

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JANUARY 15 - 19, 2024

JESUS

REVELATION

Epiphany Series
Jan 7 - Feb 11





MONDAY

Read **Revelation 12:1-12**

This week's topic is spiritual warfare and Satan's defeat by the Cross of Christ. Revelation 12:1-6 opens with Satan seeking to destroy the Christ child and God's protection over the child and His mother. Revelation 12:7-12 describes Satan and his evil angels being cast out of heaven and now is raging his fury upon the earth. On the earth Satan is defeated by the Cross of Christ and by those trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Today Satan is waging spiritual warfare on the earth. Spiritual warfare is real although not always visible through human eyes. In 2 Kings 6:8-17 we read about Elisha's encounter with unseen spiritual forces. Elisha and his servant were staying in the city of Dothan when at night the city was surrounded by Israel's enemies, the Arameans. When Elisha's servant woke up in the morning, he discovered the city surrounded by the Aramean army. He reacted in fear, asking Elisha what should they do.

The prophet answered, *"Don't be afraid. ... Those who are with us are more than those who are with them"* (v. 16). Then Elisha prayed, *"Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see"* (v. 17). Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. He was enabled to see beyond the physical realm into the spiritual.

There are two realms in life, the physical and the spiritual. Through human eyes we see only the physical. Through spiritual eyes we can see the unseen world. As we mature in our faith, we are able to see more and more into the spiritual realm. Elisha had the spiritual vision; his servant did not. Elisha was able to see that *"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."* Therefore, he was not afraid of the enemy army surrounding the city.

We need to see that spiritual warfare is real, that Satan and his forces are active in this world seeking to destroy God's work. We should not run from Satan in fear; instead, we need to see that God has surrounded us with His chariots of fire (angels). Then we will not be afraid.

QUESTIONS

Are you aware of active spiritual warfare taking place around you? How can we become more aware? How should we respond to it? How can we strengthen ourselves to counter it?

PRAYER

For Pars Theological Centre

Pars Theological Centre equips the underground church in Iran. Pray for continued resilience for and protection of the leaders we are training, their families, and their ministries. Pray for new leaders to be raised up in the Persian-speaking church. Pray for leaders who are in prison—for the Lord's comfort and shalom to be with them and their families.



TUESDAY

Read **Ephesians 6:10-18**

In spiritual warfare we are fighting against an unseen enemy. Ephesians 6:12 says, “... our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Spiritual warfare is not only occurring in the visible but also in the unseen.

Daniel 10:2-14 describes a spiritual battle taking place in the heavenly realms. After Daniel had fasted and prayed for three weeks, an angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel said to Daniel that from the first day that he had begun his prayers, God has heard his prayer and sent the angel to Daniel in answer to his prayer. However, the angel was detained by the “prince of the Persian kingdom” (v. 13), which kept him from completing his mission for twenty-one days.

Daniel said, “Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia” (v. 13). The king of Persia was a demon who was powerful enough to detain the angel for twenty-one days until the more powerful angel, Michael, came to help the angel complete his mission. Spiritual warfare was taking place in the heavenly realm between demonic forces and God’s angels.

How are we to deal with such warfare taking place in the heavenly realms? Paul’s answer is that we must “put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, [we] may be able to stand [our] ground, ... And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:13, 18). We cannot fight the spiritual battles on our own. God has provided for us the spiritual armor and the power of prayer to empower us to defeat the enemy. However, we must make use of these weapons in the battle. We must not venture out in self-confidence thinking we can do it in our own strength.

QUESTIONS

How are we to wage spiritual warfare? What can you do to become more effective in fighting the battle? What might prevent you from pursuing an effective battle plan?

PRAYER

For Pars Theological Centre

Pray for our Formation Conferences. Pray that discussions, seminars, workshops, times of fellowship and corporate worship will all be Spirit-led, bringing renewal to the minds and hearts of both students and facilitators.



WEDNESDAY

Read **Revelation 12:7-12**

In our battles with evil spiritual forces, we know the end of the story; Satan is defeated and Christians are victorious in the end. Revelation 12:11 tells us that Satan has been “*overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.*”

Colossians 2:13-15 further explains Satan’s defeat: “[Christ] forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

Satan’s most powerful weapon against humankind is death. Christ, by His death and resurrection, destroyed the effectiveness of this weapon. We, by trusting in what Christ accomplished for us on the cross, are able to overcome Satan “*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.*”

“On His Cross and through His Resurrection Jesus overcame forever the worst that evil could do to Him; and those who have entrusted their lives to Him share in that victory. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross, sin is forgiven; when a man accepts in faith

what Christ has done for him, his sins are wiped out. And when he is forgiven, there is nothing for which he can possibly be accused.” (Barclay)

“*Death has been swallowed up in victory. ‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

Therefore, we do not have to live in fear of Satan’s most powerful weapon against us. We can “*resist the devil, and he will flee from [us]*” (James 4:7).

