



Christology-Part 11

The Current Ministry of Christ

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Well, we've got a good night plan, looking at some things that I don't think Christians think about quite enough, and maybe will fuel your faith and get you excited about seeing Christ face to face. So let's begin with a word of prayer. You hopefully got a worksheet, and we can get going. Pray with me, please.

God, I pray that you would help us tonight to gather a more accurate picture of your Son, Jesus Christ. Let us understand what He's doing right now—His ministry from heaven, His work, His ascension. God, just help us to bridge this gap in our thinking, filling in aspects that we haven't considered, we haven't really pondered, or maybe we just have glanced over some basic phrases or sentences from Your Word and we haven't really taken them to heart. Help us to fill in the gaps in our minds so that we can think more accurately, more biblically, more truthfully about Christ. That's what we want. We really want to think rightly as we should.

God, we know that you care about this. We've started eleven weeks ago talking about the importance of understanding your Son and what He's done and not misunderstanding His role, His ministry, His person. And God, I just thank you for this team that's willing to invest week after week to study these things. So God, encourage them tonight. Bless them. And by that, I mean give them a full fuel tank of just spiritual motivation and excitement and knowledge. Help us to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks so much, God, for this time. Thanks for your Word, the clarity of it. Help us to dig into it as we ought tonight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse number 8 says that we don't see Christ now, but we love Him. And that's the challenge of modern Christianity. We are not in the physical presence of Christ. If we were living in the first century and we were in the middle of His three-year public ministry, it would be great for us because we would have the tactile physical experience of being with Christ—having the sentences come out of our mouth, having Christ respond with sentences from His mouth. That would be great. It would be hard for us to, in our imagination, build a thought of Christ that was entirely off the mark—especially, and I speak for us, those of us that have been drawn to Christ, have had the work of God in our hearts of regeneration. We would have a real easy time understanding who Christ is. I mean, the depths of it, perhaps not, but it'd be hard for us to get off the rails.

But we don't see Him now, Peter says. And the goal of Christianity—and I know this offends people—but we kind of have this long-distance relationship with Christ. It's hard for us to keep on the track of thinking biblically about Christ because our imagination can begin to think of Christ in ways that is not accurate. We can allow our feelings—in a very emotionally driven stage of the culture in which we live, this particular chapter—we're so worried about how we feel and how things impress our emotions, we can begin to form pictures of Christ that aren't right.



So it is the goal of Christians. I know they claim that we're worshipping a book, but it's the goal of Christians to get back to the Word to see what God has revealed in His Word about Christ. And tonight we hope to do this. It's kind of like a blind date—from the period of hearing about the gal to actually, you know, walking into the restaurant and meeting her. And I'm talking like I've done this before, and I haven't. But some of you have been on blind dates. Nod at me if you've been on a blind date. That's happened to you. And, you know, it's a whole different experience, I'm assuming, depending on how well the revelation comes through your buddy about your date. You create ideas because you don't have that person there, and then you meet them.

And we're going to meet Him face to face. And the ultimate "oops, I didn't understand" is Matthew 7, "Depart from me, I never knew you." But for those who are genuinely regenerate and we're real Christians, we still have the distance and the gap between who Christ actually is and what we've allowed ourselves to maybe, in some sloppy theological thinking, what we've begun to think of Christ as being.

So tonight, that's what we want to do. We want to kind of tighten that up. We want to think about Christ as accurately as possible. We'd like to consider His present ministry. And to do that, we need to start with the ascension.

So take your Bibles and turn to Acts chapter 1, and let's go through the historical account of the ascension of Christ. Now, I say the ascension, but there are arguably many ascensions. Okay, that sounds like heresy already, but it's not. Because even the day that Christ was raised and He was having a conversation with Mary Magdalene, there was seemingly a concern to get back to the Father that day, right? Why in the world would He say, "You go tell the disciples, I need to go back to the Father, don't cling to me, I got to go. You got to go."

Well, we find out later that He sticks around for forty days after the resurrection. So it seems as though—and it's a lot of speculation about what's going on—there's several ascensions. Some would even argue that what's going on in Luke 24, which is the other very brief statement of the ascension—at least it's titled that way in most Bible translations, the ascension—that He ascends into heaven. Is that the ascension? Well, we know this: in Acts chapter 1, we have the last ascension. So we'll call it *the* ascension, because He's not coming back again until the eschatological events of the Bible unfold.

So this is the one we want to read about. This is the one we want to look to. And if you want to harmonize it with Luke 24, then we're assuming we're somewhere in the neighborhood of what has traditionally been believed, as we'll see here in Acts chapter 1. We do get a sense of the setting, but of what has been traditionally proposed as the site of the ascension.

And I thought even before we look at the text, we could kind of get excited about the physicality of this all by throwing a couple pictures up here on the screen of the three—and they may all be wrong—but the three proposed sites for the ascension.

Now, all the pictures you take when you go to Israel, at Jerusalem in particular, and you want to get the Temple Mount behind you—and it's unfortunate that it has a huge edifice that is constructed for Islam with a gold dome that everyone takes their picture against—but you're usually on the Mount of Olives



looking back to the Temple Mount. But if you get on the Temple Mount and you look back to the Mount of Olives, which is, you know, east of the Temple Mount... By the way, how many of you have never been to Israel? You've never been to Jerusalem? Okay. How many of you who have never been there plan on going with us 18 months from now? Okay? So when you get those cash gifts at Christmas, when Aunt June sends you that extra check for \$300 or whatever, stick it in your Israel account and save it. You have 18 more months until the final payment's due, so you've got some time to go with us to Israel. I encourage you to go.

But anyway, if you're looking back at the Mount of Olives, which you will if you go with us, and Christ hasn't returned and we're still on earth to do this trip, you'll look back and probably the most obvious building you'll see, looking back, is the gilded, onion-domed Russian Orthodox Church. Now, those of you that have been there, nod at me because you've seen this, right? I mean, it's the fanciest building as you look across the Kidron Valley there toward the Mount of Olives. That's the Johnny-come-lately site that the Russians say, well, this is the site of the Ascension. This church wasn't even built until 1886—and I remember that because it's the same year Moody Bible Institute was founded. And it's dedicated to Mary Magdalene. It's really called the Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene. But they claim that, hey, this is the site that Christ ascended back to heaven. Probably not.

