The Discipleship Project-Summer 2021

Series 3: Victorious

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Armageddon

Series Big Idea

Because our battles belong to the Lord, we must trust God to bring victory.

Lesson Big Idea

Because the battle has always belonged to the Lord, we should faithfully follow Him as He returns to bring about everlasting victory.

FOUNDATION

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:11–13 **(PPT)**

John shivered under the worn-out blanket. Another dream. Another vision. He rubbed his leg where a deep scar refused to heal. As the pain eased, he rolled over, making a cocoon from the ragged blanket the soldiers had tossed him when he was forced from their small skiff, landing him on the shore. He pulled in his cold toes. Thank God, he didn't have to worry about anyone tormenting him anymore. He was pretty much alone on this island. Was it raining? Once again he fell into a deep sleep.

John stood up with a start. In the distance he could see a rider on a white horse coming toward him. His breath was short and rapid. The sight was stunning. The horse was a majestic animal, prancing toward him with more grace than he had ever witnessed. As John tore his attention from the great animal, he was just as mesmerized with the regal rider. His robe was as red as blood; his eyes flickered like fiery flames. John stepped back, even though he was not afraid of the horse and the rider. Suddenly light caught the rider's crown, and John realized he was looking into the eyes of a king. Then he noticed others. The armies that followed were also on white horses. They were all dressed in fine linen, pure and white. The demonstration was majestic. John stared in wonder.

John heard a voice booming across the distance saying this rider was Faithful and True. Out of his mouth would come a sword that would strike down the nations. He would be the executor of judgment, delivering justice in his passionate anger. His very presence commanded all to notice the name written on His robe and thigh: King of kings and Lord of lords. The blood-red robe, the crown on His head, and His name all made sense. This was Jesus Christ. John was thrilled to see his beloved friend again.

John's attention was turned to another army gathering against the great white horse and the rider. This army was the beast and kings of the earth coming together to fight against Jesus and take Jerusalem.

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In horror John watched the massive destruction the beast and his army initiated. Suddenly the ugly beast was seized with such force and power that he could not breathe. An angel grabbed him, bound him with chains, and cast him into the lake of fire. The angel turned from the pit, brushing his hands together as if they had dust on them. He smiled up at the King and placed his hand over his heart. The King smiled. It was finished. The war was over. Great praise echoed throughout the atmosphere. The saints on white horses shouted and cheered for the victor. The victory was won; Jesus Christ was the victor.

John woke up with a start. It all seemed so real. He reached for his parchment and quill. He had to write this down before he forgot. What an amazing revelation. Tears ran down his cheeks as he frantically recorded everything he had seen.

FRAME

We may be more familiar with the reference *apocalypse* than we are with the *Battle of Armageddon*. However, for the most part, they are both referring to the same event. The *apocalypse* is a story of the catastrophic final destruction of the world. The *Battle of Armageddon* is an account of the final battle according to the Holy Bible. Interestingly, many stories, movies, and books are based on the biblical account of the end of the world, even though major liberties are taken and chalked up as poetic license. For example, stories exist of a lone survivor in a desolate city fighting paranormal beings. He fights relentlessly until exhaustion weakens him to the point of death. Then a heroic rescue pulls him from imminent danger. Other stories include superheroes and villains of astronomical strength fighting to the death causing massive destruction to the whole world. Secular stories have their own twists and unexpected endings, causing readers to hold their breath and hope the hero wins. Whatever the outcome, the reality is that these stories are inspired by a real end-of-the-world war that is prophesied in the Holy Bible.

- **Have you read or seen stories about the apocalypse? How do they compare to the Bible account of the Battle of Armageddon?**

Though the subject of the apocalypse is a common concern, we do not need to fear because we know where the story originated and how it ends. (**PPT**) The apocalypse is a popular theme among all ages, but the most amazing thought is that most people truly believe it will happen someday. Preppers stow away food, water, and other supplies to sustain them when this catastrophic ending begins. Crowds gather as Christian churches offer Bible studies and classes on the end time. The Bible outlines the apocalypse culminating in the Battle of Armageddon, the last battle before the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Several places in the Bible refer to this horrible war. The Battle of Armageddon is embedded in prophecy, which is a prediction or a forecast of future events.