QUESTIONS

Since we know that we have already won the victory over Satan by the blood of Christ, how should we now live? What changes might we have to make in our lives?

PRAYER

For Pars Theological Centre

Pray for the Pars team and their families, that they would always be sensitive to the Spirit’s leading as they co-labor with Christ in building His church for the purpose of His great glory, trusting Him to provide for all their needs.



THURSDAY

Read **1 Corinthians 15:54-58**

Jesus told His disciples: “Remember ... if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). History repeatedly demonstrates how God has grown His Church and Kingdom amidst seemingly impossible circumstances. Journalist Todd Nettleton describes the spiritual warfare taking place in Iran today as one example.

“In 1979, there was a massive shift in political power in Iran. The Islamic Revolution put the mullahs—Islamic leaders—in charge of the entire nation. They promised a nation run strictly according to Islamic principles, as if the Quran was the constitution and Imam Ali head of state.

“For Iranian Christians, ... it must’ve seemed [devastating]. What place would there be for Christians—especially ‘apostate’ converts from Islam—in the Islamic Republic of Iran? Many believed the end of the church in Iran was at hand. ...

“Forty years later, those pronouncements seem laughable. Today, according to Joshua Project, the fastest-growing church in the world is in the Islamic Republic of Iran. [Per] Joshua Project stats, we can confidently say that more Muslims have come to Christ in Iran in 41 years since the Islamic revolution than did so during the roughly 1,400 years between the advent of Islam and 1979.” (Nettleton)

It has not been an easy road for Christians in Iran. Pastors have been murdered and executed. Farsi-speaking churches have been closed, house churches raided, Christians interrogated and arrested, some assaulted and otherwise tortured. “There has been much suffering. Yet gospel workers inside the country, as well as secular survey results, confirm that hundreds of thousands of Iranian Muslims have come to Christ. ...

“As the government became more strictly Islamist, the people became less so.” (Nettleton) Some Iranian evangelists estimate that “nearly three-quarters of Iranians have rejected Islam. As the government became more openly hostile to Christianity, the people became curious about how Jesus and His ‘good news’ could be a threat to the nation.” (Nettleton)

Some Iranians “point out that Ayatollah Khomeini—the stern face of the Islamic Revolution—drove so many people away from Islam that he can rightfully be called the greatest force for propagating Christianity in the history of Iran.” (Nettleton)

QUESTIONS

God is advancing His kingdom today. What is your response to this?

PRAYER

For Pars Theological Centre

Pray for Iran and the Persian-speaking diaspora, for Christ’s light to shine in areas of darkness.



FRIDAY

Read **John 10:1-6**

God is at work in the world, although we may not always see His hand in the process nor recognize His voice. The following experience of Perry Roll shows us the importance of hearing and obeying God's voice as He speaks to us.

Roll had a small aluminum cross with "God Loves You" stamped on it that he had carried in his pocket for many years. On a bus ride to Indiana, he waited in the bus station restaurant for several hours for his connection. Across from his table sat a woman with a cup of coffee. Roll heard a voice from within telling him, "Give her your cross." He was puzzled. Then he heard it again, "Give her your cross."

"I glanced around to see if anyone else had heard the voice. But no one was even looking in my direction. I didn't want to give my cross to a complete stranger. It meant something to me. Besides, she didn't need my cross. She looked fine to me, not like some of the obviously-down-on-their-luck types. This is ridiculous, I thought. I got up to leave when I felt a firm pressure on my chest, as if a huge hand were holding me in place."

"The voice came again, strong and sure: 'Tell her it's from Me.'"

He went to the woman's table. He noticed that she had her hand positioned awkwardly, halfway in the purse resting on her lap. He gave her the cross and said, "God wants me to give you this." The woman read the inscription and started to cry. Roll asked, "Are you okay, ma'am?" She nodded and slowly withdrew her hand from her purse. Roll was shocked when he saw what she was pulling out, a pistol!

She said, "I came here to have my last cup of coffee. My daughter was killed a few months ago, and my husband just left me. I thought God had abandoned me too. You made me realize He's still with me." She cradled the cross in her palm and read its message once more: "God Loves You." Then she asked Roll to take the gun away. She said, "Thank you," wrapping her fingers tightly around the smooth metal of the cross. "I have never needed these words more." Clutching the cross to her chest, she walked out the door. (Roll)

QUESTIONS

God is frequently speaking to us. How can we become more attuned to His voice?

PRAYER

For Pars Theological Centre

Pray for new partners who would capture the vision of Pars and support us prayerfully and financially in carrying the work forward.



Sources

- William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 84.
- Todd Nettleton, “After a Year of COVID Uncertainty, Here’s Certainty—God’s Kingdom Will Advance,” published March 21, 2021: <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/covid-uncertainty-gods-kingdom-todd-nettleton>
- Perry Roll, “Stranger at Union Station,” *Guideposts Magazine*, June 1997.

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.