Section: Doctrine of Christ (Christology)

Lesson 61: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Q66. Where is Jesus now?

Q67. When will Jesus return?

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Greeting:**

Well good evening! My name is Justin Ader and I have the privilege of serving here amongst this church body as a deacon, the youth director, and a member of the teaching team. If we have not met personally, it would be my joy to meet you, so please feel free to come up after the lesson and introduce yourself. Tonight, I get the privilege of closing out this season of Midweek as we head into Summer break. I am thankful to be here with all of you tonight as we study our next two questions and answers in the Word of Truth Catechism. You heard that correctly, we have a double header that I hope will be a blessing to you.

**Introduction:**

Tonight we continue in Part 7 of the Word of Truth Catechism: Doctrine of Christ (Christology). We have been working our way through this doctrine looking at the two natures of Jesus (His divine and human natures known as the Hypostatic Union), we learned what makes Jesus’ life different from every other person, we learned what Jesus accomplished by dying on the cross, we learned who Jesus died for, and we learned of Jesus’s resurrection from the grave and its importance. In our lesson tonight we get to focus on where Jesus currently resides and on His return in bodily form to earth. Now, sometimes as teachers of theology we have to be technical, but being a youth director as well, gives me a learned skill to hopefully make these topics easier for us all to understand. These two topics we are going to discuss are very interesting, informative, and my aim is to help us all understand them better because the latter topic, Christ’s return, has been one of much confusion and falsehood throughout history. So let’s pray and ask God to illuminate His truths to us as we seek to understand and know Him, and then we will dive into our first question and answer.

Pray with me.

**Q66. Where is Jesus now?**

Jesus is alive, and His body is exalted in heaven, where He is preparing a place for His redeemed people and interceding for them in the presence of God the Father.

I want to break this answer down for us into four points as follows (if you are a note taker you will appreciate this):

1. Jesus is Alive
2. Jesus’s Body is Exalted in Heaven
3. Jesus is Preparing a Place for His Redeemed People
4. Jesus is Interceding for the Redeemed in the Presence of the Father
5. **Jesus is Alive**

We have learned in previous lessons that Jesus died a sacrificial, substitutional death on a cross. By dying on the cross, Jesus accomplished Substitutionary Atonement. These big words, in their simplest form, mean that Jesus died as a substitute and sacrifice for sinners. On the cross, Christ fully satisfied God’s divine wrath as the perfect substitute in place of His elect. Jesus died for those people whom God the Father had given Him: the elect. We have learned in previous lessons that Jesus was buried after His death on the cross, but He did not remain dead. Jesus died on a Friday, and on the third day—Sunday—Christ rose physically from the grave! We commemorate these two days each year with Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday (or Easter Sunday). After Jesus rose from the dead on that Sunday, many recorded witnesses saw Him alive. Jesus’s resurrection from the dead is not a myth or a tall tale. Jesus presented Himself alive to the women near the tomb, to His disciples, and to more than 500 other people. After His resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days on earth appearing to hundreds of people while continuing to teach His disciples about the kingdom of God. We read in God’s Word that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive appearing to many people in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20-21, and Acts 1. I would encourage you to read those accounts, the passages are in your hand out notes. Jesus is indeed alive! Next, our answer states that Jesus’s body is exalted in heaven.

1. **Jesus’s Body is Exalted in Heaven**

After Jesus’s resurrection from the dead, and during His 40 days on earth appearing to hundreds of people, Jesus promised His followers that they would soon receive the Holy Spirit. An important clarity for us to understand is that the disciples would receive the Holy Spirit in a particular way for a particular purpose, and that was for the purpose and mission of spreading the gospel as the Holy Spirit empowered them.

Matthew 28:18-20 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

After Jesus’s resurrection and 40 days on earth, He ascended bodily into heaven. The events that took place between Jesus’s resurrection and His ascension are not our focus tonight, but seeing the ascension in Scripture is helpful for us to set the stage for Jesus being exalted in heaven. So look with me at Acts chapter 1 starting at verse 7 (it is in your handout notes).

