

November 20, 2022
The 25th Sunday after Pentecost
Pastor Matt Duerr

“TRUE-U – Armageddon”

Grace, mercy, and Peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Welcome back to True-U, Truth University. Armageddon, what do you think of when you hear that word? Probably doomsday. Recently, our President mentioned it. He warned of Armageddon. Probably because our democracy is in danger and that's something that we heard from both sides of the aisle in the world of politics. Have you ever asked your self who or what is Armageddon? With the number of times that it is actually mentioned been usually referencing some sort of doom or destruction, it is rather unique to find out that that word is found in the Bible in only one place; Revelation, chapter 16, verse 16.

Now, what does it say about Armageddon? Well, here's the lead up to it. Kings of the whole world assembled for battle on the great Day of God Almighty. Where did they assemble? Armageddon. Which brings us to an extension of last week's sermon. In last week's sermon, we saw that Satan, the Red Dragon, was attacking God's people, the church. And what we see is that the church begins to look weak. It looks defeated. And Satan wants to deliver a final blow.

And do not be deceived; remember. I know that's bringing two of the past sermons together. But remember to look at what the Bible says, lest we are deceived. What else does Jesus say in the lead up to the reference to Armageddon? He says, behold, I am coming like a thief. And one thing about Jesus is He's very consistent, because that's also what He says in Matthew 24:43, I come like the thief in the night. And it was something that Jesus obviously stressed because Saint Paul picks it up in 1st Thessalonians 5 verse two, he says, “for you are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” Do not be deceived. This is the final prophecy. It must be fulfilled. This must take place like all the other prophecies that Jesus has already fulfilled from His birth,

to the style of His ministry, to His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension. The last prophecy to be fulfilled is His coming back. And He's gonna come back like a thief in the night.

It must be fulfilled. But what really does that mean? What must happen? We're going to approach this in two different parts of two different levels. First, we're going to look at what Jesus says in Luke Chapter 21, and then also Matthew Chapter 24 and 25. He says, nation must rise against nation. I think we've seen that. Kingdoms against kingdoms. I think we see that too. Some would say in a nod to California, he says there will be great earthquakes. Yeah, we got that. Then again, they have some pretty big ones in the Middle East and Japan too. There will be famines, which is another word for drought. And were in a drought in California and the Colorado river is in a mega drought! And pestilences, that means worldwide disease. Can you say COVID-19? And there will be terror and great signs from heaven. Which we're gonna touch on more later. But please understand this is not a reference to heaven that is God's home, though this is to the heavens, to the sky and to the cosmic realm.

But Jesus says. Before all of this. Just heard. He speaks to his disciples and says before all of this. They're going to lay their hands on you. They're going to persecute you. Who's the they? He's very specific. He mentions three things, the synagogue, king, and governors. Well, the Jewish authorities would and the Roman governor would, and the governors in the different places of the Roman government would. They would persecute them, "for My name's sake." We see that did happen, just as Jesus said. He then says Jerusalem will be surrounded and will fall, will be, "trampled underfoot by the Gentiles." We saw that happened in 70 A.D. when Rome overthrew Jerusalem. And the world would continue then. Until "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Well, what happens then? Well, we're living in the times of the Gentiles. Jerusalem, Israel is no longer a world power. Then, the end of the time of the Gentiles when it's times fulfilled. There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars, a reference back to the heavens. And what would be the result of these signs and the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens? Distress of nations

in perplexity. Woe is us, doom is coming. How do we know? Because there will be roaring of the sea and waves which will cause, I quote, “people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world.” Can you say climate change? A year ago, they had a climate change conference in Canada. If I remember correctly, there were 57 911 calls for ambulances for people who had fainted with fear. But what exactly must happen?

Let's go to Part Two. The great Day of God Almighty, the day of the Lord. Understand, day is written in the singular. It is a single day when nations have aligned against God's people and well, they wind up against God's people at Armageddon. But we're told that that's a Greek word for a Hebrew word. The Hebrew word is, Har Megiddo. Now Megiddo was a Canaanite city. Conquered by Joshua. It ended up becoming an outpost for Solomon's cavalry. And Har means hill or mountain. With the basic root of that word har, means invasion.