If you go up the hill further, you'll see the Paternoster, which we usually go to. I don't think the last trip we went there, but we usually go there, and we'll try to make a point to go there. *Paternoster* are the words in Latin, "Our Father." And if you go there—if you've been there before—you remember there's all these tiled inscriptions of the Lord's Prayer in all the languages of the world, and that's how you'll remember that. But that is another site that's further up the hill that is a proposed site for the ascension of Christ.

But the one that most people think is the closest to perhaps the right geography is even further up the hill. And you might remember this little shrine. It is called the Shrine of the Ascension or the Dome of the Ascension—not to be confused with the Dome of the Ascension that's on the Temple Mount, which is, they claim, the ascension of Muhammad. But this is the Dome or the Shrine of the Ascension at the top.

If you've been there, you know it's like this little walled enclave, and in the middle there's this dome that is a—believe it or not—a Muslim mosque, they call it. It's a very small little room. You'll poke your head in it. You'll look at it. There's a little stone there, and they say, well, here's where Christ ascended. They may be right. A lot of people believe it.

They believe it because, if you remember, if you've been to Israel, if you're going with us, we'll talk a lot about Helena. Helena is the mother of Constantine. Now, this is the fourth century. Constantine is converted to Christianity. We talked a little bit about that in this series. And he has his mother—I was going to say he sends his mother, I'm not sure he sent his mother—but his mother goes to the Holy Land, and she begins to do all this historical work to discover all the historical sites for where Jesus was buried, where Jesus was crucified, where Jesus ascended.

Well, it was on this site that she, from the locals and her research—and it was good research, it was well-funded research—she, by the way, was the one who picked out the church site of the Holy



Sepulcher, which is the place where they put Christ's body, the tomb, and the place where He was crucified—which is not the place we usually go to, but anyway, more on that when we get there.

But at the top of the hill, she said, right here on this spot, this is the spot of the ascension. I give those Helena sites a little bit more credence than the other sites that we often see because it's early and it was good well-funded research, and she had no reason—she had—she was an unbiased researcher to come in with her entourage to make decisions about where these places were. So this could actually be the place.

But in the twelfth century, of course, the prince of Egypt—I shouldn't even call it that, but the sultan—came in and kicked all the Christians out. This is a bad time in history, you understand, during the Crusades and all that. There's a big fight being picked that launched a lot of the Crusades. Don't let me start on the Crusades, because I don't have the PC version of the Crusades. More on that another time.

But the Muslims came and killed a bunch of people. They took the church of the Ascension that was here. They destroyed it. They turned it into a mosque in 1187, 1188. And what's left today is the little dome. It's hardly big enough for, you know, your office at work. It's a very small room, but we'll go there.

Let's go to the site of the ascension—the scriptural account of the ascension—and let's start.

Acts chapter 1.

"Theophilus," Luke—Luke is writing to Theophilus—verse number 1:

"In the first book, O Theophilus," that was the book of Luke, "I dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until, now we're turning the page, literally, into the book of Acts—the life of Christ, the life of the church, Acts of the apostles—until the day," verse number 2, "He was taken up," ascension, "after He had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen. He presented Himself alive to them after His sufferings with many proofs, appearing to them during the forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."

And again, I'm just asserting that perhaps there were other ascensions, perhaps not as dramatic as this one, where Christ is doing more in His resurrected body to transport Himself back to the throne of God. More on that in a minute.

"Now, while staying with them, He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which He said, you heard from Me, for John baptized with water, you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So, verse 6: "When they had come together, they asked, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.'"

This is one verse, by the way, and reason I am a premillennialist, because the kingdom restored to Israel is a millennial statement. And He doesn't say, "You got it wrong, there is no millennium." He says it's not for you to know the time of the millennium. So that's one verse among many, and part of



the mosaic of convincing reasons I believe there is yet a future for Israel in the land. More on that another time.

Verse 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 ends of the earth.” 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.

And while they were gazing into heaven as He went—and you can imagine what bizarre feelings you would have watching this happen—behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven?” Now this is weird. Here they are. Now two guys show up. Who was that? I don’t know. Who were those guys? I don’t know. I thought they were with you. You know, this is strange.

And they said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way you saw Him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

All right, then you get the rest of the story, and off they go rolling dice for the substitute apostle.

Observations About the Ascension

1. Jesus Left in a Body

Number one: Jesus left in a body. Sounds, of course—not of course. This is majorly debated, and it has many implications. He did not evaporate. He did not disappear. That scene of the apostles sitting in the locked room with the closed doors and Jesus shows up, you get the sense that maybe, you know, that heaven is a dimensional concept, or He is coming in and out of materialization. But He’s not.

This bodily figure goes up into the sky, which should raise all kinds of questions for us—and those that are appropriate. At a certain point, it gets really cold up there, you can’t breathe. How far is He going? How can you survive up there in the cold vacuum of interplanetary space? I mean, there’s a lot of questions being asked. But what we know is the physical, tactile body that was eating fish—broiled fish—with them, like in John 21 and in the upper room, the locked enclave room they had, He is taking the esophagus, the tongue, the teeth, the hair, the eyeballs, the lenses, the retinas, the rods, the cones, the hammer and the anvil inside of His ears, His beard, He’s taking His chin bone, His shin bones, His patella, He’s taking His femurs, and off He’s shooting up with all of His skin and His clothing, and He’s going up into the sky.

It is a bodily ascension. It was a bodily resurrection. That’s a big deal, and it’s important for us to recognize that, that when you think about Jesus, He’s not now non-spatial. He’s not now spiritual. He’s not see-through. He is physical.



Not to raise the objection of 1 Corinthians 15 that the resurrection body is a spiritual body—we've explained that several times. To be a spiritual body means that it is not an earthly body, and that has to do with the comparison between the first Adam and the last Adam, and that has to do with whether or not He has impulses in His flesh to do right or to do wrong—and He has no impulses to do wrong. The resurrected body is impervious to sin.

So we're talking about a spiritual body in that dimension in 1 Corinthians 15. Here we're talking about a real, tangible, tactile, physical body going up into the sky. That is the ascension. And it is a supernatural event.

By supernatural, we mean things like the iron axe head floating, Jesus walking on water. We don't mean a supernatural event meaning that the body itself was not a real physical body that had real bones and blood vessels and teeth and a tongue and all that. No, it was a real body. It goes up into heaven. It breaks the laws of nature, which you've got to get over if you're going to be a Christian—which, by the way, you've got to get over if you're an atheist too.

