A gold crown on a white background

Description automatically generated**Session 7**

***Trustworthy, Video 4***

**Topic**

**15-16 April 2024**

**Armageddon, Jezreel and Megiddo –** Today’s lecture is situated in the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel, where the battle of Armageddon will take place someday. (In fact, another name for this valley is the Valley of Armageddon.) But many important events took place there in Old Testament times. The eastern end of the valley is at Mount Carmel, where Elijah had his famous confrontation with the prophets of Baal in the days of King Ahab. And just as Yahweh would be proved to be the one true God when He sent fire down from heaven to consume Elijah’s offering, so Christ will be shown to be the Lord of all the earth when He returns to this valley in the future. The town of Megiddo is located close to the midpoint of the length of the valley; because of its strategic location along the trade routes, it has been a battleground for thousands of years. Some examples of battles that took place during Bible times are: Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites there in the days of the judges (Judges 4); it was a fortified administrative city during Solomon’s reign (1 Kings 4 and 9); Pharaoh Nico fought King Josiah there (2 Kings 23). This entire area was very well known in biblical times, so “Megiddo” was often used as a reference point. Seeing this place and remembering that Christ will have His final victory here can be a help to us as we face the wins and losses of everyday life; we can face the difficulties of our lives with the end in mind. Because God has the ultimate victory, I can trust Him today. **We want our decision to trust to inform our feelings, rather than having our feelings determine whether or not we trust God.**

**Naboth’s Vineyard and Voices of Influence –** The Jezreel Valley was also the location of the ancestral home and vineyard of Naboth (“the Jezreelite” – 1 Kings 21). King Ahab’s palace was there as well, very close to Naboth’s property. Recall that Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, caused the death of Naboth in an evil, treacherous way. But God held Ahab equally accountable. He sent the prophet Elijah to confront Ahab, saying, “You have *sold yourself* to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord.” Jezebel had been the “loudest voice” in Ahab’s life, inciting him toward violence, dishonor and sin. So his “legacy” was that “there was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited” (1 Kings 21:25). Ahab put himself into bondage to sin…because of the evil influence of his wife.

What voices do we surround ourselves with, allowing them to influence our lives?Are we letting the voice of God, speaking through His Word, lead us? Or are we rejecting truth and listening to lies, either from our own hearts or from ungodly people that we have chosen to be around us, filling our ears with their viewpoint? Do people around you incite you to bitterness, anger and revenge? Or to love, joy and peace? **Whatever words have *access* to our hearts will affect our actions.** We need people around us who will speak words of solid biblical truth with grace and compassion. Here are some questions we can ask ourselves:

* Is there anyone in my life who influences me to justify thoughts and actions that go against God’s Word?
* Are there some people in my life that I allow to have access on a regular basis so they check to make sure that what I am thinking and doing is in line with God’s Word?
* If people speak words of caution to me, am I willing to listen and redirect my actions?

**Who we listen to are who we are influenced by. And who we are influenced by is who we are placing our trust in.**

**Ahab’s Blood Versus Christ’s Blood –** God told Ahab that in the same place where dogs had licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs would lick up his own blood. That was fulfilled when Ahab was killed in battle, and his men washed his chariot in a pool near Naboth’s vineyard. The dogs licked up the bloody water, and prostitutes bathed in it! The spilled blood of Ahab was a direct consequence of his sin. Contrast that with the spilled blood of Jesus Christ, which was a consequence of *our* sin. But His shed blood brings glory to God. Ahab’s blood was *full of guilt*; Jesus’ blood *covers our guilt*. Washing in Ahab’s blood was a *defiling* act; washing in Jesus’ blood is a *purifying* act.

**Final Takeaway –** God already holds control and the ultimate victory; therefore we can trust Him.