



Christology-Part 12

The Future Ministry of Christ

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Well, you are running through the finish line, and this is it. Let's pray.

God, thanks for this semester that we've had, working through the most important subject in the universe, the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be worshipped for all eternity, will be the center of the new Jerusalem. He will be honored and obeyed and worshipped. He will have the preeminence in everything. And we're thankful for that, God, and we thank you that now while the world ignores him, while most don't give him much of anything as it relates to their allegiance or their honor, that you've called us out from the rest, the *ecclesia*, the church. You've made us a separate kind of group within the world, a subset of people that are turning our attention to Christ now and in so doing by your grace receiving salvation and God the sparing of our soul on judgment day.

We're grateful for that. Please do not ever let us, those of us that claim the name of Christ, to treat Christ in our minds or our thoughts as our butler or our servant but let us recognize that he is the king of kings and lord of lords and that we've done very little to serve him well even if we were to spill our blood for him give our lives for him be tortured for him it would be very little compared to what he deserves. He deserves our all. Give us more of a heart to serve and love him in every possible way to endure whatever discomfort, whatever annoyance, whatever ridicule he might bring to our lives, let us bear it gladly. Let us rejoice as Jesus taught us in that day because great is our reward in heaven.

So help us, Lord, please, to readjust our lives, to recognize that the most honored person on planet earth is nothing compared to Christ, that any pursuit, any pleasure, any value, any habit, any desire is so small and so secondary to the real glory and the power and the preeminence of Christ. And if we could just see that for five minutes, if we could just get a glimpse of the glorified Christ, we would forever be changed.

As John said in 1 John 3, we look forward to the day when we will be permanently changed because we'll see Him as He is, not as some image in our memories or some construction of ideas from the pages of Scripture, but He'll be in our presence and we'll see Him face to face. So we look forward to that day, God, when everything will be changed. Pray for us tonight as we go about this study that you would give us clarity, that you'd give us grace and humility as we look at your word afresh tonight. In Jesus' name, amen.

[The Catching Up of the Church](#)

All right. Turn in your Bibles, please, to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, and let's talk about Christ's, quote unquote, catching up of the church. We're going to look at Christ's future ministry. I don't know what's on your day timer for the future, but Christ has got a lot on his agenda that is going to commence one day with a trumpet blast, the voice of the archangel—we're going to read about it here in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4.



Let's start in verse 13 to catch the context which was the death of loved ones. What about the eschaton? What about the end of all things? What about all this promise of the return? We saw him go, supposed to come back in the same way. What about these people that have died?

1 Thess 4:13, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep." They've died. "That you may not grieve as others who do not—who, as others do—who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep."

Now their bodies are in the ground, but their software, what really matters, their personality, who they are, their spirit is with Christ. Their spirit is not in it. By the way, any of the soul sleep doctrines, the JW's, the seven-day Adventists, you know, it seems like it's a resurgence. I was with a group of people in a think tank on eschatology, and here's this new idea coming around in modern times in seminaries of a new kind of twisted version of soul sleep. There's no possibility, because here it says in verse 14 that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Now their body's in the ground, we're talking about him bringing them—conscious people—back to earth. How does that take place?

Verse 15, "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord." This is the truth. This is revelation, maybe not formally known with clarity. Here comes some clarity. "We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will [descend] from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."

I thought they're coming back with him. They are, but their hardware needs to be reconstituted, just like Christ's was. They're going to rise. "Then we who are alive and who are left will be caught up," *harpazō*, will be snatched up to the sky together with them—their bodies, and our bodies and software are all in one piece. We go together to meet the Lord in the air. "And so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, encourage one another with these words."

The context was: don't worry about those who have fallen asleep. They haven't missed anything. As a matter of fact, they're with Christ. They'll come back. They'll get their bodies back when this last trumpet is sounding and the end times unfold.

So what's Christ's agenda for the future? What's He going to do? Well, the first thing we know, and it will be our first encounter with the resurrected Christ, we're going to be caught up if we happen to be alive. And even if we're not, our bodies will be reconstituted, catch up with our software. We'll then be whole again for the first time, and we'll have a meeting in the air.

That's the passage we're looking at here, which, by the way, over there in John 14:3, the very familiar verses we learned as kids seems to clearly nicely fit with this. Remember the text: "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."



So Christ has ascended, he is going to come back, and he will meet us in the air. We'll be caught up, *harpazō*, will be taken up and meet him in the air. He went up in the sky, disappeared behind a cloud. That was the picture of Acts chapter 1. He's going to come back when the trumpet sounds, when the voice and command of God goes forth, and we're going to meet him in the air.

That's the next thing on the agenda for Christ: a taking up of the church to meet him. And if we happen to be here. It's nice to imagine that. Perhaps you won't make it. I won't. Maybe we will. I don't know if we'll live that long. I don't know if it'll happen today or tomorrow, but we need to recognize that that is the anticipation of the church because, letter B, it has been assumed because of the teaching of Christ that it could happen at any moment.

That is my conviction. There are two sets of promises in the Bible. You can put them in two columns: statements about the return of Christ that seem to be imminent—that's the word we like to use, it could happen at any moment—and those that seem to be, it's not going to happen until these things take place.

My understanding is to divide those into two camps, look at the audience, and to recognize that the initial catching up of the people of God to meet Christ in the air is in any moment, at any time, at any hour, at any second, it can take place. There's nothing that has to precede it. Now, there's more to the day of the Lord, to the return of Christ, but that initial catching up of the church to meet Christ could take place at any time.