Can I say that? To you, if you happen to be an atheist, or your atheist friends, or the atheists that you read. Can you remember this? People struggle with the supernatural in the Scripture, okay? You can struggle with the supernatural in the Scripture, but you've got to struggle with the counter-natural in reality if you're a staunch atheist. You understand that, right?

Because the natural world that we know does not condense into a point of singularity and expand into beautiful people that you wanted to date and marry and have kids with. It doesn't happen. We speculate about those realities because we have to explain what we have. And so everything is counter-natural if it exists as we know it because time and the degeneration of energy and everything else—we've got to recognize everybody's got the problem of supernatural. We call it supernatural. You can call it counter-natural. You can call it against nature. Whatever you want to call it.

This is another event of what I believe is God who breaks the laws that He makes, right, for very specific purposes—for instance, to create us. I mean, that's not a law of nature, to create something out of nothing. That's the supernatural breaking of laws that God is doing to create, and in this case, to get His Son up into a place where we are going to eventually catch up with Him—more on that later.

But the point is, the Bible is filled with counter-natural things. When I say filled, there's less than a hundred of them in the Bible. Have you heard my message on that? Less than a hundred breaking of natural law. If you count creation week as one event, and you move on from there, you've got less than ninety events where there is the breaking of natural law. I've counted them myself, and this is one of them—where law is broken.

People don't rise up into heaven and shoot up out of sight without a jet pack, right? Remember the Rose Parade a few years back when that guy with the jet pack flew down, you know, Colorado Avenue? I was there for that. That was amazing, right? You read about that and there it was. Jesus—no jet pack—breaks natural law and flies up into heaven.

Jesus left in a body.

2. Jesus Went to a Place

Number two. This one's going to sound equally juvenile and elementary to you, but Jesus went to a place. Because His body takes up space, and that body's got to be somewhere. He goes away in a body to a place. He doesn't—again—He doesn't evaporate. He's not a non-tactile physical body. He's a real body, and if He goes up in the sky, He went someplace that, you know, people don't believe.

Again, if you're just going to step into another dimension, then evaporate. That's what I'm thinking you're going to do. This is not what happens. The claim of the Bible is He went somewhere.

John 14:1–3—you learn that as a kid. “And if I go,” right, “to prepare a place for you, I'll come again and receive you to myself.” The going and coming of Christ is to a place. That's what the Bible teaches.

And people laugh, “Well, He went up in the air. What does that mean? Heaven's up? Well, the world's round, and if He's going somewhere up there, it couldn't be up. Maybe it's down. Why didn't He go through the earth?” That's as stupid as saying—like me saying—why do all the rockets shoot up in the sky that go to Mars or to the moon? Because the earth is round, maybe you should shoot the rocket through the bottom of the earth. Right? See what I'm saying? Think about it long enough. There is an argument there that makes some sense.

Yeah, He went up, right? And why? Because wherever He went, this place called heaven is up. Just like if you're going to go to the moon—even though the moon may be down there—if I'm going to shoot a rocket and go to the moon, I'm going to go up to get there. Are you following me on that? That means something to me as I contemplate it.

All right. Jesus went to a place. That means—again, put these two together—there is a Jesus in a body in a place right now. And that place, the Bible says, is heaven according to Acts 7:55–56. It's at the right hand of the place that God made for Himself to dwell. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,” which didn't just include, you know—He made a place for Himself to dwell, a throne room for Himself. And Christ is now there at that place, at the right hand of where God's presence, focalized presence is. More on that another time.

3. Jesus Will Return

Jesus will return. Obviously, that's how this ends. And it's very important what it says. It's the same way you saw Him go. It's the same way He will come again.

Let me just read it. “Men of Galilee,” verse 11, “why do you stand looking into heaven?” Well, I'm thinking the answer is obvious because I just saw Him fly up into the sky. Well, just remember this: you can stop looking. He's not coming back now. “This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.” So He goes, probably without the sound, and that real physical body is going to go back down. That's what the Bible teaches: a physical, bodily return of Christ.



Now, I make a point of some obvious things. He left in a body. He went to a place. He will return in a body.

Now, we talked about the fundamentals last week, the big debate with liberalism and conservative Christianity—real Christianity. That was part of it. If Christ returns, He won't return physically, right? He's not going to bodily return to the earth. That has been the teaching of the Bible all along.

Zechariah—since it's such an obscure passage for us New Testament readers—let's at least turn to this one. It's easy to find if you go to Matthew and turn back two books. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Matthew. Matthew, turn back two books. The end, last chapter. Look at these statements.

And to untangle Zechariah 14 would take more time. But this is always—I remember as just a young Christian reading these verses and thinking, this is a very significant thing.

Jesus—I knew about the ascension—then I read this.

Then the Lord—do you see capital, small cap O, small cap R, small cap D—what's that always spell? Yahweh. "Then Yahweh will go out and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle."

And on that day—this is Zechariah 14:3—you're there, right? "Then Yahweh will go out and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle. And on that day His"—who's His? His. Yahweh. "His feet." I didn't think Yahweh had feet. I didn't think God is spirit. Do you see this? This is just loaded with theological, Christological truth.

"On that day His feet"—Yahweh's feet, God incarnate's feet—"shall stand." Oh, pick this place. You got a lot of places. There's several hills that you could land on if you're going to come to Jerusalem. You could land on the Temple Mount. You could land on Scopus. You could land on all kinds of places. There's hills everywhere.

But no, He's going to land on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east—just in case you want to be clear where Christ is going to come—or in this case, the incarnated Lord who has feet standing on a mountain—"the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west, very wide valley, so that one half of the mount shall move northward, the other half southward."

Cataclysmic event.

You can draw a picture to Revelation 19—or a line rather—and see when Christ's physical feet touch the physical Mount of Olives, it's in the middle of a battle, which is exactly what we see here in Zechariah 14, and it's the end of this time of Jacob's trouble. More on that in eschatology. But at least can you see what's happening here in Zechariah chapter 14? God touching down on a cataclysmic event at the end of time with feet.



I don't know if that's what it must be—the incarnation of Christ. I mean, this has got to be one of the verses that He shared about Himself from Moses and the Psalms and the prophets. It had to be a part of the portfolio of verses when He thinks about the return. He's coming back. He's ascending on the mount. He's coming back on the mount. His feet will touch it.

So it's great when you go to Israel, you know, to look at the Mount of Olives and to think: it will be the place. The Bible promises—track record's real good on prophecy in the Bible—that His feet will come back and touch the ground. Physical feet. Wow.