Now we have to ask ourselves a really big question. And it's a very serious question. When we look at the Book of Revelation. Is it written in a literary fashion or in a figurative apocalyptic fashion? And those of you who have studied it know it's written in a figurative language, apocalyptic in nature. Where everything is symbolic. And if everything is symbolic. Do we want to go right here, right now and say, but this one word that's used one time in all the Bible, we're gonna take a literal they're gonna line up in this place, God's people are gonna be assembled there, the Kings are gonna surround them... Or do we still take it figuratively and say the nations of the worlds are gonna align themselves against God and they are going to not just attack the church, they are going to har, invade the church?

Do not be deceived, as we heard last week, we are in spiritual warfare. The Church is under attack. It is and has been invaded. Because when we look at God's word, the Bible, we see that within the quote-unquote “Christian Church” there are those who did not agree with it from the very beginning with Genesis, they say; there is no creation. They disagree with the flood and say that it was not worldwide. It was only in a flood in the local sense. They don't agree that Jesus really

existed or as the Jesus seminar will say that you know the miracles and stuff those were hyperbole. Jesus was a good man. The cross and rise from the dead? Not hardly, that's impossible. And all the way to. Well, to today where we see gay marriage embraced within the Christian Church. A woman's right to choose abortion, approved and promoted within the church. Emotion driven gender identification. Approved, and supported in the church.

Then of course, then you can hear the word. Yeah, well the problem with the church is all those denominations. I heard that this past week. And I was told, yeah, I just, I don't agree with all the denominations and stuff. We are all in the same boat, we are all in this together. Do not be deceived. No, we are not! First Corinthians 6:9-10, I've mentioned it now, 3 sermons in a row. It makes very clear who does not inherit the Kingdom of heaven, eternal life with our Lord. It is those who reject God's word and go with the teachings of man, accepting that man knows better than God. And any church that believes that, and embraces these things, we are not in it with them. They are against the Church while bearing its very name.

Now you might say Pastor Matt, this is what depressing sermon don't worry. The good news is this. Do not be deceived! There is no battle of Armageddon. In that particular place where the Christians have been rounded up and surrounded by kings and they're gonna destroy them? No. What we see in Revelation chapter 16, go home and read this, is the nation's lineup the King's line up against the church and like a thief, unexpected, God comes; Jesus comes. He shows up on the great Day of God, the great day of the Lord. The Lord shows up with the blast of a trumpet. The sky rolls back. He comes on the clouds of heaven, just as the Angels had told the disciples when He ascended into heaven. Just as you've seen this Jesus rise on the clouds, this is how He is gonna return. He returns fulfilling that prophecy. And when He returns, He returns with a shout, and again that is written in the singular. I believe it's simply this, "Rise." And all of those who have died will rise from the dead. And those whose faith, hope and trust was in Jesus, whether from the Old Testament believing that God would fulfill His prophecy of the

coming Messiah; or those who look back on the Messiah and say He came, they will be taken to be with Him. And those who are still alive and put their faith in Christ, that remnant of a church will be taken to be with Him. That's the rapture. It's not some thousand years thing or all of that. No, it's the Day. And at the same time, those, who have not put their faith in Christ, those who have opposed God, who have opposed His church, who have persecuted it, who have mocked it, ridiculed it; they will be raised and separated over here to the left.

And then there is judgment. To those on the right, eternal joy, why? Because their name is in the Book of Life, the work of Jesus has saved them and they put their faith, hope and trust in Jesus. And the others are judged by, well, the books of works. They are judged by their works. And there will be eternal judgment where there will be, Jesus says, weeping and gnashing of teeth. Why weeping? They feel sorry for themselves. I'm too good for this. And gnashing of teeth. How dare you judge me on my works? How dare you judge me. I'm such a good person! I did everything I could to save the planet. I did everything I could to save the puppies. I did everything I could to protect the rights of a woman to murder their child. I did everything I could to promote the right to gay marriage. I did everything in my power to support and encourage young children to explore their gender and decide who they really are. I did everything I possibly could to make a mockery of your word and your creation and your power and your glory. That's the reality.

And here on the last day, the last Sunday of the church here, next week Sunday, we start Advent. We are reminded that just as this church year has come to an end, this world will come to an end. It comes to an end on a day. And for us, it's a great day. The Great Day of the Lord. A day that we can look forward to. A day that we can rejoice in. And a day that we get a little taste of today as we commune with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through Holy Communion. It's just a little taste, but this is just a brief moment in time. But it's foreshadowing all eternity with our savior. Not be deceived by all the stuff that's out there about Armageddon. Jesus wins. Because of that, you and I will too! In our Savior's Name, Amen.