

Catechetical Sermon, September 15th, 2024

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 19, "The Reign of Christ"

Scripture Lesson: Ephesians 4:1-16

Lesson Aim	To understand what it means that Christ is in his exalted state as King and Head of his church and that his return is imminent to the earth from his exalted state to judge all people.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 19 and Ephesians 4:1-16 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What does it mean for Christ to have ascended to heaven? It means that he ascended before witnesses bodily. In his human nature he really went to the place of heaven.</p> <p>Question and answers 50 and 51 speak to the purpose for which Christ ascended into heaven and the benefits, which resulted. What is the purpose and benefits of his ascension? Christ ascended to heaven to demonstrate that he is the head of the church and that the Father rules all things through him. The benefits, which resulted from his ascension and headship of the church, are the giving of gifts to and the protection of, the church.</p> <p>What does it mean for Christ to be king and head of the church? It means that he has final authority in the church.</p> <p>What about the authority of ministers, elders and deacons? These officers of the church have authority but only insofar as they submit themselves to the confessions of the church that summarize the Scriptures and, ultimately, the authority of the risen Christ.</p> <p>Question and answer 51 discusses the benefits of the rule of Christ that involve the giving of gifts to and the protection of, the church. What are these benefits? The Holy Spirit works to regenerate people and to grant them a true knowledge of God, faith, repentance and sanctification. These gifts are given by the Spirit through the ministry of the Word of God. Also, through these gifts and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ defends us and keeps us safe from all spiritual enemies. Our spiritual enemies are ruled by Christ.</p> <p>What will happen at the Final Judgement? There will be a separation between the righteous (that's us in the church) and the wicked as Christ says in Matthew 25: "The Judge shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats; and shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats of the left."</p>
Bible Reading	Psalms 58-65 (Reading through the Psalms)