So it's at one of these places, or they got them all wrong. It's just like God to have us miss, you know, the spot. But it's fun to think about Christ's going to come back on that mountain right there.

All right.

Resurrection vs. Glorification

Please understand the distinction between the resurrection of Christ and the glorification of Christ. The resurrection of Christ and the glorification of Christ.

Here's something perhaps you haven't pondered as well as you should. And I know some of you are smarty-pants and you have, but think about this: Mary's there thinking that the resurrected Christ at the tomb on Easter morning, resurrection morning, is a gardener, right?

Think. Gardener? Going to mistake the glorified Christ for a gardener? Right? No. Why? Because though He was in a resurrected body—and though you read in 1 Corinthians 15 that His resurrected body is the prototype for our resurrected body, and it will be raised in glory, it's sown in weakness, raised in glory—that's not the kind of glory we're talking about when we talk about a glory that Christ gets. Right? That's different.

So whatever glory He gets, He's doing interaction. He's having interaction with Christians and others, I'm sure—skeptics. You've got Thomas, who's a type of a skeptic, and probably there were others like him with unregenerate hearts that were not believing Him. But He has interaction with people for forty days, and He's not in a glorified state, although He's in a body that is resurrected, that is impervious to death, that is described in 1 Corinthians 15 as glorified—different kind of glorified.

The glorification of Christ is a glorification that takes place at the ascension—or I should say when He reaches His destination at the ascension. That's different and important for us to catch.

So I put it this way, letter A: it is a resurrected body plus glorification.

What kind of body am I going to have? A resurrected body. Will it be glorified? No—a small g. It'll have the glory of that really healthy, good-looking gardener that Mary ran into, right? Because I'm sure if she looked close, man, that guy—perfect hair that guy's got. Look at that guy. Yeah. I mean, He was a resurrected person, but He didn't have the glory of the Son of Man, as Daniel 7 puts it.



Some verses that are worth looking at. Let's start in John 17. John chapter 17. The high priestly prayer, we call it—Christ praying for us. One of the few places in the New Testament you can look at where Jesus has not just His disciples in mind, and us by extension, but He talks about us specifically. But that's not what I want to talk about—I was just killing time to let you find it.

John 17: Jesus spoke these words, verse number 1, lifted His eyes up into heaven. He said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You....”

And then later: “I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do. Now—and now, Father—glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.”

That was a glorification of Christ without a body. That's the Son's glory that He's had for eternity past with the Father. Because this weird God that we serve is triune. Three persons—one essence, three persons. And He was glorified, obviously, because He's God. But now He's got a body. He's in the state of humiliation. And now He's going to ascend, and now He says, I'd like the glory back.

But this is going to be weird. It's the first time we've got the glorification of God with a body.

I say the first time—but it isn't the first time. There was another time and it was just for a little while. Sunday school grads—when was that? Transfiguration. You get a star. Transfiguration, right? He gets glorified. The three disciples freak out that were there because wow—what? That was weird, right?

Now, if Mary had saw that in the garden, you wouldn't say, “Hey, where'd you take Him?” You'd know that was Christ.

So the resurrected body takes on glory, and it's the kind of glory He had before when He didn't have a body. Now it's a resurrected body plus divine glory.

You don't need to turn to the next one. You know it—Philippians 2. We quote it all the time: “Therefore God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him a name that is above every name.” And the glorification comes after the humiliation. And He is now—He's glorified.

But I do want you to turn to this one: Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 19 through 22. This is a great statement about the glorification of Christ. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 19 through 22.

Got to catch this very long Greek run-on sentence, which turns into a pretty long English sentence in the ESV. So we'll pick it up in the middle, verse 19:

“And what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe... according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead”—that's one part of it—“and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”



We got resurrection—that’s going to take some power. Now we got power on turbo when He gets this resurrected body glorified: He gets exalted to the right hand of God in the heavenly places. That same body—different now—glorified as He’s ascended to heaven.

“That is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named... and He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church.”

He is exalted. He is ascended and resurrected and then exalted and glorified.

That’s the difference that we’re going to naturally see in the new Jerusalem. You and I are going to be walking around like good-looking caretakers that could be mistaken for gardeners, and there’s going to be One who’s going to light up the place so we don’t need a sun anymore. There will be no sun, S-U-N, because the S-O-N, the Son of God, will light the place up by His presence. There will be photons emitted from the body of a Person who is glorified with divine glory because He has accomplished the task of humiliation. Resurrected body plus divine glory.

There’s some passages. And again, that didn’t happen for forty days. Forty days He didn’t have that. As some theologians like to say, “Well, He had it, but it was veiled.” Okay. But I think it’s more accurate to say He had His resurrected body, then God bestowed the glory on Him when He was exalted to heavenly places.

Now, that means this. Blind date. If you’re anticipating the Jesus that we read about in the Gospels, you’re wrong. That’s not who you’re going to meet. The One you’re going to meet is going to look different.

Matter of fact, you’re going to say, “Well, isn’t He going to come back to earth so He won’t have the heavenly glory?” No. When He comes back to earth, He has the heavenly glory because, read Revelation chapter 19, He comes back like a powerful monarch with a sword coming out of His mouth, just saying things.

We’ll look at that another time. But instead, let’s look to the beginning of that book in Revelation chapter 1.

Revelation chapter 1. Here is the image that John has. Now, John is in a unique position. John saw Jesus prior to the crucifixion. Saw Him in His earthly ministry when a lot of people just thought He was a traveling rabbi. John saw Him after the resurrection. So he saw Him after the resurrection in a body that was glorified with a small *g* but not a big *G*. Then he saw Him ascend into heaven, and he knew that was really trippy and weird. But off He goes, and the claim was that He’s going to have the glory that He had with God before He came to earth—before the earth was even created. But now He’s got a body.

This is the first time now that John gets to catch up with the Jesus he knew before he even knew who He was, really. And then when he saw Him do miracles, and that was pretty glory-ridden and glory-packed, and then he sees Him resurrected in a glorified body—now he gets to see Him with His resurrected body plus divine glory.

Here's his depiction of the whole thing:

"I, John," verse number 9, "your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Verse 10: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Wow, a lot packed there—I'd like to say things I shouldn't.

"And I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,"—what are you screaming about?—"saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.'" By the way, spoiler: this is Christ. But His voice here is described firstly like a trumpet, verse number 10.

Write in the book—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.

Then, verse 12: "I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the lampstands was one like a son of man," Daniel 7—don't ever forget that. We had a time when we talked about Son of Man as a bigger statement even than it would seem than the Son of God, at least on the surface. That's a big statement. Son of Man—that's the divine one.

"Clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around His chest." You've seen the sash when they come out—Miss California, right? Only this is a golden sash, which, by the way, the high priest in the Old Testament had a sash that was interwoven with gold. I mean, this is a picture probably of His regal and priestly attire.

Verse 14: "The hairs of His head were white," Daniel 7 again—Ancient of Days. That's the phrase there. And see, if you're Ancient of Days, the depiction of being ancient is—the crown of the aged, Proverbs says, is your white hair. So, I mean, there's a lot of imagery here. I don't want to over-interpret this because we don't have a key to interpret it all. But that seems to be a pretty obvious one there. "Hair like wool, like snow." I mean, it's so ancient.

"His eyes were like a flame of fire." That—you don't want to look too closely into His eyes. Not sure. I don't want to over-interpret this. But, I mean, you remember when Peter gets a sense of His power and divinity? He says, "Away from me, Lord, I'm a sinful man." I mean, you don't want to look Him in the eye when you realize how holy He is, how sinful you are. There's that penetrating sense of His perception and flame of fire.

"His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace." And again, have I said I don't want to over-interpret this? The one item that we see that has burnished bronze in the temple is the altar. It's interesting that this altar that was like a giant jacuzzi—it was a big box—had burnished bronze there. And they would see the animal sacrificed, the putting away of sin, the atonement. And He has these feet of burnished bronze refined in a furnace—the bronze, the altar, the fire.

"And His voice," back to His voice again—it's like a trumpet before—you couldn't miss it—and now "like the roar of many waters." I mean, that is like Niagara Falls now.

Verse 16: “In His right hand He held the seven stars.” He gets into that later. “From His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,” which is how the whole story ends when He comes back to touch His feet on the Mount of Olives—Zechariah 14, Revelation 19—and He judges the nations. “And His face was like the sun shining in full strength.”

Now I’m into Revelation 21 and 22, where His very presence in the radiance of glory creates in the physical realm photons that light up the New Jerusalem and the world in full strength. The sun in full strength.

“And when I saw Him,” verse 17—now, this is John who’s known Him. This is the one who calls himself the disciple that Jesus loved. Knew Jesus as a traveling itinerant preacher. Saw Him do miracles. Saw Him resurrected. And now he sees Him—forty days with Him from the resurrection to the ascension. And he falls at His feet.

Verse 17: “I fell at His feet as though dead.”

His response to the resurrected body plus divine glory is—wow.

So that whole *I Can Only Imagine* song—I don’t want to pick on. I mean, I know it makes you feel really good when you hear the song. But I’m kind of into the option that they give me: *fall at His feet*. Was that one of his options? Pick that one, right? As opposed to dancing a jig or high-fiving or whatever the other lines seem to suggest might be possible options.

I think the options are: when you see the glorified Christ, it will be an awesome sight. It will be an amazing sight. Even His best friends fall down as though dead before Him, and it takes Christ to reassure him—lay His hand on him, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last,” and off it goes.

Can you get a clearer picture of your blind date? That’s kind of what I’m trying to say. “Though you don’t see Him,” right, “you love Him; though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him, receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” You know that. 1 Peter—we started with that. 1 Peter 1:8.

All I’m saying is don’t expect something you’re not going to see. Expect the resurrected Christ with divine glory exuding from who He is.

Omnipresence (Planned Sidebar)

The more you think biblically about this, the more you’ll have the question of omnipresence. So can we take a planned sidebar here and talk a little bit about omnipresence? Omnipresence.

This is a problem. The more you think about Christ being confined in a body and somewhere right now in a place where God dwells—God, if He’s spirit, you’re thinking, hey, it’s easy to be omnipresent if you’re not contained. But Jesus is contained in a body—a resurrected divine body. How can He be God if He’s not omnipresent? Because it would seem to be that if you’re in a body, you’re not omnipresent. That’s how I feel when I first thought of it.



So let's talk about it a little bit. Is that okay? Let's talk about it.

Let's start with this. I don't have anything on the overhead for this, but let's think this through.

I already quoted John 20:17. You can just jot it down. You know these verses. You don't have to turn to any of them. Some of them, maybe I'll rethink that.

John 20:17 is when He says, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not ascended to the Father." So that ascension may not have been *the* ascension, but it was an ascension. When you ascend, you're going to be gone.

I know—the master of the obvious award I get tonight, because many of my statements are very obvious. But think about it. If Christ ascends, He leaves you. "Don't cling to Me. I'm going." And if I'm going, and I'm physical, and I'm in a body, and He's still in a body, then He's not here.

How about John 14:2? "In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. If I go to prepare a place, right, I will come again, take you to Myself." So He's going. There's a lot of verses. We could add ad infinitum. We could deal with that. He's going. He's going. He's leaving. He's going.

And yet at the very end of Matthew 28, verse 20—the very last phrase of the Gospel of Matthew—He says after the Great Commission, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Conflict.

Are you going or are you staying?

You're going to be with me—and by extension, every disciple after the disciples—and because I'm making disciples of all the nations, you're going to be with all the disciples on earth. But you just told me you're contained in a body and you're leaving. "Don't cling to Me. I got to go."

That's the problem.

John 14—I do want you to turn to this one. The most important passage to sort this out in our thinking. You won't like the answer, some of you, because I get a lot of emails on this one. People don't like this. Even a statement I've already made tonight has tweaked a lot of people—that our relationship with Christ is long distance. Oh, they vehemently respond: "Don't tell me I'm in a long-distance relationship with Christ." Well, it is in a very real sense. He's not here physically, and that is an important thing for us to realize.

Now, here's what fixes this in part. God is complex. He is triune. He is three persons in one essence. I know you don't like that either, but live with it. That's what we have.

Verse 16 of John 14:



“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

There’s going to be a change that takes place.

“I will not leave you as orphans.”

Now, there’s a lot of things that God says that are true, but they’re stated in a general way, and then the specifics are stated, which makes us understand what He meant by that.

Here’s what you need to understand about God’s presence in your life: it is by proxy. He is not leaving you an orphan because He’s sending another—comma—Helper, the *paraklētos*, who will be called in to come alongside of you, and He will be with you.

Now, here’s the thing. If He’s with you, it’s like I’m with you. Because here’s the weird thing about God—He’s one. Are they distinct? Yes, they’re distinct persons. Where is the person of Christ? At the right hand of the Father in bodily form—bizarred out with glory exuding from Him. But He’s with me.