And if you look at that, you'll even see it in the book that we're looking at in 1 Thessalonians. Take a look at chapter 5, verses 1 through 3. That gets our attention on end times topics. And he says in verse 1, now concerning the times—you still got your Bible open there—and the seasons. These are words often used, the *kairos*, the *chronos*, the opportunities, the clicks on the clock, how long is it going to be? Brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware, here it comes now—Mike Fabarez paraphrase—that I can't answer that question for you. Because when Christ was asked it, what did he say? It's not for you to know the times of the seasons.

Whenever the issue of times and seasons comes up, you're not supposed to know. That is for the initial catching up of the church to meet the Lord in the air. You're fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like—here's the verbiage of Christ now—a thief in the night. Now think in your minds, if you're a Sunday school graduate, of all the times Christ liked to speak of his coming back like a thief in the night, his parables. It can happen at any time. Now a thief's not going to tell you when he's coming, so you don't know when he's coming. It's going to come without notice.

That trumpet's going to sound, the church is going to be caught up, you need to recognize it's like a thief in the night. And when people are saying, verse number three, hey, there's peace and security, then sudden destruction will come on them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

Now, when we read the book of Revelation, we see a lot of bad stuff in there, and this seems to connect with a lot of what we see in the Old Testament prophets, and what we see right here. Whatever happens is going to come like a thief and bad things are going to happen to them. What's going to happen to us?



Well, we saw here at the end of chapter 4, what's going to happen to us is we're going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

So without notice, we don't know when it's going to happen, the imminent return of Christ is a meeting in the air. Then we have sudden destruction coming on the world. Mark chapter 13:34 through 37—don't turn there because we're going to stay in 1 Thess—but that's one example of Jesus saying things like, hey, you don't know when it's going to happen. Be on guard. Stay awake. You don't know when the time will come. You don't know when I'm going to return. You got to stay awake. You don't know when the master is going to return to his house. Could be evening. Could be midnight. Could be when the rooster crows. Could be in the morning. You don't know, but it's going to come suddenly, and don't let him find you asleep. That's just common in Jesus' teaching: the imminent return of Christ, any moment return, it could happen at any time, and you could be face to face with Christ.

Here's another one. I didn't put it on the overhead, but jot it down. James chapter 5, verses 7, 8, and 9. James chapter 5:7, 8, and 9, which starts to give us a different feel like 1 Peter does and 2 Peter does, the sense of where is his coming, and James says, be patient. Be patient until the coming of the Lord. Look at how the farmer, he's patient. You be patient.

He says, be patient and establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand. It could happen at any time. And don't grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing at the door.

There's no better picture in my mind in the New Testament of the imminence of Christ than the judge is standing at the door. See, there were some neat things about my house I grew up in when my brother and I would get ourselves in trouble. We had these wood floors that when dad came down or mom came down because we were causing too much ruckus in our room, I could hear the pounding footsteps coming down the hall. I could interpret them too to tell how angry they were by how they sounded, but I knew they were coming. And that gave us time to quickly do what we could to get ourselves in order, right? That's picture here. The picture is dad is standing at the door and at any moment the door could fling open.

The return of Christ is at hand, and if you don't feel that you need to feel that because that's what Jesus repeatedly discusses. Now you're going to throw up your hand and say, well there's a lot of passages that don't sound like that. When you see this then you'll know and if you see that then you'll know and I don't see that so then I guess it's not now. Well there's a whole different set of passages that says you shouldn't know because you can't know and it could happen at any time it's like a thief in the night so you and I need to be, number three or letter C, always ready. That's the only way we can never be surprised is if we always think dad's going to come through the door at any minute.

You have to be always prepared, which is of course what usually the thrust of Jesus' parables is all about.

Now you're still in 1 Thess, are you not? Look at the next verse here. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 4: "But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief." For the guy who's ready for the thief, he's not surprised by the thief because he's always expecting the thief. Now he



comes like a thief in that there's no, you know, notice or appointment and there's no giving or telegraphing of the time that he's coming, but if you're ready, then you're never surprised.

“For you are all children of the light and children of the day, and we're not of the night or of the darkness. So then, let us not sleep.” If this is not a clear depiction of Christ's repeated parables, of the concept of stay awake, you don't know, thief in the night—morally, spiritually, we're supposed to always stay awake. “Don't sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober,” for those who sleep sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night but since we belong to the day let 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. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep”—just to tie it together with chapter 4—“we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

Because at any moment we're going to meet him. What's going to happen to the world? Destruction is going to come upon them, which is what chapter 6 of Revelation—actually starting in chapter 5 we get the warm up—you read chapter 7 today in our annual reading I hope—and we're getting into it and things are starting to fall apart all the way to chapter 19. We got sudden destruction coming upon the earth. It begins with a catching up of the church. It's going to end with the battle of Armageddon. More on that later.

1 John 2:28, I jotted down for you, and this would be worth looking at since we're done with 1 Thess for now. Look at 1 John 2:28, not too far from where we're at. 1 John 2:28. Great text. Challenging. Needs to be brought to your attention, recalled in your mind. This is how you need to live. I don't know what it is you're frustrated about, that you're stumbling over, that you're giving in to, but you need to remember He could come at any time. And therefore, it should have an effect on how you live.

Verse 28: “And now, little children, abide in him. Cling in him. Stay with him. Stay tight with him. So that when he appears, we may have confidence”—the door is opening, yay—“and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.”

The imminence of Christ, Christ's return, or the catching up of the church in the air, is what we just don't talk so much about, particularly because there's so much controversy over eschatology, so most pastors lay back and don't even talk about it, right? I mean, it's so out of vogue to even deal with.

Driscoll's new book—I mean, he's the hip, cool pastor these days—come out with his first Bible doctrine book, nothing about eschatology. A word or two about the return of Christ. A lot of other discussion about the other divisions of theology.

