



December Cell Talk: Week 2

Theme: Heaven's Perspective on Christmas (Rev 12)

Kit List: Bibles, candle, matches,

Welcome

Where have you seen spiritual warfare this week? In other words, where have you seen a clash between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, or the Enemy? Where have you seen righteousness in battle against evil? Who is winning?
(Reminder: See if you can find a news article about the neighbourhood to bring in and discuss, as a way of "reading the world" alongside reading the Word).

Worship

Light five candles this week for the fifth week of Advent. As you light the candles, have someone read Romans 8:31-39.
Sing: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen". Add your prayers to the Scripture and the song, specifically thanking the Lord for saving us from Satan the Accuser's power.

Word

Read Revelation 12 together.
What does this passage have to do with Christmas? Why don't the images in this story show up on many Christmas cards?
Is this passage all just fantasy? The product of a wild imagination? Is it to be taken literally?
How do we best read passages like these that use this type of imagery?
Who are the woman and the child in this passage?
Who is the Dragon? What was the Dragon's role in heaven?
What does it mean that the Dragon was cast out of heaven? What are the consequences of this, in particular for us on earth?
The Dragon can no longer accuse in heaven. What does it try to do now on earth?
How is the Dragon frustrated and defeated on earth?
Who are the offspring of the woman the Dragon is now waging war on?
What is required of these offspring in the battle against the Dragon? How will they be victorious.
Once again, what does this passage have to do with Christmas? Why talk about spiritual warfare, the Accuser, and martyrdom at Christmastime?

Witness

Go out to street corners and declare the victory of Jesus and the expectation of his return. The best way to do this at this time of year is through Christmas carols. One way to do this is by signing up for a Kettles shift as a cell group this week. For those in Vancouver, **we are now into Dec, so it is vital to fill all the Kettles shifts. Please call Nicole before your cell and find out what shifts are available!**

Also, be in prayer daily for a friend who does not yet know Christ the Dragon-slayer.

Are you up to date on your tithing for the year? Now at the end of the year is a good time to ensure that you have been supporting your local ministry with your finances as well as your time and prayers.

What is your testimony? What do you tell people about Jesus the great liberator, the lamb that was slain to set us free from the power of death and sin? Work on your testimony, the story of your salvation, to share with someone during this Christmas time.

This passage, part of John's Revelation concerning Jesus Christ and his pastoral letter to seven Churches around Asia Minor at the time, describes the nativity of Jesus from a slightly different perspective. We have already gone through the nativity story seen from the point of view of Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, the Wise Men, and even King Herod. In both Matthew's and Luke's account, we see Jesus coming into the world in a place of danger and vulnerability. So too in the Revelation account. This is Christmas (and following events) from a supernatural point of view. In it we see the child, Jesus, being born to Mary, and the Dragon (the Accuser, the ancient serpent) waiting to devour him. The imagery used is poetic, prophetic, and apocalyptic. It is the revelation received by St. John, what he could understand and communicate of the heavenly mysteries he saw. Much of the imagery found in the book of Revelation is taken from Old Testament sources, and so would have been very familiar and evocative to the original audience.

The Dragon's expulsion from heaven brings both joy and woe. Joy, because it has been defeated in heaven, and will no longer accuse humanity. Woe, because its expulsion brings it to earth, filled with fury, where it will wage war on the followers of Christ and the creation of God through deception. But there is more joy than woe, because the ultimate defeat of the Dragon will come, by the blood of the Lamb and the testimonies of the saints.

The Dragon is frustrated in its plans as the baby Jesus is rescued from its jaws (as we have seen Jesus rescued from the slaughter of Herod), and the woman is taken to safety as well in the desert. Even the created order frustrates the Dragon as the earth swallows up the waters it spews forth.

The Dragon's defeat is announced. It cannot devour the child, it cannot destroy the woman, and it cannot deceive or overcome the woman's other offspring, who are the Church, the saints of God. But the battle is still fierce, and the defeat of the Dragon involves the martyrdom of the saints, who are obedient unto death just like their saviour and king.

Once again, Christmas is often thought of as a time of comfort and joy, and it is that, but it must also be remembered that it is a time of invasion, danger, warfare, death, martyrdom, kingdoms crumbling, the announcement of a new king and a new kingdom.