How is He with me? Because He didn’t orphan me in the world because He’s going to ask the Father—He already did—and He’s going to send a Helper, a *paraklētos*, which has a sense of space to the word—He’s going to be with you.

And He dwells—you know Him, He says in verse 17 there—because He dwells with you, but then He’ll be in you. Now, He doesn’t dwell with you. If you’re a Christian, He dwells in you. He dwelt with you, perhaps, during the convicting period of your coming to Christ, but once you became a Christian, He was now in you.

That means He got as close to you as He could possibly be in a relationship with you, and you’re not an orphan.

“I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see Me no more.” You’re not going to see Him. That’s why 1 Peter 1:8 says you don’t see Him. “But you will see Me.” Wait a minute—I thought you said I don’t see Him. Well, you don’t see Me, but you see Him because I live, you also will live.

“And in that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

Where are you? Well, I’m at the right hand of the Father. But My relationship with the Father is so close, it’s like I’m in Him, although I’m really at the right side of His throne, whatever that means, where the focalized presence of God is.

And it’s going to be like I’m in you because your relationship with Me is going to be so close because I’m sending a proxy. And it’s not a proxy of a guy I really know or is really cool or is really close to



Me because he's My brother. No—He is in essence God, just like I'm in essence God. But the person of Christ is at the right hand of God.

I'm going to be in you by proxy in the person of the Holy Spirit.

One verse that may help: 1 Corinthians 3:16. You can remember that one—John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 3:16. It's one of these large statements and then focalized statements. It goes from the general truth to the specific explanation of that general truth.

“Do you not know that you are God's temple?” Now that means that God's temple—that's a way of saying God is in me. But that's a triune God. Are all three persons of the Godhead in me? No—clarification: “and that God's Spirit dwells in you.”

So I have a relationship with God, but God the Father is in heaven. That's the place He made for His focalized presence to exist. And Christ, in bodily form, is at His right hand. Now, does He have to pick up His iPhone and call the Spirit to find out what's going on with me? No. Why? Because the Spirit and Jesus—they're in essence God. They're three in one.

So it's as though He's with me. But technically and physically, He's not with me. But He knows everything about me. And He's with me even to the end of the age.

And every disciple we make until the end of the age, Christ is with him—but not personally. Personally—and I say that in terms of the personalities of the Godhead—but in essence, He is with me, just like God the Father is in me, but He's not specifically in me. It's the Spirit of God that dwells in me.

So, you'll run into passages—two specific ones—Colossians 1:27, Galatians 2:20. You don't need to turn to either one of those, but both of them will speak of “Christ in you,” and that's when people raise their hand and go, “Oh, see, Christ is in me.”

Christ is not in you because there's no room for Him to be in you, because He's in a body. He won't fit in you, right? You'd die if He was in you. But He's in you by way of the residence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Galatians 2:20—you know that one too: “I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” How does Christ live in you? By proxy through the person of the Holy Spirit.

“Oh, by the way, I don't know if I'm buying that.” I'm glad you're not buying it yet, because I want to turn you to another passage.

How about Colossians 3 and then Ephesians 2? Colossians 3 and Ephesians 2.

Colossians 3:1–3. “If then you've been raised with Christ”—oh, wait a minute, I wasn't even born when Christ was raised. No, no, no, but really from God's perspective, you were raised with Christ by the imputation of His righteousness and His work and His resurrection. It's as though I have been raised.



“Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” Oh, clarification. Where is He? He’s at the right hand of God. “Set your minds on things above, not on things of the earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Now, He just told me Christ is in heaven. And that means that I then am in heaven. Oh, where are you right now? Oh, I’m on earth. I’m in Aliso Viejo. Yeah, you are. But God, in terms of His judicial work in the person of Christ, it’s as though you’re already there. You’re not really there. Christ is not really in you, right? But He is in you by way of the proxy of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2 is another one which is helpful. Verses 5 and 6—I’ll read them real quick. “When we were dead in our trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and verse 6 is the important one: and He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

He’s in heavenly places, and you’ve been raised and seated with Him. And you’re thinking, “I’m not. I’m seated in an auditorium on Columbia in Aliso Viejo in Orange County.” That’s true. You are. But that’s not what we mean.

And when you can make that distinction with that, you need to make the distinction with Christ as well.

“Well, what about God? I’m sorry—what about Christ then? He must not be omnipresent.”

When we say God is omnipresent and that He fills all in all, you need to understand that there is a distinction between His perception and His physical presence. If my perception is somewhere, it’s as though my presence is there, even though if I’m contained in a body, my body may not be there.

And this is not like an iChat or, you know, webcam. This is the real full-blown perception of everything that can be perceived. Just like the Bible says, everything is laid bare before God, Hebrews 4, Christ has perception where He’s not. And that is the definition of omnipresence. Even on earth, He showed His omnipresence with John 1:48–50. He says to Nathanael—well, Nathanael said first, “How do You know me?” Jesus said, “Before I called Philip, I saw you under the fig tree.” Nathanael said, “Whoa, man—Rabbi, You’re the Son of God. You’re the King of Israel.” Jesus said, “Because I said I saw you under the fig tree, you believe Me? You’ll see greater things than these.”

That’s a class-A simple thing that deity does. It’s not even hard because His perception is in places where He is physically not. That makes Him omnipresent. He perceives reality in all places.

So is He here? In a sense.

The other one you’ll get is Matthew 18:20, where He says about church discipline, when the church leaders decide that someone is to be excluded, He says, “Where two are gathered together, there I am in the midst,” right? There I am—My presence is there.



Christ doesn't show up when church leaders decide to exclude a sinning parishioner. But the point is, it's as though He's present.

So the presence of—you'll see this kind of general statement and the specificity of it. That's what you need to think.

Don't think Jesus is Casper the friendly ghost. He's in a body right now. That's what I'm trying to get you to get in your synapse five minutes ago. Well, some people—you will forget it. You'll think Jesus is here. Jesus is not here. He's only here by way of the person of the Holy Spirit. He's present and His authority is present because He's fully perceiving everything here. But physically, He's somewhere else.

Christ's Current Activities

All right, quickly now. Christ's current activities.

You don't need to turn to this—you already know it—but Hebrews 1:3 says He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Okay? The whole point of that is He occupies a regal position. God makes a place called heaven. He decides to put His focalized presence there. He then brings up the physical body of Jesus and He glorifies Him and seats Him there.