If we don't think about the imminent return of Christ—see, then we don't live as though the judge is standing at the door. We don't stay as sober or awake. We don't live as circumspectly as we should. We need to return at least this doctrine to your thinking or one verse to memorize: “And now, little children, abide in him so that when he appears we can have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.”

Put that one in your mind next time you're tempted to grumble, complain, gossip, you know, give in to temptation, do whatever it is, get lazy. You're supposed to go do this or that to serve the Lord. No, I don't want to. I need to stay home tonight. Just remember, you don't want to catch—you don't want to be caught, rather—at the return of Christ living like that. It should keep the fuel and the fire of your Christian life alive.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

What's the next thing on the agenda for Christ? Well, it's His meeting you and me in the air. If we happen to still be alive when this happens, then we should always live as though it could at any moment. That's the teaching of the New Testament: be ready.

What's the next thing then? Well, He's going to catch up His church in the air, then it's time for—and I'm kind of trying to coin a few phrases here tonight—the evaluative judgment. And I call it that not because the other kind of judgment doesn't evaluate—all judgment evaluates—it's just this is a kind of judgment for his people that is not going to be in reference to sin. It's not going to be in reference to retribution. It won't be in reference to condemnation.

There are two kinds of judgments. That's what I'm trying to say. And I'd like you, once you jot that down, to turn to the very end of the Bible, Revelation chapter 20 and 22. And I want to show you these side by side in two different verses. Revelation chapter 20 verse 12 and Revelation chapter 22 verse 12. They happen to be both verse 12.

Now, simplistic Christian thinking won't cut it. And when it comes to a lot of themes like judgment, if you think simplistically about it, you'll miss the breadth of it. And in some cases, when there's breadth to a particular biblical word, there's such a distinction that it's night and day. And you've got to realize the word judgment is that way. Judgment is a word that is used in two entirely different ways because they both involve disclosure.

The Bible says this about everything. Everything will be disclosed. Everything hidden is going to be exposed. Everything whispered in the inner room will be shouted from the rooftops. Everything will be exposed. Now that everything is exposed, what happens? Two kinds of judgment, okay?

Judgment number one, Revelation chapter 20 verse 12 says, “And then I saw the dead, the great and small, standing before the throne. The books were opened, then another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done.”

Look down at the end. They end up in the lake of fire, this paragraph. This is the judgment for retribution and exacting punishment.

Turn the page, Revelation 22:12. Same word, *krinō*, it means to judge, but *krinō* here is used once you evaluate and expose, not to judge or recompense someone with retribution, but with reward. Take a look at verse 12: “Behold, I'm coming soon. I'm bringing my recompense with me, my *krinō*, my judgment with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.”



More on that later. I don't want to put my cards on the table because we're going to look at other passages here in just a second. Suffice it to say that when it comes to the two kinds of judgment we're dealing with, the judgment of evaluation of the church—now the church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, at least the last generation of it—it's time now for an evaluation of each individual life.

But whatever that evaluation is, though the word recompense or repay or judgment is used, it never involves Romans 8:1, you know that verse. It never involves condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus." Super important for you to realize.

Some people think if I'm not going to hell, I'm not going to be condemned, and there is no purgatory, and I'm not going to suffer for my sin—well, then there's no evaluation. There's never an exposure of my life. Not true. Okay? The Bible's very clear on that.

Passages like 1 Corinthians chapter 3, 2 Corinthians chapter 5 are going to make it very clear. Now, the goal is to expose so that we can justly reward.

So, let's take a look at these two passages. Let's start with 1 Corinthians chapter 3. 1 Corinthians 3 verse 10. Now, the context here is Christian ministry, but don't think because you're not in ministry, you're getting out of this. This is for you too. Though the focus here is Paul's concern about people ministering the church and doing it in the wrong way.

But take a look at this. He's trying to compare his work with the shoddy work of others that have been ministering among the Corinthians. But he says in verse 10, according to the grace of God given to me, 1 Corinthians 3:10, "like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation and someone else is building on it." I came to you, I shared the gospel, I set up a church, now other people have come and fed you and taught you and given you truth from God's word, but it hasn't always been good. "Let each one take care how he builds on it." Okay?

"For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Now, if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw"—clearly two categories here—"then each one's work will be made manifest for the day will disclose it." Whenever you want to look at judgment, it always uses words like manifest, disclose, reveal, uncover. That ought to give us some pause.

"And it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done." These are metaphors, clearly—silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw. I'm never tossing out from the pulpit literal silver, precious stones, or literal wood, hay, and straw. These are all metaphors for what kind of ministry I do among you as a minister of the gospel, the minister of the Scriptures.

Now, there's going to be a revealing of my life and my ministry, and it's going to test what kind of work that I've done. Now, if the work, verse 14—and day, by the way, in verse 13, is it not capitalized? That's a good little editorial way to clarify that this is the day that keeps being discussed. It's the day of disclosure, the day of judgment.



“If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives”—which of course it wouldn’t if fire were the thing looking at some, evaluating a structure that’s built, because wood, hay, and straw would be burned up, but of course gold, silver, precious stones would not—“well, then he’ll receive”—circle it there—“a reward.”

Now we’re talking about after it’s all done and I meet God on the day, I get evaluated, I get rewarded if the work that I did was good. “If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire,” because it took all of his life’s work and if most of it was shoddy and it wasn’t good and it was self-seeking and it wasn’t biblical—in this context, this ministry—well then you’re going to suffer loss, while the other guy who did good stuff will be rewarded.

This is not the suffering of purgatory, which is the closest verse the Catholics get to to try and come up with a concept of purgatory, which is an external, unbiblical, anti-biblical doctrine. But the point here is that I will have, in a metaphorical sense, my life evaluated by fire. Anything shoddy, it will not count. I’ll be evaluated and rewarded only for those things that were good and proper and virtuous and right.