Acts 1:7-11 [This is Jesus speaking] 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Specifically in verse 9 we see what is known as the ascension of Jesus Christ. The word ascension generally refers to the act of rising up or lifting up. The Apostles’ Creed declares that Jesus ascended into heaven and He is seated at the right hand of the Father. This means that Christ was taken from earth into heaven in front of the apostle’s eyes. His ascension from earth to heaven was an upward movement of His body and soul that the apostles witnessed. When I read this passage in Acts, I can picture the apostles just staring into the heavens as Christ is being lifted up and then wondering where He went as He is taken out of their sight. They probably stood there amazed and in awe for a while, and therefore the need arose for the two men in white robes to snap them out of it. In this account, we clearly see two things: Jesus is alive, and His body is exalted in heaven.

The fact that Jesus is alive is vitally important to our faith. Jesus being alive and exalted in heaven means that we have a living King! If Jesus was not alive, then none of us would have any hope for redemption from sin. This is what God’s word tells us. Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 with me real quick. I want you to see how the Apostle Paul explains the events surrounding Jesus’ last weeks on earth, and then how he speaks of the importance of Christ’s resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. [Go down to verse 12]

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile [meaning your faith is pointless] and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. The reason that we would be pitied more than anyone else if the resurrection did not happen is because we would have based our livelihood, suffered, been hated by the world, and possibly faced persecution, all for a lie. But the fact remains, and we know this by faith, Jesus Christ is alive and exalted in Heaven! We have a risen and living Savior!

Now, knowing that Jesus is alive and is exalted in heaven is encouraging for our faith, but it gets better than this. When we consider all of Scripture, we see some very important realities that should encourage us further. As we have learned, Jesus doesn’t just have one nature, His humanity, but He has two natures. We cannot forget about His divine nature. Pastor Steve taught us a couple weeks ago about the Hypostatic Union. The hypostatic union is Jesus Christ’s eternal, fully divine nature being united to His fully human nature at His incarnation. These two natures are not mixed, confused, or changed but are united without loss of separate identity, and they are inseparable. The key point here is that Jesus still has two natures while being alive and exalted in heaven. So let’s look at two key truths about Christ.

First, Jesus does have a human body still [His human nature] and He forever will. We must know that His body is not omnipresent [everywhere at once], rather it is located right now in heaven. Currently, Jesus is alive in bodily form in heaven. We saw this truth in the Acts passage we read.

Second, Jesus does have an eternally divine nature as He is God the Son who eternally has all of the attributes of the Godhead. What this means is that Jesus, in His divine nature, is spirit, and sovereign, and omnipresent [everywhere at once], omniscient [all-knowing], and omnipotent [all-powerful], and all-wise, and much more than that.

What this means is that Jesus is unique from us in that He has two natures which gives Him different ministerial roles. What I mean by this is that Jesus is in heaven in bodily form doing important ministerial roles, while also being spirit and everywhere doing important ministerial roles. We know two things from Scripture: Jesus is alive in heaven, and He is with each one of us!

Romans 8:9 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. Paul tells us that if you are saved, Christ is in you. Wow! This is amazing to think about. Jesus promised this to be the case to His disciples.

Matthew 28:20b And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. If Jesus is alive and exalted in heaven, how is He with us always? By His spirit.

Now that we have established the fact that Jesus is alive and is exalted in heaven, we can ask, “What is He doing there?” He is doing two things according to our catechism answer. First, Jesus is preparing a place for His redeemed people.

