

“CHRISTMAS VICTORY”

Text: Revelation 12:1-5

Subject: “The Grinch Who Tried To Steal Christmas”

Introduction: When I was a little boy, my favorite toy was G.I. Joe

Question: How many of you remember G.I. Joe? “G.I. Joe, G.I. Joe, fighting man from head to toe, on the land, or the sea, in the air.”

- I loved my G.I. Joe because he always won the battle games with all my army men around him.
- My side won the war whenever G.I. Joe was involved.

Revelation 12 is fascinating

- It reveals that Christmas is really at the center of the greatest war of all time
- The war began in Isaiah 14:12-15, and Ezekiel 28:12-17 when satan rebelled against God in heaven.
- Lucifer was cast out of heaven because of pride and one-third of the angels foolishly casting their lots with him. (Rebels seem to follow rebels).
- These fallen angels became satan’s storm troopers – doing the bidding of their evil commander.
- Thus began the war against God’s divine purpose and the human race.

Question: How did you and I become embroiled in this cosmic war of the ages?

Answer: We got involved when Adam and Eve sinned (by choosing to disobey God).

- It is known as the “fall of man.”
- Man sinned, because of sin man died, and sin was passed on to us all.
- So now, fallen humanity needs a Savior to save us from our sins:
 1. The Savior must be human to save the human race (and)
 2. The Savior must be Divine (and sinless) to satisfy the just demands of God’s Holy Law.

And that’s where Revelation 12 comes in.

Question: What is the context of Revelation 12?

Answer: It is a picture (clear and simple) of the Grinch who tried to steal Christmas.

- It’s a revelation of satan’s campaign throughout the ages (his desire from the very beginning).

Question: What is the revelation?

Answer: It’s unmistakable in verses 1-5.

- A dragon stands before a woman who is about to give birth.
- The dragon’s sole desire is to devour her child the moment it is born.

Question: Who is the woman?

Answer: The woman is Israel from whom the Messiah would come.

Question: Who is the dragon?

Answer: The dragon is satan – the enemy of the people of God.

- In v. 3, the words “**red dragon**” refer to the violence of satan’s nature.
- In v. 3, seven heads and ten horns refer to the **intelligence** and **power** of Lucifer.
- In v. 4, satan’s desire from the beginning is described by John. “**To devour her child as soon as it is born.**”
- It is a clear picture of Israel (**the woman**) in pain, waiting for the Messiah to come forth.
- It is a clear picture of satan (**the dragon**) making one attempt after another to destroy the people of God – to stamp out the coming Messiah, and thus, leave humanity lost in our sin with no hope and no future.

In other words

- Satan knows that the whole ball game is to get the child. Why?
- If he misses the Child, satan knows he is doomed!

Question: Did the dragon get the Child?

Answer: Verse 5 tells us that Jesus was born and ascended to the throne 33 years later.

In other words

- There’s the birth (**satan grabs and misses**) and Jesus ascends to Heaven preparing for His return.

Question: What does this have to do with me today?

- In vs. 9, satan is pictured as a deceiver on the earth.
- In vs. 12, satan is angry and has limited time.
- In v. 13, satan persecutes Israel where the Messiah would come from.
- In vs. 14, God nourishes Israel (the woman) or provides for His people in every season of life (even in your wilderness, desert seasons).

But in v. 17

- The enemy of your soul does what? “He is angry with the woman (Israel or God’s people) and goes to make war with the remnant of her seed.”
- We are the seed of the woman!
- From the day Christ was born in you, satan has been at work to hurt you!
- This dragon is in opposition to God’s redemptive plan on the earth.

So why this message?

1. To understand how God overcomes the evil schemes to destroy His people, so we will be spiritually healthy people and,
2. To gain a greater appreciation for Christmas as being the last failed attempt of satan to destroy the people of God.

So put your seat belt on

- As we uncover the dragon’s attempts to destroy the people of God and discover how we can avoid the same snares and schemes of the Grinch who still tries to steal Christmas).