And then I’ll get rewarded. If I spend my whole life doing shoddy work as a minister, I’m going to suffer loss and when I get there I won’t get reward and the next pastor will. That’s not what we want. There’s some motivation built into this, and we should always be thinking about our day of evaluation.

This is not about salvation. Is that clear in verse 15? The guy can be saved even though his work wasn’t that good, but it’s going to be with his life’s work burned up.

2 Corinthians 5 — Judgment for Reward

2 Corinthians chapter 5. I said 1 Corinthians 3 is about ministry, and it is, but don’t think you’re going to get out of it because of the little here in verse 10 of 2 Corinthians 5. That includes you too. Whatever God has called you to do. I’m called to be a minister. You’re called to be whatever you’re called to be. But just know your life will be evaluated just like mine will.

Verse 9: “So whether we’re at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him,” that is Christ. For—why is that? Why do we want to please Him so much? “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” All of us will. “So that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Now, I know the kind of judgment I’m talking about and concerned about is the kind of reward that I get. If I’ve done something evil in my life, that gets burned up and I suffer loss. It’s exposed, it’s revealed, and then I don’t get anything for it. Those things that I’ve done that please the Lord, I get rewarded for.

That’s going to be a situation that is going on in the presence of God, we assume, while all—literally—hell is breaking loose on earth, when sudden destruction is coming upon the world. The church is now standing before Christ being evaluated, and rewards are dispensed.



What kind of rewards? We've preached on this before. You can look up sermons on Focal Point website. We've talked about, you know, all kinds of things—responsibility, riches, situations that involve relationships, and on and on and on. You can look up those messages. The Bible has a lot to say about rewards.

Now, it is given to us this revelation and clarity about a day of evaluation in which reward will be dispensed so that you can be motivated by that. And while every time I preach on this topic, someone comes up to me and says that such a crass worldly thing, I don't do anything to get rewarded. I do it all because I just love the Lord.

And I say, well, then you're not utilizing all the motivation that God gave you because this is a godly motivation. And it's funny for all the purists among us who want to say, I don't do anything because of reward. I do it because I just want to love the Lord. I do it out of love for the Lord. Great. I serve out of love for the Lord too. But God told me to serve so that I might gain reward.

Does he say that? How about passages like the one in parentheses? Matthew 6:19–21. "Store up for yourselves treasure in heaven." That is a command. And I'm supposed to now turn my attention away from temporal things and storing up treasure on earth so that I can focus on storing up treasure in heaven. That's a command for me—to be ambitious about my eternal state.

As C.S. Lewis rightly said, if we understood anything about the issue of rewards, we'd recognize that Christians, right, are far too passive and not ambitious enough. Everybody thinks, you know, ambition's a bad thing. When it comes to eternal things, it's always a good thing.

The whole point of the disciples being faithful was because if they were, they would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That's a power trip. We're not supposed to be into power. No, you are—just not here, see? The concern you should have is to be something there. And to store up and amass wealth here, right? That's not the point. It's to store up and amass wealth there.

Which, by the way, you can store up a lot of wealth there if you have wealth here, the Bible says, and you're generous with your wealth here. See how that works? You don't want to nod at that one, but...

How about Hebrews 10? These two passages are worth looking at. They're right next to each other. Let's look at this. Hebrews 10:35. Might as well throw in verse 36 as well, because it gives us that kind of extra—or I should say eschatological—view of things. It's beyond this life.

Hebrews 10:35. Are you with me on this? "Therefore, do not throw away your confidence," he's speaking now to the rank-and-file Christian saying, listen, hang in there, keep going, "which has great reward." Now you could say, well, of course it does in this life. I think there's something much more transcendent involved.

Here, look at verse 36: "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God"—it's over—"you may receive what is promised." And over and over and over again, the Bible talks about the things he's going to dispense.



And it isn't just, you know, some proverbial crown of life that you're going to throw away when you get there. You're going to throw it away? Give it to me, right? Because even if we cast our proverbial crowns before the Lord, the Lord is going to stand you up, put it back on you, and send you out to serve Him with a position that He says you are qualified for and counted worthy to serve in because you served Him well on earth.

So it's given as a godly motivation. In fact, across the page, chapter 11 verse 6 says, "Without faith it's impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." If you don't believe that, if that is not part of your theology, you don't even please God. You don't even have faith. You're not even having the kind of biblical faith, the whole kind of faith that should drive you through this life to look for the goal, which so much of Hebrews is about.

Chapter 12 says the same thing: "Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising its shame." The things that we could do and get through in this life, to not care so much about the things of this world and drive on to things that matter for eternity—if we could just get in our minds that God would want to motivate us with some kind of reward in eternity.

And for those of you that think it's such an awful thing, such a crass thing, it's funny how you go home and motivate your kids with it, right? And you do it for temporal things. Johnny, do your homework. Because if you don't do your homework, you're going to be a high school dropout. And you're a high school dropout. You're not going to do very well in the world and be good for you if you did.

Why are you motivating them? Why don't you just say, hey, just do it out of love. And if you don't love, forget it. Because you know that there are consequences for diligence. And the Bible says the same thing to us. There are consequences for diligence. Gold, silver, and precious stones is far more important for us. It's a lot harder. It takes a lot more effort. But God would have us be motivated by eternal rewards.

So you're going to stand before God. I know we're in the shoes of our own lives, but if you could get back to the topic of the night, what is God up to? Well, God has on Christ's agenda a meeting of the church in the air. Next thing for Christ is a time of evaluation of the church.

And you're going to be in that line, and there will be an exposure of your life, and he'll take all that was sinful or lackluster or shabby, and he'll throw it all away from you, and he'll take what's left, and he'll reward you for it. That's going to go on in God's presence at the judgment seat of Christ.