1. **Jesus is Preparing a Place for His Redeemed People**

When the next midweek season starts at the end of summer, we will cover Jesus’s ministerial functions in great depth, so I won’t spend too much time on them here. But, I want to show you our catechism answer in Scripture. This is what Jesus said while still on earth during His earthly ministry with the disciples:

John 14:2-3 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Jesus tells the disciples and us that in His Father’s house, there are many rooms. This tells us that there is plenty of space for all true believers—the redeemed—to reside in the presence of God for eternity! Jesus then asks a rhetorical question to reassure His disciples of His promise to prepare a place for them where He is going. Jesus promises to come again and take His redeemed to Himself where they will reside with Him for eternity. Last summer, I was privileged to preach through Psalm 84. In that sermon, I emphasized that this promise from Christ should cause us to not seek the temporary, but the eternal. That is the saint’s everlasting rest. As we go about our days that God gives us here on earth—our temporary dwelling place—we look onward and upward to be with Christ in our eternal home which is everlasting! Jesus is preparing a place for His redeemed people and is interceding for them in the presence of the Father.

1. **Jesus is Interceding for the Redeemed in the Presence of the Father**

Scripture affirms to us that Jesus is indeed in the presence of the Father and that He is interceding for the elect—His chosen ones. Let’s see the truth of Jesus being in the presence of the Father from Scripture.

Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ [meaning that you belong to Jesus], seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. This clearly tells us that Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Now, we know from previous lessons that God does not have hands. God is spirit. So what does it mean that Jesus is at the right hand of God? Being at the right hand of someone symbolizes a position of special honor, trust, authority, and power. In many cultures and historical contexts, the right hand is considered the favored position, reflecting trust and high status. This is Jesus, our high priest and King!

Now, the apostle Paul also affirms this to the Romans.

Romans 8:34 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Let me define the word interceding for us to help us understand what Jesus is doing. To intercede means to come between two people and be a mediator or advocate. A mediator is someone who reconciles two people back together, one who pleads on behalf of another. For us who belong to Jesus, He is our mediator. When we sin, Jesus intercedes for us on our behalf to God saying, “I paid for that sin on the cross.”

1 John 2:1 ​1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Again, Jesus is our Mediator who intercedes for us.

Our brother, Matt Kirstine, said this: “This means that Jesus stands as the basis for our salvation and perseverance. Christ’s righteousness is the blanket to us; it has been imputed to us. We should be repenting and fighting sin diligently, but when we sin, Jesus stands as the one worthy to justify us because of His person and work. Christ intercedes for us—believers won’t be lost in this life or found condemned in judgment, since Jesus paid our debt in full and has credited us with His perfect record! Take comfort in this believer. Jesus is assuring you acceptance and safety with God, rather than you getting the separation and wrath you deserve. Have comfort in this. This should cause the most restful, un-anxious, joyful posture in us. Your most damning problems have been solved, your most important need has been met, your eternal joy in fellowship with God has been secured. Have comfort in Christ and His work.”

Brothers and sisters, I am praying that this catechism question and answer has brought you clarity and comfort. We are not done. Let’s look at our second question and answer for tonight.

**Q67. When will Jesus return?**

Jesus will physically return according to the will of God. Until then, we are commanded to be faithful servants and wise stewards. Come, Lord Jesus!

As with the previous question and answer, I want to break this one down into 3 points and then close with some application for us. They are as follows:

1. Jesus Will Physically Return
2. Jesus Will Return According to the Will of God
3. We Are Commanded to be Faithful Servants and Wise Stewards

Before we jump into the first point, I want to talk about some of the past falsehoods regarding this topic of Jesus’s return because throughout history this topic has caused a lot of speculation, distraction, false teaching, and even death. It is very serious and has led many to destruction. We need to be ever so cautious when talking about the second coming of Jesus. My goal in sharing what I am about to share is not to look down on the people that have been led to destruction, but to give us and those around us a warning about falling into falsehoods regarding the second coming of Christ. With that, I want to start with the extreme historical events that have happened regarding the second coming of Jesus.

