

Christ the King Sunday

November 24, 2024



PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

[Jesus] did none of these things for himself... Afterward he rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death, and finally ascended into heaven and assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father. The devil and all his powers must be subject to him and lie beneath his feet until finally, at the Last Day, he will completely divide and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc.

– Martin Luther –

Isaiah 51:4–6

God sent his suffering servant into the world to bring salvation. Through the prophet Isaiah we hear the nature of what is to come through this one — a justice like no other will be set in place for God’s people. The new King’s justice will be like a light in the darkness, guiding the way toward salvation. Hope will abound amongst God’s children as the heavens vanish and the earth passes away. The Lord’s salvation will be forever; nothing can destroy God’s plan for his people’s eternal life.

- How did Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfill God’s eternal plan for salvation? How does Jesus make things “right” and “just” in the face of all that is not?
- What is God asking of us in these verses? How do we actually do that in our daily lives?

Psalms 93

It is difficult for our finite human minds to think of the everlasting nature of God’s being. For us who live a lifespan of around 85 years or so, we have a tough time thinking of time before and after our own existence.

- What do you think of when you imagine “eternal life.” Is it merely an immeasurably long time, or something more?

In this enthronement psalm, the psalmist sings of God’s reign. He is mightier than the raging waters; his existence is everlasting. The Hebrew word for God’s unlimited existence is *ol-am*. It portrays a reality that is beyond time, while at the same time is future directing. To say that God is “everlasting” is to focus on his divine goodness that will continue to be manifest for all the years to come.

- Children often ask, “Who created God?” Why is it important to know that God is unique, unlike anything else?
- How is the eternal and everlasting nature of God a sign of his continued devotion to the created order?
- In what ways do we rely on God’s mercy and kindness to extend far into our personal futures, as well as the future of all that exists?

Revelation 1:4b–8

In Greek, the first word of this book is *apocalipsis* from which we get our word “Apocalypse.” But the word actually is more clearly and simply expressed as “Revelation” — that is, something revealed (literally “unveiled”).

- What do you think of when you hear the word “apocalypse”? What do you think of when you hear the word “unveiled”?

- Why might it be important to know that the meaning of the word here (and the title of this book) is more like “unveiled” than “apocalypse”?

John introduced his letter as a message from Jesus himself. We find here a new title for Jesus, given by God himself. “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God” (v. 8).

- What does the designation of the Alpha and the Omega convey to you? In what sense does this reflect the Old Testament title for God as the “Ancient of Days”? How does this name for God signify his eternal nature?
- When applied to Jesus, the Son of God, how does this title reflect our theology of the Holy Trinity?

Jesus is also referred to in verse 5 as the “ruler of kings on earth” — or as we often call him, “The King of kings.”

- In what ways are all earthly rulers under the dominion of God? What if they don’t understand that? Do they have to comprehend it for it to be so?

Mark 13:24–37

Jesus taught his disciples about the end of the ages using the metaphor of a fig tree. It’s easy to see when a tree is about to bear fruit. All of the signs are there: first a bud, then a leaf, then a full tree. This, Jesus said, is a sign that summer is near.

So what are the signs of the return of Christ? If we know how to figure out when summer or winter, spring or fall is coming, ought not we be able to tell when Christ will come again? Many in the past have thought so! Each and every prediction that has been made thus far has been wrong. Perhaps Jesus simply wants his followers to be ready, to live with intention rather than complacency.

- In what ways do believers fail to “stay awake” as we wait for Christ’s return? Do you think people have given up on his second coming?

Jesus assured the disciples that there would be no question about his coming as they would see him “coming in clouds with great power and glory.” (v.26) Instead of worrying about a precise time, Jesus instructed his followers to stay awake, be aware because it could happen at any time. But Jesus was careful to say that even though the earth and heaven will pass away, his words will never pass away. (v.31) God’s Word is trustworthy and true and will always be available to humanity for wisdom, instruction, and salvation.

- Why is it important for us to cling to the eternal Word of God as the kingdoms of the world rise and fall around us? What does “being prepared” really look like?