Ask: What are the snares of the Grinch who tried to steal Christmas?

1. The Snare of Jealousy

Question: What did God do in Genesis, after the fall of mankind?

Answer: He immediately promises that from the seed of the woman a deliver would come to crush the head of satan. (Gen. 3:15)

Question: So what does the Grinch who tried to steal Christmas do?

Answer: He begins to attack and constructs a plan to kill Eve's seed (thinking that Eve herself and not one of her ancestors, would give birth to the child) John 3:12 says: *"Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one."*

Question: What did Cain do?

Answer: He killed his brother Abel. Why?

- Because Cain was jealous that Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God.

In other words

- In the first children ever born, satan attempts to wipe out the line of the Messiah and leave us lost in our sin.
- The red dragon used the seeds of jealousy to try to defeat God's plan.

What's the application?

- To remember that one of the Grinch's greatest schemes is to play upon our own pride.
- This makes room for the seeds of envy and jealousy.
- This won't allow us to rejoice with others as they succeed.
- Instead we can envy their blessings and bring destruction to our own spiritual health. How?
- Because envy is the pain we feel when someone else has something we want.
- And jealousy and envy rob us of a contented spirit.
- And *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* (I Timothy 6:6)
- And God's will is clear in Philippians 4:11, *"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."*
- Envy caused the first church-split in heaven. Lucifer wanted something he couldn't have.
- His discontentment poisoned others and thus began a world of pain and trouble and tears.

2. The Snare of Unforgiveness

(Satan's next attempt to get the child occurs during a famine)

- A great famine comes to the world. The people of God will be in jeopardy.
- The only nation prepared with food will be Egypt.
- But how could the Israelites get food from Egyptians?

Only one way

- God has to allow a man named Joseph to be beaten, betrayed, ridiculed, enslaved, lied about and imprisoned to become the "set-up" man.

Question: How does Israel survive during the seven years of famine?

Answer: Joseph's 10 brothers go to Egypt and stand before Joseph and plead for food.

Question: What does Joseph do?

Answer: He weeps, he forgives, and he extends grace (and food) to his betrayers.

What's the application?

- That forgiveness of our offenders releases God's power (and overcomes the evil plan).
- Had Joseph harbored ill will, Israel would have starved and the Messiah would be missed.

So remember

- It's a scheme of the red dragon for you to be hurt, stew in your own juice and refuse to release your offenses and offenders to God. As unforgiveness ties you to the past.
- Forgiveness frees you from the control of what has happened to you in the past. (Repeat)

3. The Snare of Compromise

Question: What happened to Israel after Joseph died?

Answer: A new king came to power.

- Pharaoh became afraid of the Israelites. (He couldn't allow Israel to become too powerful).
- And the Grinch tries to kill off the people of God so Messiah will not be born.

In Exodus 1:16, Pharaoh says...

"Every baby boy that is born, throw him into the River Nile."

In other words

- The Grinch has a plan to stop Christmas, but God's plan will not be frustrated.
- Moses' parents hide him in a basket.
- Moses will be raised in Pharaoh's court of prestige and luxury.
- It is only a matter of time before Israel becomes extinct without a leader.

Question: And what does Moses do?

Answer: Hebrews 11:25 says, *"Moses chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."* WOW!

Question: What would have happened to the Israelites if Moses had become obsessed with the pleasures of sin in Egypt?

The application?

- To guard against the snare of the little foxes.
- To reject the invitations of the evil one set before you.
- To live for what really matters in the long run.
- To keep our hearts pure and our affections shut up to the things of God.
- To not waste our lives living for the stuff that so soon passes away.
- To understand that all temptation is a lie, promising you something that it cannot deliver.

4. The Snare of Discouragement

- The Grinch appears next in the book of Judges.
- He uses Israel's pagan neighbors to try to destroy Israel!
- These were dark days for Israel, so much so that Gideon cried out in Judges 6:13; ***"If the Lord is with us, then why has all this happened to us? Where are all the miracles that our fathers told us about?"***

Question: What is the snare of the evil one to destroy God's people?