Throughout history, there have been several instances where individuals or groups, often led by charismatic leaders, have faced destruction or significant hardship due to false beliefs or predictions related to when Jesus will return. These cases often involve a combination of apocalyptic expectations, prophecy misinterpretation, and sometimes, manipulation by leaders. Here are a few examples:

* The Great Disappointment (1844): This event involved the followers of William Miller, who predicted that Christ would return on October 22, 1844. When Jesus did not appear as expected, many followers were left disillusioned, financially ruined, and socially ostracized. This event led to a significant reshaping of the Adventist movement, out of which the Seventh-day Adventist Church eventually emerged.
* Peoples Temple (1970s): Jim Jones, the leader of People’s Temple, initially didn’t focus on the second coming of Jesus but gradually incorporated apocalyptic and messianic elements into his teachings. He led his followers to Jonestown, Guyana, promoting it as a paradise and a sanctuary from the supposed nuclear apocalypse. In 1978, over 900 members died in a mass murder-suicide, largely influenced by Jones’s manipulative teachings and control.
* Branch Davidians (1993): The Branch Davidians, a sect that separated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, believed in the imminent return of Jesus. Led by David Koresh, they became embroiled in a siege with federal agents at their Waco, Texas compound. The siege ended tragically with a fire that led to the deaths of 76 people. Koresh had convinced his followers of a prophetic vision involving the end times, which contributed to their willingness to engage in a standoff with federal authorities.

Now, I will get a little bit milder. Many over the last few decades have falsely predicted the second coming of Christ and the end times by giving timelines or specific dates that came and passed. What all of this leads to is a distraction by the enemy to keep us focused on false teachings rather than on Christ and what He calls us to do while here on earth, namely, to know and understand Him, to worship and glorify Him, to share the gospel of Jesus with others, and to obey His commandments. We are called to grow in holiness and do the things God has called us to do according to His revealed will found in His word. I have had friends of my own who have been so focused on the end times and second coming of Christ that they lost sight of the basic things that God has called them to in the here and now. People are attracted to the mysteries of the end times. People want to know when Jesus is coming back and so they overly focus on politics and world events rather than on growing in Christlikeness. I have had friends leave solid churches to chase after churches that teach mainly on current events during their Sunday sermon with a focus on end times. This is serious stuff. People are attracted to this kind of speculation. So what does God’s word say about the return of Christ? First, that Jesus will physically return.

1. **Jesus Will Physically Return**

This is a foundational truth that we need to know in regard to the questions of end times or Jesus’ return. When we say that Jesus will physically return, we are talking about Him in His physical body. Jesus made it plain to the disciples after His resurrection that He indeed does have a physical body.

Luke 24:39 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

Again, we saw in Acts 1:7-11 that Jesus ascended into heaven physically, with His body, and He will return in the same way according to that same passage. As a reminder to what I have already taught: Jesus remains fully God and fully human, and He has a human body in heaven right now as I speak. He will physically return in that same glorified body according to the will of God.

1. **Jesus Will Return According to the Will of God**

Jesus returning in His glorified body has not yet happened. It will happen when God’s pre-ordained plan comes to pass. God has set a time for it to happen which only He knows. God will not reveal that date to us. So whoever tells you that Jesus will return on such and such date… RUN! Again, a lot of people like speculation or mysteries. They want to know things and seek them out. But, regarding Jesus’s return, there is not a mystery Bible code to decipher, a secret message hidden in the text, or any current events that can be pointed to in order to justify a prediction of the return of Christ. Here this again: Current events happening around the world, in politics or wars, etc cannot be pointed to in order to justify a prediction for the return of Christ. You may hear of these things as you go about your day whether it’s on social media or from co-workers, things like, “What do you think about the fighting in Israel with Hamas, or the issues with Iran and Israel or with Russia?” Scripture doesn’t call us to make assumptions or predictions on Christ’s return based on perceived signs in current events. All throughout history there have been wars, natural disasters, and so many other terrible things going on in the world as a result of sin. Just read the Old Testament. Many generations before us have thought that their generational circumstances were very bad, just like we do today. It’s not as if prior generations had it good and the world today is just so terrible that Jesus must be returning. For example, the transatlantic slave trade. That was terrible! What about World War 2? Millions, not hundreds or thousands, but millions of people died in that war all over the world. What about the sufferings and persecution of Christians throughout the last 2,000 years? What about homosexuality and perversion of God’s design for marriage? That has happened all throughout history as well all the way back to Sodom and Gomorrah. Yes, things today are not as they should be because of sin. Bad things happening in each generation feeds the temptation for people to assume that they are in the “end times.” Again, are these bad things equal or any worse than bad things that have happened in prior generations? My point is this: We cannot take current events and think that we can predict the return of Jesus based on those events. Why? Because Jesus said so. He tells us that no one knows the time of His return. Instead, He has called us to be diligent in our focus, worship, and service for Him. Now, I want to take a moment to look at some passages from the Bible, God’s word, that discuss the return of Christ.