We can be confident the end-of-the-world war is coming because of the predictions in the Bible. We are powerless to stop it. We cannot slow it down, nor can we change the outcome. It is written in the Bible. We can believe the Bible because it is the inspired Word of God (II Timothy 3:16). God's Word is true and applicable to every generation that comes. God's Word was settled in Heaven before time began (Psalm 119:89).

- **Why should we not fear the end-time wars and other events?**

The good news is this war is already won. The victor is our Lord Jesus Christ. The time is not designated to us yet, but to God all is ready. However horrendous the war appears, we do not have to fear because Jesus Christ will be the victor of this war. If we stay faithful to Him and choose to remain in His army, we will be among those who rejoice and celebrate victory with our Lord and Savior, the King of kings.

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The fight against God is a losing battle. (**PPT**) The biblical account of the Battle of Armageddon suggests that the beast is the devil—the personification of all that is evil. The kings are the rebellious leaders of the world who form an unholy alliance with the devil against Jesus Christ in the last battle on earth. However, this is a losing battle because the Bible is clear about who the victor will be. Jesus Christ is the victor in every battle and every encounter with the enemy of our souls. Those who place themselves against God are sure to lose the battle because the outcome is already written. God will always win.

Through the shedding of His blood on the cross, Jesus conquered death, Hell, and the grave. (**PPT**) God put a plan in place against the enemy for our benefit. God wanted us to know that nothing could deter us if we want to be in His army. He set in place a beautiful recruitment process in His Word. (See Acts 2:38.) If we believe in God, repent of our sins, and take on Jesus' name in baptism, we are promised the gift of the Holy Ghost to come into our lives, literally Christ living in us. Along with this great promise comes power to overcome the enemy under any circumstance (Mark 16:17–18).

- **What are some ways the devil distracts or attacks us in an attempt to separate us from God?**

John was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." And it seems John knew Jesus more intimately than most of the other disciples. Perhaps this closeness to Jesus allowed John to obtain a special revelation of who Jesus really was. The Gospel of John is more of an account of the deity of Jesus Christ in comparison to John's other three letters to the church found later in the New Testament.

However, at the end of his life, we find John as a captive, marooned on an island called Patmos (Revelation 1:9). On this island God began to reveal things that must come to pass. The Book of Revelation is the account of the final plans of God in the end time.

God set the stage for the final battle, and He already knows the outcome. (**PPT**) We can be confident that if we put our trust in God as John did, we will be on the winning side. We must believe Jesus Christ came in the flesh, died on the cross, and will come again to finish off the enemy of our souls. From the beginning of time, God knew He would be victorious in the Battle of Armageddon. We can be thankful He has a plan and will follow through. He is true to His Word.

We should choose to be on God's side because He is the victor. (**PPT**) The key to success on God's team is to choose to be on His side. This is the key to winning every battle we must fight against the enemy of our souls. How sly or cunning the enemy seems to be does not matter; he will never be able to overpower a child of God. John pointed out that as children of God, we have power to overcome the world and the spirit of the antichrist simply because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. His Spirit living in us is greater than the spirit that is in the world.

First John 4:4 tells us, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (KJV).

God has given us access to everything He has because we are His children. We should make a point to seek out the path to eternal life through Jesus Christ because He is the one with all power. Jesus procured the keys of Hell and death through Calvary. He experienced death and lived to tell the story.

God does not need a literal sword or spear to win the battle. His Word is His weapon. (**PPT**)

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The Bible describes God's Word as being alive, sharp, and powerful, like a sword, but not just any sword; God's Word is a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). No wonder God's Word is so powerful; no matter what direction we swing, it will do the work. The longer we know the Lord, the more precious His Word becomes to us. The more we depend on His Word, the more we realize it is a successful weapon against the enemy. Jesus showed us how to use this weapon to defeat the enemy when He defeated Satan in the wilderness. He demonstrated that the Word is all we need to fight.

