

The Creed
Week 7: 4/18 – 24, 2010

“From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead...”

Sunday

Read: Acts 1: 7-11

Observations and Questions

- This passage contains both the ascension of Jesus and a promise of his return. Who was He talking to at the time this was taking place? What charge did He give to the disciples prior to his return to heaven? Who were the “men in white” that addressed the disciples?

Key Concept:

- Jesus’ eventual return is assured. The timing of His return is only known to God.

Questions to Ponder:

- Why do you think that Jesus would not reveal the timetable for His return to our world? What would happen if people knew for certain the time of His return? If you know what time your supervisor is going to return to your work area, does it affect how you work when he/she is absent? Why or why not?

Pray

- Pray for an expectant heart for the return of our Lord, as well as a passion to be faithful in all you do until His second coming.

Monday

Read: 1 Corinthians. 15:51-52; I Thessalonians. 4:16-17

Observations and Questions

- What is being described in these passages? Does it appear to happen suddenly? Do you think people will be surprised when this occurs? Will there be any advance warning (see Matthew 24:44)?

Key Concept:

- When Jesus returns, he will raise the dead in new, imperishable bodies, followed by calling the living to Him in the heavens.

Questions to Ponder:

- What do you think of these passages, referring to the “second coming”? Do you think this might happen in your lifetime? Does the possibility of the return of Christ while you are alive cause you to reflect on anything about how you are presently living or the priorities that you have? Are you looking forward to Jesus’ second coming?

Pray

- This week we are considering the future coming of our Lord. If this prospect gives you anxiety, lift it to God and pray that He would take your uneasy feelings and replace them with His peace. Ask Him why you are feeling anxious. If you have not yet trusted Jesus as your Savior, now may be a good time to do so.

Tuesday

Read: 2 Peter 3: 1-10

Observations and Questions

- Why has Peter written this letter? What two things is Peter trying to combine to help the people understand what is to come? What are some characteristics of the “last days”? The first destruction of the earth was done by water. What will the second one consist of? Why is the Lord delaying His return?

Key Concept:

- Christ’s apparent delay in coming is so that as many people as possible will have repented of their sin and become part of God’s family.

Questions to Ponder:

- What aspects of Peter’s description of the “last days” do you believe are in evidence today? What do you make of the scenario described by Peter of what is to come? What are the dangers of trying to forecast when this will happen? Are you glad that God is being patient (vs. 9)?

Pray

- Take advantage of God’s patience by spending time in prayer today for those whom you know are unsaved (see John 14:6). Pray that they would come to the realization of their need for a Savior...and that they would trust Christ. Ask that God would place Christians in their path that will have an influence on them, and to put them in circumstances that will cause them to reevaluate their understanding of Jesus.

Wednesday

Read: John 5: 22-23; Acts 10:39 – 43

Observations and Questions

- In both of these readings, who is mentioned as being the ultimate judge of mankind? What reason does John give for this assignment? In the Acts passage, what does Peter say that Jesus command of the disciples? What does Peter say about the prophets in the Old Testament?

Key Concept:

- Jesus Christ will be the judge of all people at the end of the age.

Questions to Ponder:

- What makes a “good” judge? Think of the people you know (if any) who serve as a judge in some capacity. Are they the right people to serve in this way? What difference does a person’s character make in his/her ability to be a good judge? Knowing what you know about Jesus, how do you feel about Him being your judge when that day comes?

Pray

- Ask God to search your heart and reveal to your conscious mind anything in you that needs to be confessed and repented of. Ask God to give you the desire and the courage to come before Him for this time of confession (see 1 John 1:9). Pray that He will guide you to talk with any individuals whom you have sinned against in any fashion and to ask forgiveness from them for these things (see James 1:16 & Matthew 5: 23-24).

Thursday

Read: Matthew 10:26; Matthew 12: 33-37

Observations and Questions

- Who is speaking in these passages? What will happen at the time of judgment from what you can see in these passages?

Key Concept:

- At the judgment, everyone will be held to account for his or her words and deeds.

Questions to Ponder:

- What do you think about being held accountable for your own words and deeds? Are there things that you have done in the past that you believed to be secret? How do you feel about what these Scriptures say as it relates to those hidden things in your life? Is there anything you need to do to be made right with God or a person for those hidden things?

Pray

- Praise Jesus for His perfection as our future judge...judging in righteousness and with fairness...yet providing us the opportunity while we are alive to be forgiven for our sin before that time of judgment. Thank Him for what He endured on the cross as He has taken our sin upon Himself. Worship Him as your Savior, and serve Him as your Lord.

Friday

Read: Matthew 25: 31-46

Observations and Questions

- What is taking place in this passage? What opportunities do we have to help “the least of these” that Jesus talks about? What is the relationship between serving people and serving Jesus? Are there consequences for our actions and/or inactions regarding helping others?

Key Concept:

- Our faith is borne out by our actions. A heart of service to others who are in need exhibits true faith in Christ.

Questions to Ponder:

- If we are saved by grace, not by works (Ephesians 2: 8-9), what do you think about this scene of judgment (see also James 2: 14-25). Is your faith in Jesus Christ in evidence by how you live? In what ways? How are you using your time/talent/treasure to live out the command of Jesus to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-40)?

Pray

- If you sense that Jesus would desire you to become more actively involved in living out your faith, bring this before Him in prayer. Ask Him to reveal how He has created you to play an important role in His kingdom plan. Look for opportunities to jump in and serve in ways that take advantage of your natural abilities and spiritual gifts.

Saturday

Read: Matthew 6: 19-21; 16: 26-27; 1 Corinthians 3: 10-14

Observations and Questions

- What are all three of these passages talking about? What happens when we focus our attention on “treasures on earth”? What is the value of material goods while we are alive when looked at from an eternal perspective? What is the difference between “being saved” and the rewards that will be given us in heaven?

Key Concept:

- Aside from our salvation, part of our judgment will be the rewarding in heaven for the things we have done while living on earth.

Questions to Ponder:

- Are you good at delaying gratification...in other words waiting for the things you want in order for it to be a better experience (i.e. pay for something when you have the cash to buy it instead of increasing your debt)? How can you apply the principle to the idea of storing up treasure in heaven vs. on earth? Based on how you have lived your life, are you anticipating a good reward in heaven?

Pray

- Thank God in your prayer time for the many blessings that He has provided (health, job, family, friends, etc.). Ask Him how you can be a blessing in His hands to others in some way. Lift up the passages you have read today in prayer and ask God to direct you to opportunities to store up treasure in heaven as you share Christ’s love with others in practical ways here on earth.