

Sermon for 26th Sunday after Pentecost

Date: November 18, 2018

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Danial 12:1-3

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 10:11-25

Gospel Reading: Mark 13:1-13

Sermon Text: Danial 12:1-3

Sermon Title: For All the World To See



Introit: Psalm 143:2, 5-6, 10-11; Antiphon: Psalm 143:1

Hymns:

LSB 655 – Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

LSB 680 – Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise

LSB 786 – Lord of All Good (v.1,3)

LSB 660 – Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus

Distribution:

LSB 549 – All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

LSB 525 – Crown Him with Many Crowns

Liturgy:

Divine Service IV, p. 203



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Text: Danial 12:1-3

At that time Michael, the great commander, who stands on behalf of the descendants of your people, will rise. It will be a time of trouble unlike any that has existed from the time there have been nations until that time. At that time your people, everyone written in the book, will be rescued. Many sleeping in the ground will wake up. Some will wake up to live forever, but others will wake up to be ashamed and disgraced forever. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness on the horizon. Those who lead many people to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever.

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Grace to you and peace in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

With Reformation, All Hallowed Eve¹ and All Saint's Day behind us we are winding down to the end of the Church Year. Only Thanksgiving and one more Sunday remain ahead of us for this year. Then with the onset of December a new Church Year will begin, and we will once again remember the blessed birth of the Babe of Bethlehem, ...but we're not there yet.

As we get closer to the end of the Church Year the readings assigned to each Sunday begin to concentrate on the end of life, and the end of this creation. Like it or not this world has its troubles. As much as we'd often like to escape those troubles and get to the wonder that God has promised us, God's timing and God's plan are what we must wait upon. So we wait. We wait in this sinful sin-filled world.

We are faithfully waiting for that day when Jesus will return with the armies of Heaven. He will come for the final battle, the final war between Heaven and Hell, waged and fought over us. Now the movies make that look like it might be something horrible to endure. The movies make the "Battle of Armageddon"² something to dread for all people left alive on Earth. The movies even suggest that Heaven could perhaps lose. The movies get the Bible wrong a lot.



When that final battle comes there will be no doubt who will win. There is no chance that Jesus might not take the field or win the battle. There's not going to be some last minute trick Satan pulls out of his hat to defeat the Holy Christ of God. That is an undeniable fact. It is a fact that cannot be refuted. It cannot be because the battle, the ultimate battle for your souls and your life, your eternal life, has already been won. In fact two battles have already been fought, and twice Christ was victorious.

The first was shortly after Lucifer tried to usurp the throne of Almighty God. In Revelation chapter twelve it reads:

A war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels had to fight a war with the serpent. The serpent and its angels fought but it was not strong enough, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The huge serpent was thrown down. That ancient snake, named Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, was thrown down to earth. Its angels were thrown down with it.³

1 'Halloween,' 'All Hallowed Eve,' and 'All Saints Eve' are all English words that describe the same date. The day before All Saints' Day.

2 The place called Armageddon is mentioned in Revelation 16:16-ff.

3 Revelation 12:7-9



While Adam and Eve were carelessly caring for the beautiful Garden of Eden, living among the animals and with each other in perfect bliss and peace, a nightmare was taking place over their heads. God's perfection was challenged by one whose arrogance led him think he could push God out of the way and take for himself the worship due God.



While butterflies landed on Eve's nose and Adam collected fruits and vegetables to eat for lunch a battle the likes of which this Earth will never see was waging above them. While birds sang Adam and Eve to sleep,

“rulers, authorities, the powers who govern this world of darkness and spiritual forces that control evil in the heavenly places⁴”

engaged in a battle for creation itself. The contrast between Eden and evil are striking.



In that great and epic clash of powers that we humans cannot, could not, imagine Satan lost and he was cast down.⁵ What was the first thing Satan did after losing that battle? He ran right to Eden. If he could not defeat God in

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Heaven he would hit God where it hurt most. Satan would attack Adam and Eve, and so he did. His attack was sly and sneaky. He convinced them to sin, and in doing so tore them away from God forever. Eternally separated from God, lost forever to the bliss and comfort they had enjoyed under God's protection.

Satan no doubt laughed a sinister snicker of sarcasm as he tried to slink away, but God was not fooled. God arrived in the Garden and dealt with Adam and Eve first. The first lesson is what disobedience had brought them. God knew where they were. God knows everything. He didn't need to ask for Himself, He asked for them. God spoke, "Adam, where are you?"⁶

Adam, who had been hiding, now realized for the very first time that he was lost to God. He came out of his hiding place and proceeds to blame God and Eve for what had happened. Eve followed his example and blamed God and Satan for what had happened. Neither of them thought to apologize. Neither of them thought to repent.



Then God turned to Satan. God did not ask him any questions, He simply pronounced judgment. His words were clear, another battle was coming. This time the battle would not be for Heaven but rather for the very souls of the Children of God. God also stated what the outcome of that battle would be. He said:

"I will make you and the woman hostile toward each other. I will make your descendants and her Descendant hostile toward each other. He will crush your head and you will bruise his heel."⁷

You see in the middle of all that wrath Satan was still smiling. He had a sarcastic smirk on his face that he could not hid. He thought he had won. He had torn us away from God, and he knew sin was permanent. Once sinful, always sinful. No matter what God did, no matter what curses He commanded, Satan had destroyed God's perfect creation.