Stephen, when he's getting stoned, looks up, sees Christ standing at the right hand of God. Which, by the way—what does Hebrews 1 say? He's seated. Which is it? Well, just like you today, if you went to work like I did—sit in my chair and call my assistant. "Where's Mike?" "He's in his office sitting in his chair at his desk." And then you come by and I'm standing. "You lied to me. He's not sitting. He's standing."

Jesus is in a physical body. He won't have thrombosis and He won't get blood clots in His leg. But I'm thinking you're not going to sit the whole time you're there. Jesus gets up and stands and He sits. Don't think of Him as a cartoon or a formula. He's a person. And He is sitting in His position of regal power. And occasionally we learn He stands.

More than that, when John gets the vision of Him in Revelation 1, He walks among the lampstands. Whatever that means, right? Those are the churches. He gets involved in some way in the heavenly representation of the churches on earth. So He's walking around. He's standing up. He's sitting down. But He's got a place of regal position. His name is on the back of the throne there at the right hand of God.

And Jesus is sitting there and standing there and walking around there.

He occupies a regal position.

Revelation 5:11—oh, by the way, you should put in the notes just above this, Psalm 110:1. That's the prediction that God incarnate would be seated at the right hand of God. That's when David said, "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"



Revelation 5:11–14:

“Then I looked and I heard, and around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads and myriads and thousands of thousands, verse 12, with a loud voice saying, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain’”—that’s Christ, code for Christ, even John the Baptist knew that—“to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

That means if you have some power, you give it to Him. If you have some wealth, you give it to Him. If you have wisdom, you defer and give it and dedicate it to Him. If you have might—it’s His. Honor, glory, blessing—His.

“And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever

Revelation 5, verses 11 through 14. Then I looked and I heard, and around the throne the living creatures, the elders, the voices of many angels, numbering myriads and myriads of thousands of thousands, verse 12, with a loud voice saying, worthy is the Lamb who was slain. That’s Christ. Code for Christ. Even John the Baptist knew that. To receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. That means if you have some power, you give it to him. If you have some wealth, you give it to him. If you have wisdom, you defer and give it and dedicate it to him. If you have might, it’s his honor, his glory, his blessing, his.

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea saying, and all that is in them saying, to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever. And the four living creatures said, right on. That’s right. Amen. So be it. And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Whatever’s going on in heaven right now with the physical body of Christ, he’s up, he’s down, he’s walking, and he’s receiving worship. They are worshiping the slain, once slain, now resurrected, now glorified, embodied Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, the one we call Jesus Christ. Oh, which by the way, we can do the same thing though it’s long distance.

Colossians 1.18 is that Christ is the head of the body of the church. He’s the beginning, the firstborn from the dead so that in everything he might have preeminence. Because we speak of him, we teach of him, we sing to him, we worship him long distance by, as a church, giving him preeminence in what we do. That’s why we pray, that’s why we sing, that’s why we preach him so that he can have preeminence now. We’re perfect way.

This one may be exciting to think about. Ephesians 4, 7 and following, the connection of Christ’s ascension is made between Him ascending and now long distance doing something very active in your church. Look at this, verse 7, Ephesians 4, 7, by grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore, it says, when He ascended on high He led a host captive, host of captives, and he gave gifts to men. He ascended, gave gifts. That quotation of that psalm is now applied to Christ. The ascension is the ascension. He goes and long distance now starts giving gifts.



In saying, by the way, parenthetical statement, he ascended, what does it mean? But that he had also descended into the lower regions, comma, the earth. That's the earth, came to earth. And he who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, all the sky, all the space, that he might fill all things. He's got all preeminence. He is the one that we're supposed to worship and give credit to.

That was the second point. And now he gives gifts. What kind of gifts? He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by human cunning, the craftiness and deceitful scheming of people, rather speaking the truth in love, were to grow up into him who is the head into Christ, want to be more like him, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly, which makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

That's a lot of stuff, but we've got a church that is seen as a body and Christ is the one we worship. He's seen in this imagery as the head, and we know the head is not physically here. That's kind of gross, decapitated body of Christ, but he's not here. He's gone to heaven. But in heaven he's not passive. He's actually providing all of the equipment that is needed to make the church work.

I put it this way: he manages actively true churches, not churches that aren't true churches. He has nothing to do actively with those, much like the picture of the shekinah glory, the glory of God leaving that statement, Ichabod. Remember that? Ichabod, the glory has departed. When the glory departs from a church, or the way I like to put it because it's biblical, the lampstand goes out, right? Christ is done managing that.

But if your church is spiritually alive, if God's blessing rests on your church, then the people that are in the church have been brought together by Christ. He's actively managing it. Specifically, he starts naming people in prominent positions of teaching and training. The people that are listed on the website that are there are given to you and to this church by the active, thoughtful, purposeful actions of God. That's what the Bible teaches. So he's long distance, but from heaven he's gifting the church with people and bringing together all the parts so that the church can be healthy. He cares for his lampstands and he's giving them the right folks, the gifts of the church. That's a neat thing that he's actively doing.

A lot of churches to manage. Well, he's God. He can manage them all. He's a good juggler. He gets it all done.

Romans 8.34, you don't need to turn there, you remember this, we taught on it not too long ago. Romans 8.34. Who is that? Who can condemn? Well, it's Jesus Christ, but He's not condemning us as regenerate people. He died for us, and more than that, He was raised from the dead. He's at the right hand of God who intercedes for us, intercedes for us.



That, by the way, if you track the word intercede from Romans 8.34, you'll find is a very specific kind of intercession. It's the intercession of praying for us. And you remember how that whole thing goes, we don't know how to pray as we ought, but He intercedes for us. He is asking the Father in His position of harmonious relationships in the Godhead as the Son who is in a relationship with the Father to play a role as a human embodied, divinely glorified being, saying to other human beings, hey, do this for them. Hey, they need that. Do that.

And we don't even know what to pray for half the time. But according to the Bible, he prays for us. He looks at—and that's kind of a fancy word—for he talks to God about you. He talks to the Father about things that you need. And there's a lot more people, Christians, than churches, so he's really busy right now. Because he's God, he gets it done.

He is, in that sense, that 1 Timothy 2, 5 mediator. The picture of it, if you want to see it in his earthly ministry, you remember at Luke 22, 31 and 32, Simon Peter, Satan wants to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you. I've asked the Father to do something on your behalf so that after you stumble, you'll be restored, you'll be strong, you'll make this work. I prayed for you. And he's praying for us now, just like he did in John 17.