Our main portion of Scripture for this question and answer comes from Matthew 24 looking at verses 36-51. Please open God’s word there to follow along. As you turn there, let me inform you that this passage is speaking about the bodily return of Jesus. We will go through it together in a few different parts. First:

Matthew 24:36 36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. The point of this teaching is very direct. We will not know when Jesus will return until it happens. There is no possible way for us to predict the return of Christ. Jesus says only the Father knows. We see this truth of verse 36 emphasized in the next 3 verses.

Matthew 24:37-39 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. What Jesus is doing here is correlating His return to the flood that happened in the days of Noah. He is also telling us that when His return happens, things will seem normal, just like they did before the flood. This is a very important point that we cannot overlook. This is contrary to what you may have heard regarding the second coming of Christ which are things like catastrophic events or nations falling or many earthquakes that will inform us of His return in advance. To be clear, some of these things may be happening, and have happened over centuries, but none of them enable us to know when Jesus will return. Just like before the flood, people will be going about their everyday life. So what are we to do as Christians? We are commanded to be faithful servants and wise stewards.

1. **We Are Commanded to be Faithful Servants and Wise Stewards**

To see this point, let’s continue in Matthew 24 reading verses 42-51.

Matthew 24:42-51 42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 45 “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 48 But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In this portion of Scripture we see both direct statements and symbolic statements as Jesus often does. The direct or didactic statements include commands to stay alert, be ready, be diligent in good works, practice stewardship and obedience. Now, the symbolic language used in this passage reinforces these commands. Let me show you. The talk about the thief in the night is there to teach us that we cannot and will not know when Jesus will return until it happens, therefore, be ready and alert. The talk about the servants is to teach us to be diligent in good works such as the stewardship of our days and our obedience to Christ. Jesus ends with the warning of impending judgment and punishment for those who do not trust in Christ and live for Him. There is a parallel passage to this passage regarding the second coming of Christ, and it is found in Mark 13:32-37. For the sake of time, I am not going to read it, but I’d encourage you to do so. Before we move on to other passages in the New Testament that I want to hit on, I need to give us some clarity. Some of you might have wondered why Jesus said that even He doesn’t know the day or hour of His return. Isn’t Jesus God? Second person of the Triune Godhead? He indeed is. He has all the divine attributes of God, such as omniscience, which means that He is all-knowing. Wait a minute… If He is all-knowing then how come He doesn’t know His own return? Well, He actually does know it. Now, does Scripture contradict itself? No. So, what is going on here? We have to remember that Jesus has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature which He took on at the incarnation. Jesus is fully God and fully man. So, when Jesus is speaking of not knowing His return, He is speaking from the perspective of His human nature. Remember, Jesus’s two natures are not mixed. He is 100% God and 100% man at the same time, not 50/50. The point Jesus is making is that only God knows, not any man, not even angels. Let’s now turn our attention to other portions of the New Testament that talk about His return.

In Acts 1, we saw that Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, and His followers were asking Him about when things will happen. He gives them a humbling response.