What's next? Well, then he'll come back in retributive judgment. Evaluative judgment, retributive judgment. Just coining a couple of phrases here tonight that aren't used normally. You're not going to find them in the books you read. Just to distinguish in your mind, one is to reward and one is to judge. I'm sorry—one is to reward and one is to punish, okay?

Christ returns. Now, if you're sharp, you're going to say Christ returns, Christ returns. I thought you said He returned there earlier before He took us up to judge us. He did. See? But he did it in a way to



extract his church, judge his church for rewards, to evaluate them and reward them, and then he's going to return in judgment. Even that distinction is important to make.

How many times do we see the return of Christ as this great thing for us, and then we see the return of Christ as a dreadful thing? We say, well, it depends on who you are. Well, that's true. But when you're meeting Christ is a big deal.

And I know a lot of folks say, well, that's why I don't like your theology, because you see two stages to the return of Christ. Can you get over that, please? Because if you look through the Bible, did we not talk about the ascension last week? The ascension? Wait a minute. Wait, time out. There wasn't the ascension. There were ascensions, but we talk about the ascension, because there was a final ascension, and that was the ascension. But he ascended on the day of his resurrection, and then he ascended 40 days later. You remember all this. But we talk about the ascension.

Matter of fact, you talk about the advent of Christ, and then the second advent of Christ. Do you know that even when Gabriel came and spoke to Mary, what did he talk about? The coming of Christ—to assume the leadership of the world. The government would be on his shoulder. The extent of his kingdom. Taking the throne of his father David. Remember all those statements? That didn't happen at his first coming. And yet Gabriel talked as though it were a singular coming. Not because he didn't know there was two comings, but because he's talking about the coming of Christ to the earth.

But we know there's a first advent and a second advent. And we knew there was one ascension and then another ascension. What about judgments? I've just talked to you about a judgment where we'll stand before Christ and be judged, and then we're going to talk about a judgment at the end of the millennium, the great white throne judgment. And yet in the Bible, it often talks about the judgment, the day of judgment, the coming judgment—singular. But you know, there are five different judgments laid out in the New Testament. But yet we don't say the five judgments, the two returns of Christ, right? The two ascensions, the two advents—we do now looking back on it.

So we need to get over that. That, to me, is not a very big argument in favor of the fact that you can't believe in a two-stage return of Christ. One, we meet Him in the air, and the second one is the one where His feet touch the Mount of Olives. And when that happens, there's a war and a bloodbath going on.

The first one is the great hope that's supposed to encourage me. I get caught up to be with God in the air. The second one, now I'm coming back with Him in the middle of a war, and when He comes back, it's a dreadful war.

That's the third thing on his agenda: a retributive judgment. He's going to come and he will judge that last generation personally. Now, I know he's going to deal with every single person, but Revelation chapter 19 is about a judgment on an entire generation. And that generation is much like Noah.

Do you think that the people that died in two or three or four generations before the flood were any less worthy of the judgment of God in a flood? No. But he picked that last generation, which may be arguably the worst generation of Noah's era, but it's the one he flooded.



And he will come in retribution after the judgment of the church and the catching up in the air. And according to the book of Revelation, that seems to spell out seven years, which seems to fit nicely into Daniel chapter 9, the 70th week of Daniel.

I don't have time to prove all this to you now, but it is my conviction that after seven years after the *harpazō*, the catching up of the church, he will come back for Revelation chapter 19, this dreadful battle. It starts in verse 11. If you haven't turned there yet, it's easy to find right before the concordance and the maps.

Then I saw heaven open, verse 11, "and behold, a white horse, and the one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war." Does that sound like the first coming of Christ? You're right—and when I say the first, I mean the second, 2.1, right? No, 2.1. The second coming of Christ is a joyful event when I see him face to face. Oh, it leads into time of judgment for us, but that's a judgment of evaluation and reward.

This is a tough time. This is him coming back in judgment and a kind of judgment that is not for reward—it's for recompense for evil. "His eyes are like flaming fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written on him that no one knows but himself. He's clothed in a robe dipped in blood, his name is called the Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following on white horses."

"And from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God." Does that sound like, hey, encourage one another with this? This is the coming of Christ in retributive judgment. The fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

"On his robe and on his thigh was written, King of kings and Lord of lords." And I saw an angel standing in the sun with a loud voice. He called to the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come and gather for the great supper of God." This is not the marriage supper of the Lamb, if you know that terminology. This is the birds eating flesh. "To eat, verse 18, the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and riders, the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet, who in his presence had done the signs by which he had deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, those who had worshipped his image. And these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh."

This is the final coming of Christ that's on the agenda. The first one is with great joy to meet his bride, and the second one here is for a terrible battle.



Well, if you look at that, before we leave this text, can you look there again? It says in verse 19, “I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.”

What does that mean? Christ is going to come back and the whole world is going to be ready to fight him? Well, yeah—but they’ve only heard about him because there is this pocket of people, and you have to go back to some of the sermons we did in Romans chapter 9, 10, and 11, but there’s this pocket of people in Israel who God has drawn back together, whose hope now is for their Messiah, who they have pierced, and they’re going to long for him, and they’re going to want him.

And he is going to be their champion—only he’s not arrived yet. Well, the armies and the nations are all gathered together to fight Israel and their captain, their Messiah, who is not there yet. Well, the Messiah is going to come on a horse and is going to kill all these nations.

And that’s why we say he will save Israel, because those are his people. Did you do your reading today? Please tell me you did the reading today, Revelation chapter 7. Did you not read about the twelve tribes of Israel? I’m talking about Naphtali again. What are you talking about? Asher, I don’t understand.

