# WEEK 2 — HE CAME TO DESTROY THE DEVIL'S WORKS

**December 13 — Joy**

**Primary Texts:** 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 2:14–18
**Supporting Texts:** Genesis 3:15; Colossians 2:15

## MAIN POINT

**Jesus entered our world to defeat the enemy who held humanity in bondage. Because Jesus has won the decisive victory, we can live with joy even while the battle continues.**

Christmas was not merely a quiet night in Bethlehem.

**Christmas was an invasion.**

The King entered enemy territory to set captives free.

## INTRODUCTION

Most Christmas scenes feel peaceful.

A stable.
A baby.
A young mother.
Shepherds.
Stars.
Angels.

But Scripture gives us another perspective on Christmas.

Behind the peaceful scene was a war.

From humanity's first rebellion against God, sin and death had held the world captive. Satan deceived, accused, tempted, and destroyed.

Then Jesus entered the world.

First John tells us why:

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” — 1 John 3:8

Christmas was God's announcement that the enemy's reign would not last forever.

OPENING DISCUSSION

What is one Christmas tradition that brings you joy?

How would you describe the difference between **happiness** and biblical **joy**?

Why might “Christmas as a rescue mission” feel familiar, while “Christmas as an invasion” feels less familiar?

# UNDERSTANDING

## READ 1 JOHN 3:8 AND HEBREWS 2:14–18

Hebrews explains something remarkable:

Jesus became human **so that He could die.**

Normally, we think of birth and death as opposites.

But the writer of Hebrews connects Bethlehem directly to Calvary.

Jesus took on flesh and blood so that through His death He could destroy the power of the one who held the power of death.

## 1. THE WAR IS REAL

The conflict did not begin in Bethlehem.

It reaches back to Genesis 3.

After humanity's rebellion, God told the serpent that one day an offspring of the woman would crush his head even though the serpent would strike His heel.

Genesis 3:15 is often called the first announcement of the gospel.

From the beginning, God promised that evil would not have the final word.

The rest of Scripture unfolds that conflict.

Then Jesus came.

The baby in Bethlehem was the promised King arriving to confront the enemy.

### DISCUSSION

Why is it important for Christians to recognize that there is a spiritual dimension to the world we live in?

What are the dangers of either ignoring spiritual warfare completely or becoming overly fascinated with it?

How does knowing the outcome of the story affect the way we face the battle today?

## 2. THE ENEMY'S WORK IS BONDAGE

First John describes the **“works of the devil.”**

Throughout Scripture those works include:

- deception,
- temptation,
- accusation,
- sin,
- bondage,
- destruction,
- and fear.

Hebrews highlights one particularly powerful weapon:

**the fear of death.**

Death entered God's good creation through sin. Humanity lives knowing that life is temporary, relationships can be lost, bodies fail, and death eventually comes.

That knowledge produces fear.

But Jesus entered the very condition we fear most.

He experienced suffering.

He experienced temptation.

He experienced death.

And He emerged victorious.

DISCUSSION

Where do you see fear exercising the most control over people today?

How can fear become a kind of bondage?

Which tends to have more influence on your decisions: confidence in God or fear about what might happen?

## 3. JESUS SHARED OUR FLESH AND BLOOD

Hebrews 2:14 says:

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things…”

Jesus did not merely appear human.

He became truly human.

He experienced hunger, exhaustion, grief, pain, rejection, temptation, and ultimately death.

Why?

Hebrews answers:

**“That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death.”**

This is the surprising strategy of God.

Jesus defeated death **by dying.**

Satan's apparent victory at the cross became the means of his defeat.

Colossians 2:15 says that at the cross Christ **“disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame.”**

The resurrection then declared publicly:

**Death could not hold Him.**

DISCUSSION

What does it mean to you personally that Jesus willingly entered the weakness and suffering of human life?

Why was Jesus' full humanity necessary for our salvation?

How does the resurrection change the way Christians understand death?

4. THE DECISIVE BATTLE HAS BEEN WON

A helpful historical picture is the difference between **D-Day and V-E Day** during World War II.

The Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, did not immediately end the war in Europe. Fighting continued for nearly another year.

But Normandy represented a decisive turning point. Nazi Germany's eventual defeat was increasingly certain even though battles remained.

The New Testament describes the Christian life in a similar way.

At the cross and resurrection, Jesus won the decisive victory.

But evil has not yet disappeared.

We still experience:

- temptation,
- suffering,
- spiritual opposition,
- disease,
- injustice,
- grief,
- and death.

We live between Christ's decisive victory and His final victory.

**The outcome is settled even though the battle continues.**

That is one reason Christians can experience joy in difficult circumstances.

Joy does not mean pretending everything is fine.

**Joy means knowing who wins.**

DISCUSSION

How is biblical joy different from positive thinking?

Where in your life right now do you need to remember that the battle is real but the outcome is secure?

How might knowing Christ's ultimate victory change the way you respond to fear?

## APPLICATION

Hebrews does not describe Jesus' victory as something merely theological.

It is deeply personal.

Verse 15 says Jesus came to:

**“deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”**

Jesus sets captives free.

That freedom begins with our salvation, but Christ continues freeing His people from the patterns that once controlled them.

Some of those chains are obvious.

Others are quieter:

Fear of failure.
Fear of rejection.
Fear of losing control.
Shame from the past.
Secret habits.
Bitterness.
Anxiety about the future.
The need for approval.

The Christmas announcement is that those things do not have to be your master.

Jesus is.

PERSONAL DISCUSSION

What fear seems to become louder for you during this season?

Is there an area of life where you know intellectually that Christ has authority, but you still live as though something else controls you?

Where have you already experienced Christ bringing freedom into your life?

What would trusting Jesus look like in one specific battle you are facing right now?

Leaders: This is an opportunity for honesty without forcing disclosure. Do not allow the conversation to become speculative discussion about demons or spiritual warfare. Keep the focus where Scripture places it: **Christ's authority and victory.**

## PRAYER

Invite group members to silently identify one fear, temptation, or area of bondage they want to surrender to Christ.

Then pray together.

Thank Jesus that:

- He entered our world,
- He understands human weakness,
- He defeated sin and death,
- He remains merciful and faithful,
- and His final victory is certain.

Pray specifically for people in the group who are carrying fear, grief, shame, or ongoing spiritual battles.

## BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

### NAME THE FEAR. SPEAK THE TRUTH.

When fear surfaces this week, pause and identify it specifically.

Complete these two sentences:

**I am afraid that _____.**

**Because Jesus has defeated sin and death, I know _____.**

Then pray that truth back to God.

The goal is not to deny what you are feeling.

The goal is to allow what is **true about Jesus** to become louder than what fear is telling you.

## COMMENTARY

### 1 John 3:8 — “Destroy the works of the devil”

The word translated *destroy* carries the idea of undoing or dismantling. Jesus came to undo what Satan's rebellion and humanity's sin had produced.

### Hebrews 2:14 — “Partook of the same things”

The incarnation is essential to salvation. The Son truly became human while remaining fully divine.

### “The power of death”

Hebrews is not teaching that Satan has ultimate authority over death independent of God. Satan uses death and its fear as instruments of bondage. Christ's resurrection breaks that power.

### Hebrews 2:17 — “Merciful and faithful high priest”

Jesus' humanity means He is not distant from human suffering. The victorious King is also the compassionate High Priest who understands weakness.

### Doctrinal Guardrail

Christians should take spiritual warfare seriously without attributing every difficulty, temptation, illness, or conflict directly to demonic activity. Scripture points us toward vigilance, prayer, obedience, truth, and confidence in Christ—not fascination with the enemy.