Answer: To despise and despair the painful seasons of life.

- To think that God is not at work in the dark days.
- To think that God can't redeem your hard places.
- To think that God won't accomplish his purposes.
- To think that God is far, far away.
- To think that the best is behind you.

The cure?

- Believing that God (like He did in Judges) is able to do new things in our midst.
- To understand that God (like He did in Judges) can use weak people to get His will done.
- To understand that God (like He did in Judges) has a plan for you regardless of how discouraged you may be.
- To understand that God (like He did in Judges) has not forgotten you and is working even when you cannot see Him.
- Remember – discouragement is a lie of the devil to blind you in the present of what God is going to do in the future.

5. The Snare of Unresolved Anger

- The Grinch uses this snare over a thousand years after he worked on the first sons of this earth.
- God raises up a shepherd boy named David to be a giant-killer and a great warrior.
- Saul hears the people give honor to David.
- Anger fills Saul's heart and it leads to hatred.
- Satan knows that David's line is the one through whom the Christ-child will be born.
- The Grinch fills Saul's heart with unresolved anger to kill the king-to-be (David) and stop the Christ-child.

Question: What is the root of this anger?

Answer: Being unsatisfied with who God is and who God has made us.

- Failure to be satisfied in God drives us to be angry.
- Anger shoots at others, but in the end wounds itself.
- It produces discontentment and drives us into carnal actions.

6. The Snare of Fear

- It is revealed in the book of Esther.
- The Grinch uses wicked Haman to devise a plan.

Question: What's the plan?

Answer: A plot to kill the Jews so God's people become extinct (so Messiah cannot be born).

Question: What does God do?

Answer: He orchestrates a beauty pageant where Esther is chosen.

Question: What does the Grinch do?

Answer: He attempts to put fear in Esther's heart for breaking the law and expectations of the king. The Grinch wants to shut the mouth of Esther.

Question: What does Esther do? She says in Esther 4:16, *"I will go and see the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish."*

In other words

- God puts confidence – where the devil wants fear.
- God puts faith – where the dragon wants fretting.
- God puts boldness – where the Grinch wants panic.

And God will do the same today in your heart when fear comes knocking.

7. The Snare of Insecurity

Question: What does the Grinch do when Jesus is born?

Answer: He puts a plot to kill the Baby in the heart of paranoid Herod.

Question: Why does Herod kill the babies to get rid of the Messiah?

Answer: Because Herod is insecure and insecurity can't share the limelight with anyone else.

- In fact, Judas was so insecure he sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver to get out of poverty.
- And the Grinch thought he had the Child.

But God has the last say.

1. God awakens Joseph in a dream and spares the Baby Jesus.
2. God accepts the sacrifice at Calvary and raises Jesus from the dead.

Question: What's the good news of Revelation 12?

Answer: The good news is that even though the Grinch tried to steal Christmas...

- God has a plan in place!
- God provides for the needs of His people!
- God knows what we need before we need it!
- God has a Triumphant Son, a Triumphant People, and a Triumphant Church.

He always has and always will overcome the snares of the evil one.

- He still does it on days like today, as he builds healthy people.
 1. **Jealousy** – Maybe you envy what someone else has.
 2. **Unforgiveness** – Maybe you've been offended and still rehearse it.
 3. **Compromise** – Maybe secret sins are robbing you of a clear conscience.
 4. **Discouragement** – Maybe you're in the dark days and see no rainbow in sight.
 5. **Anger** – Maybe you're not satisfied in God and God alone.
 6. **Fear** – Maybe you need faith and confidence to do God's will.
 7. **Insecurity** – Maybe you've felt insignificant and unnoticed in the grand scheme of things.
- Whatever it is – bring it to the altar and bring it to the Lord.
- Let God make this Christmas a great Christmas – because greater is He that is in you than the Grinch who tried to steal Christmas!
- Remember the song we sing? “Oh come all ye faithful, **joyful and triumphant.**”

Amen
Bill Kirk