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A CHRISTIAN PREVIEW TO AVENGERS: ENDGAME



Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons

By Judah Wessel

Like any other Marvel fanboy, I am excited more than ever to see the next Marvel film. Ever since the first "Iron Man" was released in 2008, being a part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) since phase 1 has been an incredible ride. I most likely do not need to remind people on this campus about the massive effect the MCU has had on the film industry as well as on movie culture at large.

Despite all the hype, I am also excited for this film from a Christian perspective. Movies shape a significant portion of how we look at the world and how we interact with other people. Thus, it is immensely important that we as Christians are aware of the themes and lessons being taught, even in such blockbuster movies. Although the MCU is known for its comedy, it does not shy away from the reality of tragedy and violence that many characters face. Thus, we must be aware of the lessons being taught about such serious and real issues.

Beyond all of that, there is nothing new under the sun. Except for God. The stories that we tell in films or books or games are a reflection of the creativity of the original storyteller: Jesus. Throughout His ministry, Jesus told parables to describe a reality humans could not fathom or comprehend because stories can transcend the reality we perceive. Although the stories that the comic-book movies are telling are fiction, they still contain truth. As we see below, that truth is nothing new and can be found in scripture if you look closely.

One of the important motifs in "Avengers: Infinity War" is turning to dust. Due to the strength of the god-like villain Thanos and due to the failure of our heroes to sufficiently work together to stop him, half the universe turns to dust. The ending to "Avengers: Infinity War" could be interpreted like a comic-book version of Ash Wednesday. In Genesis 3:19, God tells Adam "you are dust, and to dust you shall return." In the same way, Thanos acts like the godfather of the MCU by controlling who turns to dust. His presence suggests the divine power and will of a god, who uses such power for corrupted purposes instead of good purposes. He represents if God was an evil tyrant. Christians should be careful to praise a movie that associates God with an evil, mad tyrant.

Despite the depiction of God as an evil tyrant, "Avengers: Endgame" suggests redemption and salvation from death. Although the villain seems to have won, our heroes will find a way to restore what was broken, to find the lost found, to resurrect the dead. This is a profoundly Christian vision. Jesus was slain, yet He still conquered sin, death and the grave so that others also may be free from their bondage. I imagine "Avengers: Endgame" will also present resolution from the bondage of limbo that many characters are stuck in and that there will be redemption for the lost. For that, I am excited to use what might be the highest grossing film of all time to spread the gospel.

You can see "Avengers: Endgame" in theaters now.