Satan however did not fully grasp the love of God. He did not understand that we, we the children of God, are more precious to God than even His own Son's life. God would not, could not, endure being separated from His children forever.

In the middle of all that cursing God spoke a promise. A promise that One would come. That One would settle accounts with Satan once and for all. He, that One, would crush Satan's head and Satan's defeat would be put on display for all the world to see. When that battle came Satan's failure would be made fully complete.

That One has come. He is called the Holy Christ of God, the Messiah. Messiah has come and His name is Jesus. From the moment of His birth Satan lashed out at Him. All the children of Bethlehem were killed trying to get to Him.⁸ Satan never stopped His attack against the Christ because the Christ was the only hope of freedom for us, God's Children.

6 Genesis 3:9

7 Genesis 3:15

8 Matthew 2:16-18



Now I don't know if Satan saw it coming. He had Jesus put on trial. He had Jesus beaten and whipped. He had Jesus nailed to posts and hung up on a hill, there on display, for all the world to see.

...but then then that sarcastic smirk left his face. "Wait a minute. No, no that cannot be! Stop Him!! Stop Him!! Stop Him now!!! Shut Him up, kill Him, kill Him, kill Him now! Make Him stop!!!"

Through man's mockery, and Hell's high shouts of triumph, Jesus in exhaustion barely above a whisper spoke, while hanging there on display, for all the world to see.

"It is finished!"⁹

If thunder didn't clap across the heavens when those words were uttered, perhaps it should have, because in that moment man was made humble, and Hell was made silent. There on that cross hung Satan's eternal defeat. There on display for all the world to see. Through that sacrifice you were made holy again. Through the blood and death of God's only Son you are made children of God again.¹⁰

Now another battle will be waged. Holy Scripture reads:

At that time Michael, the great commander, who stands on behalf of the descendants of your people will rise. It will be a time of trouble unlike any that has existed from the time there have been nations until that time. At that time your people, everyone written in the book, will be rescued. Many sleeping in the ground will wake up. Some will wake up to live forever, but others will wake up to be ashamed and disgraced forever.¹¹

A time is still coming. Right now we do not fully enjoy the perfect relationship God has established with us through Jesus Christ. That is because sin is permanent. There is only one cure for sin and that cure is death. In death, through faith, we realize the full salvation God has promised us. The day will come when Jesus will give the command and the great generals of the angelic armies, generals like the arch-angel Micheal, will descend upon the Earth for battle one last time. In that battle there is no doubt of the conclusion. Scripture says those whose names are written in the Book will be rescued.

What book? And is your name in it?

Scripture records:

I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and **books** were opened. Then another **Book** was opened, which is the **Book of Life**. And the dead were judged by what was written in the **books**, according to what they had done.¹²

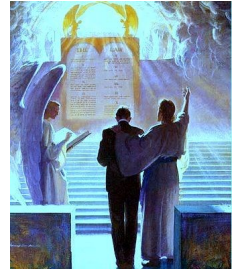
9 John 19:30

10 1 John 3:1

11 Danial 12:1-2

12 Revelation 20:12

So shall you be judged. Every sinful act you have ever committed, every sinful thought, every sinful deed is all written there, and read out loud for all the world to see.



Here is where a little Hebrew is little helpful. ‘Satan’ is a Hebrew word. It means ‘accuser.’ The accuser will be there to accuse you before God of all you have done. He will be there as prosecutor to convict you of sin, any sin. It only takes one and Hell is your home. But you will not stand alone. We have a Redeemer.

Those books are your record, but your sins are blotted out, covered over, and hidden forever by the very blood of Jesus the Holy Christ of God Himself. Written in the Book of Life is your name. There you are declared holy, perfect, and a child of God. There is no evidence against you. Satan’s failure is complete, there on display for all the world to see, as God Himself pronounces judgment over you, “Welcome home.”

You see the battle has already been won, and there are only two things that can keep your name out of the Book of Life. They are: unrepentance and unbelief.

If you sin and say to God, “I don’t care what You think, I’m going to do what I want to do.” That is unrepentance. If that sin remains on you, you will be bared from the Gates of Heaven.

If you say, “God is a joke and I don’t need Him or His tales of salvation.” That is unbelief. With that, your sin remains on you, and you will be bared from the Gates of Heaven.



16th c. altar painting in St. Mary’s Church in Wittenberg, Germany (by Cranach). The panels show the four primary ways Christ’s word of forgiveness comes to us: Holy Baptism, Lord’s Supper, Confession and Absolution, and Preaching.

How is the battle won for you? Believe and be baptized.¹³ Come to the Holy Table to receive the Sacrament of the Altar, Jesus’ very body and blood, for your forgiveness and salvation.¹⁴ And when you sin, apologize and make strides to change.¹⁵

13 Mark 16:16
14 John 6:54
15 Acts 2:38

Epic battles were fought above Adam and Eve so very long ago. An epic battle for their very souls. That battle was fought for you too. Powers we cannot imagine clash all about us. They are at war here, right now, in this room. What do you contribute to those battles? Nothing. You couldn't. We do not have that kind of power even if we wanted to help.

God requires, from you, only that you apologize from your heart, and have a true desire to change and trust in Him. Then, as a Christian, proudly wear His name upon you, for all the world to see.¹⁶

In Jesus' name.

Amen.