

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #45: WHAT IS JESUS DOING NOW?

By John Temples

Have you ever wondered what Jesus is up to these days? We all know that He is seated at the right hand of God, but is He doing anything? Does He have any part in our lives today? Or is He just passing time, waiting for the judgment?

JESUS HAS BOTH FINISHED AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Bible makes it clear that Jesus has completely accomplished His mission of atonement. In His prayer for His disciples, He said, “Father, I have glorified You on the earth; I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). And of course, one of His sayings on the cross was “It is finished.” Let us look at some things the Lord meant by “It is finished” and then look at some things that constitute His UN-finished business.

WHAT DID THE LORD MEAN BY “IT IS FINISHED”?

His suffering is finished. It is still too wonderful to think that the Lord would enter into His creation to redeem us--that He would inhabit human flesh with all its limitations. In life and in death, Jesus underwent more suffering than any of us will ever experience. Isaiah 53:4-5 describes it: “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. We esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.” Thankfully, His physical sufferings came to a definite and complete end on the cross.

His stay on earth is finished. “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12). Some false teachers say that Christ will return to earth and abide here, ruling from an earthly throne in Jerusalem--but why? Why would He leave God’s throne for an inferior

earthly one? He will never set foot on the earth again. The closest He will get to it is when He meets us in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

His mission is finished. What was His mission? “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The deed was done, the price was paid, the debt was cancelled. No more payments need to be made--Jesus paid cash!. Hebrews 10:12 tells us, “...He offered one sacrifice for sins forever.”

The Mosaic law is finished. “[He] wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). “He takes away the first [covenant] that He may establish the second” (Hebrews 10:9). The Old Testament is the inspired word of God, and is for our learning and meditation; but it is not our law today.

Satan’s power over death is finished. Hebrews 2:14--”Inasmuch as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” The head of the serpent has been bruised (Genesis 3:15). God’s promise which stood un-kept for 4,000 years has been fulfilled. Christ, not Satan, now has the keys of Hades and death (Revelation 1:18).

All of these accomplishments, and perhaps others, are included in the Lord’s affirmation “It is finished.” But all the Lord’s work is not done; He is even now continuing to be active in our lives. So let us consider:

CHRIST’S UNFINISHED BUSINESS--WHAT HE IS DOING NOW

He is administering and ruling over His kingdom now. Colossians 1:18 says, “He is the head of the body, the church.” “Is” is present tense, signifying ongoing, continual action in the Greek. The kingdom is the church (Colossians 2:14). Many people think that the kingdom is something future; however, Colossians 1:13 affirms that Christians are already in the kingdom. The old Restoration preachers taught that it takes four things to constitute a kingdom: a throne, a territory, a law, and subjects. Jesus has all these now. Note:

- Christ has a throne now, the throne of God in heaven.
- He has a territory, the whole world (Matthew 28:18) and the hearts of believers (Hebrews 6:16).
- He has a law, the New Testament, which is in force now.
- He has subjects--Christians.

1 Corinthians 15:25 tells us that Christ will reign over His kingdom until He surrenders it to the Father: "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." So without a doubt, Christ is ruling over His kingdom now.

He is blessing and sustaining us in carrying out the Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20 says, "Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." He was with the apostles when they stood up to preach. He was with the early saints when they were jailed and persecuted. He was with Stephen when he was stoned to death. He was with the church when it was scattered. And He is with us when we are trying to win souls for Him.

He continues to meet with His saints when they come together for worship. "For where two or three are gathered together, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Jesus has a perfect attendance record--He hasn't missed a church assembly or a meeting of the saints since AD 33! I also love what Matthew 18:20 does NOT say. It does not say "where two or three hundred are gathered together" or "where you are gathered together in a building costing hundreds of thousands of dollars." The Lord is proud to meet with us wherever we are, in a cave or a cathedral, in a condo or a ghetto.

He is interceding for us now. A never-ending labor of love for Jesus is bringing our requests for forgiveness to His Father's throne. Hebrews 7:25--"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them." "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate

with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous” (1 John 2:1). “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

He is providentially sustaining and blessing every local congregation of His church as it seeks to do His business. In his lonely and discouraging exile on Patmos, the apostle John was given a faith-building and awe-inspiring sight: he saw the Lord in His glorified body (Revelation 1:9-16). As part of this vision, John sees seven golden lampstands, and Jesus in the midst of them (verses 12-13). In the letter dictated by Jesus to the church at Ephesus, the lampstands appear again: “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, *who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.*” What are the lampstands, and what is the significance of the closeness of the Lord to them? Thankfully, we do not have to guess; we are told the identity of the lampstands in Revelation 1:20--“The seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven churches, and *the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*” As times grow more and more perilous for Christians, it is indeed comforting that Jesus walks continually in our midst.

He is upholding the natural creation by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). Have you ever wondered what keeps this world spinning, the stars shining, and the crops growing? “Well,” you say, “natural law does that.” Yes, but Jesus is the One who gave the laws of nature and continues to allow them to operate. Without a doubt, Jesus is Lord of the creation: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:17). “Consist” literally means “to cohere or hold together.” Christ is the great controlling and unifying force in nature.

So the Lord does indeed have some unfinished business. He is:

- Presently reigning over His kingdom, with us as His subjects.
- Assisting us in carrying out the Great Commission.
- Meeting with us in spirit when we assemble in His name.
- Interceding for us in the presence of His Father.
- Providentially protecting the congregations of His people.

- Upholding the natural creation with His loving power.

WILL JESUS HAVE ANY FUTURE TASKS OR ACTIVITIES?

The Bible names two things Jesus will accomplish in the future: *judgment* and *nourishment*.

One day, Jesus will return from heaven to raise the dead and put an end to all things physical. Then, all mankind will stand before Him as He presides over the judgment (Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15). Is it not comforting to know that the Judge will not be a stranger or one not acquainted with our case, but One who has been among us and knows our frailties?

There is one last task Jesus will undertake that will never be finished: nourishment. Speaking of the righteous in heaven, John said, “For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd [feed, KJV] them and lead them to living fountains of waters.” *Sustaining and nourishing us in heaven* is the last-named task of the Lord in the Bible. And it is one which will never end.

What are some lessons for us in all this?

For one thing, it should make us eternally grateful to know the things that He has done and continues to do on our behalf. For another thing, He is setting us an example. He is not idle, nor is He slack concerning His promises. He is busy! If He is that industrious, shouldn't we be also? Let us be more zealous about our Father's business! “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). --John Temples