Oh, by the way, another reference of that word intercession, Hebrews 7, 23 through 25, it ends in verse 25 with that great punchline. Consequently, he's able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. The picture of the priest praying for the people of Israel, that God would be good to them, just like I'm supposed to pray for you, in some sense, it's not as good of a picture as the priest praying for Israel, because of the different roles back then. But the point is, the Father is being prayed to from the great high priest that we have, Jesus Christ, for our good.

1 John 2, 1 and 2. Sunday school grads all know this verse. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if you do sin, right? We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is, not was, he is the propitiation for our sin. See, the advocate now is not someone who just prays for us. He is someone who defends us because his very life in human form is the life that is the propitiation for us. He and his righteousness is applied to me, a sinful person, and my sin was applied to his cross and accepted as payment in full, so his life stands as a defender of me, not just an intercessor who prays for me. He's a defender who frees me from the penalty of my sin.

If you want a verse to put next to that, put Revelation 12, 10, which is the picture of Satan, the accuser of our brothers, who accuses the saints before God day and night. So here's the thing. Every time you sin, there is accusation going on before God, and Christ then is actively defending your case before the Father. That's the picture that is drawn for us here.

Wow, that's a lot of stuff going on. He's doing a lot right now for us. He manages our church by giving us what we need. He prays for us. He defends us. By the way, I know you think, well, I don't need defending. I'm not all that bad. Hopefully you don't think that.

But I love this quote I came across as I was reading a 10-volume theology. Of course, I didn't read the whole thing this week. But as I was going through this great section on the mediatorial work of Christ,



it said, your private sins, right? Your private sins on earth are a public scandal in heaven. See, that's a good line for us to remember. Your little private sin on earth is a public scandal in heaven. And every time you sin, there's a scandal going on that Christ solves. Because Satan will pick up your sin and make a big deal out of it before the Father. And Christ will put it in its proper place by being your advocate. That's the picture that is painted for us with the advocate phraseology.

John 14, 1 through 3, I've quoted it several times tonight, but let me quote it for you one more time. Let not your hearts be troubled. You know this by heart. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms, as the ESV puts it. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again. I will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

I've struggled and wrestled with this verse as an expositor for a long time, or an exegete, and I've struggled with it, and tried to, you know, I've kind of—and I like the way D. A. Carson comes back around and saying, there's lots of ways to think this thing through, but in the end, really the preponderance of evidence in just how we deal with this phrase gets us back to the simplest explanation of all. And that is that Christ is leaving to get a place ready for us.

It isn't just his death prepared a way, philosophically got us right with God, preparing a space, that just means there's an acceptable—no, there seems to be a real kind of preparation that's going on of a real physical place for us. And you're thinking, wow, but you said we're not living there. No, you're right. We're going to live on the new earth. But you do remember how it starts, Revelation 21. And coming out of heaven like a bride prepared for her husband is a new Jerusalem. Guess what that is? Physical. It's a physical place that comes out of heaven. It's a 1,500-mile cube of the greatest of the new earth, and it will be brought down to us.

And according to John 14, 1 through 3, if we're reading this right, part of what he's doing right now is managing a construction project of the new Jerusalem that is going to then be presented to us as us, the groom, and as the city, the bride, and it will be the desire of your heart that he has prepared for 2,000 years to bring you a place to live. And then he's going to live there with you and be the sun that illuminates the place, and the dwelling of God will be among men and it will be your home that he's building, right? And that's a big deal. He's preparing for us right now. It's a lot to do. Well, he's God. He can do a lot at one time.

He's occupying a regal position. That seems pretty passive. He's receiving worship. That's a little bit more active. He's managing true churches. Well, even in America, there's probably 300,000 evangelical churches. Well, then he's praying for us. There's millions of Christians. He's defending real Christians. They sin a lot. Every Christian sins a lot. It's getting more complicated. And at the same time, he's managing some kind of building project that he's going to reveal to us one day.

Some people say, what's Christ doing? He's doing a lot.

Book of the week. This is pretty broad and comprehensive, but some good stuff on the mediatorial work of Christ, the present activity of Christ, but a lot of other stuff too. Peter Lewis's book, **The Glory of Christ**. It's well-written. It's concise. It's a good all-in-one readable book by a pastor slash



theologian. I mean, he's a pastor. It's hard—you can see it come through in this book—talking to us about the incarnation, the glorification, and the reign of Christ in heaven. It's one worth having in your library. Have you been buying some of the books that I've been suggesting? We've had several books suggested, so hopefully you're getting those.

All right, let's pray together.

God, thank you so much for the Word of God that gives us the revealed statements. It doesn't tell us all that we would like to know, but it tells us quite a bit about as an activity of Christ that all started with the ascension. Things that we can kind of clarify a bit of the stages of the reality of Christ. It wasn't just that he was resurrected and then went to heaven the same way. He was glorified after his ascension. He sat down at the right hand of God. As theologians like to call the session, he sat the session of Christ. He sat down, took his regal place in heaven, accomplishing redemption for us.

And now he's involved and he's active and he's caring for us. He's thinking about us. He's praying for us. Your Son is our defender. He's the intercessor. He's taking even our prayers now and making sense of them before you. And I know the Spirit's active in that too, because the Spirit's on this end. He's on the earthly end in our lives and in our hearts, helping to guide us in our praying.

God, we just thank you for the work of the whole triune God. It's just a majestic and incomprehensible reality. And one day we'll meet you and it'll be a whole lot clearer because we'll get to see you for who you are. You'll change the way we perceive. You'll give us a capacity to know that we haven't had. You'll give us clarity of perception about who you are, and though it'll be, I'm sure, a shocking transition in many ways, we'll settle into that, and I'm sure it'll be finally home for us where everything's right and the wrong is corrected and the sin is expelled.

So God, help us with the early church say, maranatha, Lord come quickly. Let us care about the future, a consummation of the ages, and let us get excited about anticipating that day and realizing that day, experiencing that day. Make us more bold, God, about our faith. May you bolster and strengthen it. Make us more active in the Word of God to learn and to study it, to know more about who you are and what you've done and what you're going to do for us and what you're presently doing for us.

So thanks for this group. I know it's busy. There's many things they can be doing tonight, but thanks that they've been here with open Bibles, jotting down thoughts that I hope will be embedded into their minds and make a difference in the way they live. Do that, please, for your own name's sake and for our good. In Jesus' name, amen.