

THE BATTLE OF CHRISTMAS

(Revelation 12)

1. **REMEMBERING** In your opinion, what are possible reasons why the dark side of Christmas presented in Revelation 12 and described in this past week's message has not been emphasized in the church?

2. **REFLECTING** In your opinion, what are possible reasons why the oft-emphasized biblical theme of spiritual warfare has not been emphasized in the church?

3. **DISCOVERING** Read Revelation 12:1-17 aloud. Focusing on the clear, easy to understand segments, answer the following questions. (Be careful of rabbit trails and seeking to interpret all the symbolism.)
 - Go back through the passage and locate where the adversaries in this war are clearly identified. What are the many ways our adversary is described?

 - What is our adversary's plan for our lives?

 - What are other Bible verses that give you insight into what we can expect from our adversary?

 - Review the passage and quotes on the second sheet. What insights do they provide on what we can expect from our adversary?

4. **CONNECTING** What descriptions in these passages and quotes put you on "high alert" or, at the very least, capture your attention and encourage you to pay attention to this unseen reality?

5. **RESPONDING** What will you do in the coming week to further heighten your awareness, strengthen your position, or increase your confidence in the battles currently raging around you? (Consider the quote below as an example.)

Most men have a hard time sustaining any sort of devotional life because it has no vital connection to recovering and protecting their strength; it feels about as important as flossing. But if you saw your life as a great battle and you "knew" you needed time with God for your very survival, you would do it.... Time with God each day is not about academic study or getting through a certain amount of Scripture or any of that. It's about connecting with God. We've got to keep those lines of communication open, so use whatever helps. (John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart*)

You were born into a world at war.... [The devil] has you in his crosshairs, and he isn't smiling.

(John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*)

QUOTES OF NOTE

Christianity isn't a religion about going to Sunday school, potluck suppers, being nice, holding car washes, sending our second-hand clothes off to Mexico—as good as those things might be. This is a world at war. Something large and immensely dangerous is unfolding all around us, we are caught up in it, and above all we doubt we have been given a key role to play. (John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*)

To live in ignorance of spiritual warfare is the most naïve and dangerous thing a person can do. It's like skipping through the worst part of town, late at night, waving your wallet above your head. It's like walking into an al 'Qaida training camp, wearing an "I love the United States" t-shirt. It's like swimming with great white sharks, dressed as a wounded sea lion and smeared with blood. And let me tell you something; you don't escape spiritual warfare simply because you choose not to believe it exists or because you refuse to fight it. (John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*)

There is a great battle going on all over the world, which, in the final analysis, is a struggle for men's hearts, minds, and souls. (Karl Marx, revolutionary, philosopher, author of *The Communist Manifesto*)

This battle we are in is a battle against the principalities of darkness, not against people who are different from us. (Donald Miller, *Searching for God Knows What*)

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.... The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:1-2, 15)

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.... "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." (Genesis 3:1, 15)

The attitude of so many Christians today is anything but fierce. We're passive, acquiescent. We're acting as if the battle is over, as if the wolf and the lamb are now fast friends. Good grief—we're beating swords into plowshares as the armies of the Evil One descend upon us. (John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*)

War is not just one among many themes in the Bible. It is the backdrop for the whole Story, the context for everything else. God is at war.... Until we come to terms with war as the context of our days we will not understand life. We will misinterpret 90% of what is happening around us and to us. (John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*)