You’ve got all these tribes. What are they doing? Well, they’re converted, messianic, converted Jews after the church has been taken, *harpazōed* out of the way. We’re dealing with God in rewards in heaven. And they’re winning the people to Christ on earth. And then there’s a battle and a saving of the people.

Now, I know these are Old Testament texts that you don’t look up every day, but go with me to Zephaniah 3 and Zechariah 14. And you’d wish these were together. They both start with Z. You’d think it’d be easy to find. But this is the fourth book from Matthew, okay? Zephaniah. And then the second. It’s Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. So you got number two and number four away from Matthew. You all know where Matthew is.

So let’s turn to these quickly. I know I’m talking down to you. I’m sorry. Most of you are like, I’m there already. I memorized Zephaniah as a kid. Zechariah, I’ve tattooed verses of Zechariah on my belly. Okay, I don’t know. You’re well-versed in the Old Testament, but for some of you newbies, I’m trying to help you find it quickly. Matthew, turn left. Let’s go to Zephaniah 3.

Now, again, I can’t give you the whole context. We just don’t have time, but I think this is looking to something farther and way down the road than the post-exile return from Babylon. And I’m pretty well-versed in history, and I just don’t see anything that seems to really smack of what we’re speaking of in these passages until I read in 90 AD a book written by John on the island of Patmos that speaks about something that seems to be yet future, and I’m convinced that it is, that seems to match these very same things.

Verse 8: “Therefore wait for me, declares the Lord”—speaking to his people—“for the day,” and they are waiting for him because the nations are ready to fight him, “for the day when I rise up to seize the



prey, for my decision to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation and all my burning anger.”

I don't know where that fits in the intertestamental period or the New Testament. This is yet to come. This is what John was speaking of in Revelation 19. “For in the fire of my jealousy”—look at these words—“all the earth will be consumed.”

For at that time, “I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, remember Isaiah, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord,” whether you believe that's they're all learning perfect Hebrew or whether that's speaking of them being righteous because out of the mouth speaks that which fills the heart. “They'll call on the name of the Lord and they'll serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush, my worshipers, the daughters of my dispersed ones shall bring my offering.”

Do you see that? Is that not Revelation 19? They are waiting for their captain. They're waiting for their Messiah. He comes. The kings of the earth are slaughtered by him. This is the coming of Christ.

Zechariah 14, two books down. Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah.

Zechariah 14. Did we not just recently read this? Have we read this yet? No, not yet? I was reading it recently, but I'm with you. What did we read today? Amos? We finished Amos, did we not? I don't know why they're throwing in four chapters on one day, and then it's two chapters, and then tomorrow it's one chapter. But whatever. We wrote our own, and then we went with the ESV one, and that one's a little different.

All right, was that enough time to get there? You're there. Zechariah 14.

“I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on 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 by a very wide valley, so that one half of the mountain shall move northward, and the other half southward.”

“And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azel, and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.”

“And on that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.”



I mean, all you got to do is think about the context of these promises that telescope beyond the problems of Israel at the day to something cataclysmic, something that consummates it all. This is when Christ comes back and they're all in the middle of a battle and he saves Israel.

Where are we? We've been *harpazōed* up. Great. Can't wait. Encourage one another with these words. We're going to see him in the air. Then we're going to have the gulp experience of standing before him in judgment—what for? For rewards, no condemnation for us. And then we're going to come back with him and we're going to save his people and he's going to do some cataclysmic things.

When the Lord's feet—which I didn't think he had, but oh, the God-man, that's the whole New Testament slid in between here—his feet are going to touch the Mount of Olives, which is exactly where he left from the Mount of Olives, and Christ will return. He's going to split the mountain in half and weird things are going to happen with the water system in Jerusalem, and then he's going to be king. His authority will be established.

Which is exactly what we see, and I just love this verse, I quote it often. You don't need to turn there, but Rev 11:15–18. It's the seventh trumpet, which if you know how this works, the seals, the trumpets, the bowls—the bowls are just all poured out at the very, very end—but the seventh trumpet announces the end.

And in Rev 11 it says, "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever, and he will take his great power and he will begin to reign." That hasn't happened yet.

For all the amill guys and the preterists that want to say, well, it's already happened—I don't see it. This seems far too cataclysmic, far too sweeping of around the world, all initiated by a battle where birds are eating the flesh of kings and nations are gathered, and it's a day like no other. I can't get around the fact that this is yet to come.

Therefore, I'm forced into a two-stage return of Christ: one to meet us in the air, and then seven years later to come back in judgment for a great battle called the Battle of Armageddon.

Then He's going to reign on earth. But here's the distinction I make as a premillennialist. I believe that that thousand-year period spoken of in Revelation 20 is going to be Christ on the old earth. And it starts with, in Revelation 20, an incarceration of the enemy—which, by the way, because of all the promises in the Old Testament and what the Old Testament promises look like, I know that I can fit into this period of time that Romans 8:19–23 promise, which was nature is in bondage to decay but will be liberated when the sons of God are revealed.

So we have two things happening that will turn the old earth into an old earth with a really good—you know—reinvigoration plan. It's got a gym membership now and it's doing really well, eating healthy, and the earth is in good shape. The lion's laying down with the lamb. Satan is bound. And the Bible says you've got corruption, right? The earth subjected to corruption and slavery—it's liberated. And the earth can't wait for that day, and it's going to happen when the children of God are revealed.



When we come back on those horses—think about it—think about the earth. When do they get to see the glory of the white linen saints coming back? It isn't when we're snatched off the earth because then sudden destruction comes on the earth. We get caught up into heaven to be with Christ and we come back and the revealing of the sons of God takes place. The earth then is liberated.

Weird things happen in Jerusalem with the water system, and things now are put right on the old earth. And according to Revelation 20, it happens for a thousand years, a thousand years, a thousand years, a thousand years, a thousand years. It's repeated over and over and over again—for a thousand years.

