, don’t try to match these dreams or vision onto our world history or onto a particular person. Focus on what the symbols mean in the story itself and what they are telling you about the nature of the kingdoms and beasts.</p>	

Next Session: Revelation 15:1 – 16:21