7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. Acts 1:7 Let’s look at another passage that affirms our points and gives us excellent commands and encouragements. Turn with me to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 ​1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

The Apostle Paul affirms here what Jesus taught. People will feel peace and security, it will feel like a normal day in our everyday lives. This does not sound like catastrophic events informing us that Jesus is coming. As Christians, we know that Jesus will return. So when He comes, it won’t surprise us. We’ve been longing for that day to be with our Lord. Paul doesn’t tell us to literally stay awake and not sleep, he tells us to do what we are supposed to do as Christians, and that is to remain sober-minded, to honor and glorify God, to obey Christ, to make much of His name, to be full of faith and love, and have the hope of our salvation. Paul lovingly reminds us that we are not destined for God’s wrath because of Jesus’s work to secure our salvation on the cross. Paul ends this passage with reminding each of us to encourage each other and build one another up. Here is another passage.

2 Peter 3:10a 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. Again, this symbolic language teaches us that we will not know when Jesus will return.

Some of you may be thinking that you have heard of other parts of Scripture that talk about signs of the end times. So how do we reconcile those with what we have seen in Scripture tonight? Let me share what our brother Matt Kirstine had to say about this:

“With this clear teaching that we cannot know about Jesus’ return in advance, we know that other passages that seem to talk about signs or indications of something to happen mean one of two things. The first would be…

1. If any happenings leading to the return of Christ are present, then we won’t be able to even determine what they are nor if they are really telling of when His return will take place. Said plainly, if real indications do exist, then we won’t even know how to understand them nor be able to predict a time based on them. Or second:
2. The passages indicating signs are about other events—not informing humans or angels of the timing of the bodily return of Christ. To this point for example, many of the signs spoken of in the Scriptures were about the fall of Israel and the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 A.D.

It is either or both of these two things or else Scripture is contradicting itself which it does not and cannot do. Scripture cannot and does not contradict itself. Its author is God, who does not err. See, when Scripture APPEARS to be in contradiction with itself, the problem lies in the reader and his or her lack of understanding, not God’s inerrant, infallible, truthful, complete word. This is very important that you know that.”

Church, anyone can read God’s word. But in order to truly understand its meaning, we are desperate for the Holy Spirit’s work to illuminate the Scriptures to us so we can rightly understand it. This is something I have taught the youth students at camp when I give them reading assignments and questions to answer. At the top of their paper I put, “Start in Prayer asking God to give you understanding (Psalm 119:18).” This psalm says, 18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. We ask in prayer that God would illuminate His word to us as we read it. God gives eyes to see and ears to hear His truths in Scripture to His chosen people whom the Spirit has regenerated. Without regeneration, a person just reads the Bible as another book. But it is more than that! It contains the very words of our almighty Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of everything! He is perfect and the standard by which all things are measured. Let’s conclude with some application.

**Conclusion:**

We are commanded to be faithful servants and wise stewards.

2 Peter 3:11-18 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, as we await the coming of our Lord Jesus, Peter calls us to live holy and godly lives. We are to be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace. We are to look forward to the new heavens and new earth where only righteousness dwells. We are to worship God by counting the patience of our Lord as salvation. Finally, we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These are what we are to focus on as Christians, not being overwhelmed with the happenings of the world. We are to rest in Christ. We are to abide in Christ as John 15:4 says. We are to focus on Christ and what He calls us to do until He calls us home. What are those things that He calls us to do? Paul tells us in:

Philippians 4:8-9 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

And what do we have to look forward to? Jesus tells us.

Matthew 25:31-34 31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

As we wait for the Lord’s return, remember these truths:

\*Jesus is Alive

\*Jesus’s Body is Exalted in Heaven

\*Jesus is Preparing a Place for His Redeemed People

\*Jesus is Interceding for the Redeemed in the Presence of the Father

\*Jesus Will Physically Return

\*Jesus Will Return According to the Will of God and

\*We Are Commanded to be Faithful Servants and Wise Stewards

Revelation 22:20-21 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Let’s Pray.