Who populates that place? Well, we already got changed bodies according to 1 Corinthians 15, according to 1 Thessalonians 4. Who's got bodies that can procreate in the old order of things, still live and even die? Well, those that came through the Great Tribulation.

And those that came through the Great Tribulation were largely the Jewish people—although there was many more than that—who waited for their Messiah to come. They get delivered and saved, and the earth now is changed, and Satan is incarcerated, and then they get to live on that planet.

And the Bible says in the Old Testament, when someone dies at a hundred years old, they'll mourn him like an infant dying. So there will be death. As a matter of fact, there's even a rebellion spoken of in Revelation 20 that happens at the very end of it.

But it's a good time, mostly, largely. Christ reigns as King. He reigns as King as Luke 1:30—which I quoted off the top of my head in that previous discussion about the two advents of Christ—and that is when the angel says to Mary that this son that you're going to have is going to be named Jesus. He'll be great. He'll be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob, and his kingdom there will be no end.

When does that happen? Second Advent. I didn't clarify, but second Advent, he reigns as king. Which, by the way, Psalm 2—Is that a great psalm? You want to look at a messianic psalm of the kingdom coming out as the smoke is clearing and the dust is settling from the battle of Armageddon. Take a look at this. Psalm 2. Do you remember this?

“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? And the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed.” Does that sound like Zephaniah? Does that sound like Zechariah? Does that sound like Revelation 19? That's it.

“Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” He who sits in heaven laughs and the Lord holds them in derision. Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and He will terrify them in His fury, saying, “As for me, I've set my king on Zion, my holy hill.”

“I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, ‘You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them into pieces like a potter's vessel.’”

That didn't happen at the first advent, did it?



“Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him.”

You start reading those psalms in light of what you know about what’s coming on the docket for Christ, they start to sound a little more rich and a little more meaningful.

Christ will reign as king after the battle of Armageddon.

And everybody asks, what about us? Us? What about us? You’ll be there. Don’t worry.

Well, we’re going to be different. You will be different, but it’ll be a good different in that you will be impervious to death because the perishable has to take on imperishable, and that takes place at the *harpazō*, the catching up of the church into the air.

Or if you died, you get a resurrected body. When you get your software and hardware rejoined, when we meet Christ in the air, your body catches up with you, and now you come back.

You’ve got people populating the millennial kingdom, and God sets up his new arrangement of things.

What will we do?

Are you still in Revelation 20? Is that where I left you? Some of you didn’t even turn to Revelation 20 because I never even read that.

But you see the incarceration of Satan, verses 1 through 3 there. And then he’s going to be released—that’s an “ugh,” wish that weren’t true—but you got people being born in the millennial kingdom that need that time of testing. He’ll be released for a little while at the end.

But look here at verse number 4: “Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. And I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for how long?” A thousand years.

Is that us? Well, according to 1 Corinthians chapter 6, it’s us. Do you remember? And it’s a whole different context. But why should you not be going to small claims court with me? Why should we not be, you know, sitting here going before non-Christians to settle our disputes? Well, because the Bible says that when it comes to our lives, don’t we realize we will judge the world? We’re going to be in authority over the world. We’ll judge angels, bizarrely enough.

So us now in the church age, with a resurrected body, when we’re on that earth—that thousand-year period of peace with Satan incarcerated—I’m different than the rest of the people on the planet. But in that difference, I will be granted authority and I will reign with Christ.



Everyone's going to have the same job? No, not at all. That's why I threw up here Luke 19, because Jesus always says it's all based on your faithfulness. He says things like this in that whole discussion: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Because you've been faithful in a little, I shall give you authority." And the first guy, he says, you're going to get ten cities. Go, you be the leader of ten cities. And you've been pretty faithful. You go take charge over five cities.

Remember that whole discussion? Certainly fits the picture here of reigning with Christ. We're going to rule over people. Yeah, they won't have resurrected bodies, but they're living for a long time. Funerals for the hundred-year-old, we're all going to be, wow, how pitiful is that? He didn't even live to be 700 like everybody else. It's going to be a different reality, but you're going to be a leader.

To what extent? To the extent that you're faithful and storing up for yourselves treasure in heaven.

Then we're going to have a final judgment of the lost. Let's speed through these because they're not pleasant. Hopefully you won't have to worry about it.

But according to Revelation chapter 20 verse 11, if you're still in Revelation 20, it says, "I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it, and from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done."

This is another judgment, and it comes at the end of the thousand years. The church has already been judged a thousand and seven years before this, at least. But in this case, even the non-Christians will submit and bow to Christ. They will be there to take what is justly their due in eternity.

No one will be shaking their fist at God. They won't be running away. Though earth and sky will flee away, lost people in resurrected bodies will now be before Christ and before the throne, and they will be judged, because all judgment has been given to the Son.

And according to Philippians 2, if you ever wondered where does that fit when it says, remember this passage: God highly exalted and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and we often skip this phrase—in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, right?

Those that haven't yet even, you know, just been one way or the other—those that are, you know, in heaven and it's a done deal for them—and those under the earth, that's the way it's often spoken poetically of those that are lost—they're all going to bow before Him.

And here's the example: the great white throne of the non-Christians in submission to receive what is their due for their deeds.

And then what does he do? Well, he exacts perfect justice on their lives. Your grandmother who lived a fairly, you know, acceptable life by sinful people's standards is going to be a little bit different



experience—I'd say a lot different experience—than the guy who was a notorious sinner by sinful human standards.

He will exact justice, which is what the passage goes on to say. And again, it says it again—we've already read it in verse number 12—but in 13, it says He's going to judge each of them according to what they have done.