- **Have you ever used God's Word as a weapon to defeat the enemy in your life? Explain.**

We cannot separate God from His Word. His Word was present in the beginning with God. He and His Word are inseparable. John shared this revelation with the saints in his first writing: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1, KJV). (**PPT**) John referred to God as "Word." In his revelation of the Battle of Armageddon, John heard the voice of an angel declare that the one on the white horse was called "The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13, KJV). God's Word is the most powerful tool we have against the enemy.

At the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus Christ will once again open His mouth, and His spoken word will go forth like a sharp sword slaughtering the enemy (Revelation 19:15). He will not need a sword, a lightsaber, or a semi-automatic rifle. The enemy does not stand a chance when the Lord speaks.

God has given us His written Word as our weapon. When the battle gets overwhelming, we can reach for our sword, the Holy Bible. God's Word is powerful. We can use it to fight our battles. Just as God will win the greatest battle of all time by the power of His voice, we can fight our battles with the Word He has already declared; that which we can read in the Bible.

- **What are some ways we can implement the Word of God in our lives?**

FINISH

No one really knows how the fire got started. It was all so sudden. The dog started barking in the middle of the night. The parents woke up, smelled smoke, and started screaming for the family to get out, "Fire!" They left behind all the heirlooms and family treasures. The most important thing was to get out alive. The fire was spreading fast; the smoke was a dark blanket covering the whole house. The family was finally all outside the structure, at least that is what they thought at first. The mother started screaming, "Where is Daniel?" She was running frantically from child to child. No Daniel.

The father didn't think for a second; he shot like a cannonball for the front door of the house. The fire truck had just arrived. The mother ran to tell them her husband had darted back into the house to get their son—only seven years old—from the fire. Moments seemed like an eternity as the mother stared without blinking into the black hole of a front door, praying for the love of her life and her beloved son to appear. Nothing. It seemed like forever when they finally appeared like a big, bulky black silhouette slowly emerging from the fire and smoke. The mother could see the father's face buried in the blanket that surrounded their only son. For a brief moment, the father raised his head and their eyes met. Tears were streaming down his dirty face, which was covered in soot. She wanted to reach for them, but firefighters and paramedics quickly surrounded them, immediately administering lifesaving techniques to revive the little boy and check out the father. She backed away with a prayer in her heart.

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The ambulance arrived a few seconds later and whisked the two off to the hospital. The mother and the girls were fine, but they ended up in the emergency waiting room, seeking word of the father and son. The doctor came out and announced that the mother could see her son now. He had suffered some smoke inhalation, but he had no burns. He would have died had his father not discovered him face down in the hallway. Thinking fast the father had darted into the bedroom, grabbed a blanket, covered his son, scooped him up, and headed toward the front door.

As the mother sat beside her son's bed, brushing a rogue curl from his forehead, she sobbed. He looked so helpless and small. She thought of her precious husband, the epitome of love. He was lying in another room, suffering from the results of his sacrifice. The doctor informed her that her husband's lungs were compromised from smoke inhalation, and he also had suffered extensive burns on his back and legs, but it looked like he would survive. He was the hero. He did not have to give what he had been willing to sacrifice—his life for his son.

When we are in the fire of adversity, we can count on our heavenly Father to bring us to safety. No matter how bad it gets, we must trust that He knows our needs and will always have us safely cradled in His arms. When we feel we are in a fiery battle surrounded with things that threaten to destroy us, we must believe that He will fight for us. He will eventually rescue us from all this world's deviousness. Then we will have the chance to fight the enemy with guaranteed victory. We already know the outcome and we win. We are on God's team. He is the winner, and we will be victorious because we chose to be on His side.

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