And this is all for people whose names weren't found written in the book of life.

I put Romans 2:5 because just to remind you the variation of judgment for the lost. Verse 5 says, "Because of your impenitent hard hearts, you're storing up wrath for yourself for the day of God's wrath." That means that, you know, your neighbor's tank is this high, and that neighbor's tank is this high, and this neighbor's tank's only here, and that guy down the street—wow—he's got a whole, you know, truckload of wrath stored up for him.

It's all different, because God is just, and God will exact perfect justice. No one will be shaking their fist at God at that point, I assure you. They will accept what is their due for their deeds, and they'll see it as just from the clarity of facing the judge of the universe.

Then—good news—Christ will reign on the new earth.

We've done the thousand years. It's over. We've got a judgment where Christ is going to judge the lost. So He judges us, evaluates us. He comes back in retribution on the last generation. He judges the lost from all time.

Now He's going to set up something where we're not going to talk about sin anymore because it's all going to be removed. As a matter of fact, we're back to paradise, to use the word that is often used—and it's a word used at the beginning in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 and even chapter 3—but I want to call it into view here because we have the same kind of arrangement on a real earth, tangible, physical, it's real, touchable planet.

Only this time it's all remade—remade to where sin is not an issue, where everyone there has already been through their life of, if you want to call it this, the testing or the calling or the election of their lives to be in one place or the other.

Revelation chapter 21 verses 1 through 8—we won't take time to read it all. You know the passage. But all the bad is removed—mourning, pain, crying, former things passed away. He says, "It's done. I'm the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end." He's going to take joy in giving to us water from the spring of life.

Everything bad is gone. The faithless, the detestable, the murderers, the sexually immoral, idolaters, liars—all of them gone. And we will be sealed in righteousness.

Paradise is remade, and Christ—here's the important part—is eternally honored.



Let's look at this one—last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22—and with this we'll close. Twelve weeks of study of Christ. This is where it all ends, right here. It ends by Christ being the focal point of eternity.

Revelation 22:1–5:

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and from the Lamb.” You remember something happened. There's a makeshift picture of this on the old earth on the day of Christ's return when His feet hit the Mount of Olives. But that's just a prototype. Because now we get the permanent one.

We've already had the new world, the new heavens. We've got the new city coming down out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband. Now through the middle of the street in this eternal state, here it comes.

“Also on the other side of the river, the tree of life,” does that sound familiar? “With its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” No matter what happens, we're in good shape there.

“No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God”—underline these next—“and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. And they shall see his face.” God doesn't have a face, right? But the Lamb does. “And his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. And no need for the lamp or the sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”

Verse 3: the throne of God and of the Lamb are there. We're going to serve him. We're going to worship him. He'll be the center of our attention.

Ten trillion years from now—mark my words on that one—ten trillion years from now Christ will be the center of our attention. It isn't some weird church service. We're going to live our lives. We're going to have our jobs. We're going to do our things. We're going to be nations there and groups and different cultures and all kinds of things going on on the new earth.

But we're going to be talking about Christ a lot. We'll be thinking about Christ a lot. We'll be focusing on Christ a lot. Christ will be the center of it all.

Book of the week. I debated whether to do this, but I think it's such a Christ-honoring set of commentaries, I think it's worth it. It's a two-volume set. Dr. Thomas wrote—it's good, it's worth having. If you don't have it in your library, if you want to kind of see Christ in all these different stages.

It was originally done by Moody Press, but I think it's now out by Wycliffe. Picked it up. It's just called *An Exegetical Commentary* by Dr. Thomas, Robert Thomas. Rev 1 through 7 is volume 1 and Rev 8 through 22 is volume 2. But that's a good set worth having. Or you can buy it on Logos because they have it on Logos. And then you can search it electronically.



All right. We did it with two minutes to spare. Let's pray.

God, we thank you very much for setting our focus on Christ for the last 12 weeks. I know it's been more than that many weeks, but 12 sessions here together. It's been great for us to think about Christ from his mysterious pre-incarnate state and thinking about the burning bush and the angel of the Lord and Christ being manifested in various ways in the Old Testament. Then taking on flesh, becoming one of us—as we'll talk about this Sunday, this Saturday night at our services—taking on our likeness so that He might save us. Gather for Himself a kingdom.

And then, God, all the way to the eternal state where He will be the focus. The throne will be here on the planet. We won't have politicians. There'll be no Senate, no Congress, no fights, no elections. We'll be looking just for the King of Kings to solve the issues and set the agenda. We'll worship Him. It'll be perfect.

So we look forward to that, God, and for all those that want to mock it, we just know it's an undeniable reality because you proved that you are who you said you are by dying and rising again. That undisputed historical fact has been a hard one to get around—that you have the authority. All authority, as you said at your resurrection to your disciples, has been given to you in heaven and on earth. So we're supposed to go and make disciples of all the nations.

Help us, God, to be bold about that. With the time remaining, we don't know how many days we have left. We don't know if we have just hours left. But we know you don't have to walk down the hall. All you have to do is open the door. You're standing at the door. At any moment, in any second, it could be over for us. We could meet you in the air. Our bodies would be changed. We'd have weird feelings in our new bodies. We'd be looking at you. It would be a bizarre reality, but then we'd be in a place where you'd start to dish out authority and riches, and on the new earth one day, property, responsibilities, titles, and you'll set us up for a life of serving you in a perfect place.

We look forward to that.

Thanks for our study, God. May it be something that doesn't just occupy our fall of Thursdays, but may it really generate a whole series of thoughts and implications and applications in our lives as we think about the center of all of Scripture, the story of Christ and his coming kingdom.

Thanks for the study. Thanks for this group, God. I know they sacrificed to be here. Just bless them. Enrich their knowledge of your Son.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.