

The Three Appearances of Christ

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Old Faithful is a geyser in Yellowstone National Park that was named by members of the 1870 Washburn Expedition. It was once called “Eternity’s Timepiece” because of the regularity of its eruptions. An Old Faithful eruption lasts between 1.5 to 5 minutes and reaches a height of 90-184 feet. The period of time between Old Faithful’s eruptions ranges from 35 to 120 minutes, though the average is 92 minutes. About 90 percent of eruption predictions are accurate within a window of plus or minus 10 minutes.

Everyday Old Faithful erupts and its large mass of boiling water appears and breaks through the earth’s crust so others can see a wonderful display of nature. As I think of Old Faithful erupting and faithfully appearing before the eyes of many onlookers and visitors at Yellowstone National Park, I also remember how Christ has faithfully appeared for His own children on the cross, in Heaven, and how He will someday appear in His return to catch away His Bride (the Church).

In this study from Hebrews chapter 9, we are going to take the Biblical word “appear” and discover how this Bible word relates to Christ and His revelation or appearance for His children. We are going to see this word mentioned in the same Biblical context and discover how Christ has appeared, is appearing, and will appear for His children someday.

As Old Faithful geyser appears and displays itself before many visitors every day, so we should remember how Jesus Christ has faithfully appeared for us on the cross in the past, how He is appearing in Heaven today for His Church, and how He will one day in the future appear in His return to Rapture His saints from earth. This is what this study is all about.

The three appearances of Christ are stated in Hebrews chapter four.

Hebrews 9:24 speaks of Christ’s present appearing for us in Heaven:

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Hebrews 9:26 speaks of Christ's past appearing on the cross:

"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Hebrews 9:28 reveals Christ's future appearing for us in the Rapture:

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

The three appearances of Christ on the believer's behalf are very important. They have a direct bearing upon our salvation, security, and steadfast hope for the future as Christians. These doctrinal truths should be precious to our hearts. We should find rest, comfort, and hope in Christ's appearing for us in the past on the cross to deliver us from sin's penalty, His appearing for us today in Heaven to provide us with the security of our salvation, and His appearing for us in the future to give us a perfectly sanctified and new body.

Christ's appearing for His people gives them salvation, assurance, and hope for the future.

Christ's appearing for His people is revealed in three ways.

I. Christ's past appearance on the cross as our substitute - Hebrews 9:25-28a

This is an important appearance of Christ. In looking back to Calvary, Jesus appeared on a cross in the past as our substitute (replacement) to pay the necessary debt or fine (penalty) that God required for sin. He bore the wrath of our God on our behalf and provided the basis for our forgiveness and justification before God.

Lets' break these verses down and understand what they are teaching.

a. The repetitive nature of animal death.

Hebrews 9:25-26a

"Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others (other animals); For then must he often

have suffered since the foundation (creation) of the world (kosmos – referring to planet earth): but now once in the end of the world (“end of the ages” – a reference to the climax of the ages that existed on earth prior to Messiah ruling over the planet) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Hebrews 9:28 adds:

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”



Paul is reasoning that the blood of animals was offered every year to cover the sins of the people, but Christ’s sacrifice is not a repetitive or repeated sacrifice like the animal sacrifices of old.

The Lord Jesus did not make repeated offerings on the cross to cover sins, as the Aaronic high priest had to do in the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. Furthermore, the earthly priests of Israel did not offer their own blood but the blood of sacrificial animals (Heb. 9:25) whereas Christ offered His own blood on the cross (Heb. 9:12). There is a vast difference between repeated animal sacrifices that were designed to temporarily cover and provide forgiveness for the sins of people, prior to the cross, and the sacrifice of Christ which occurred only once, providing complete and eternal forgiveness for those who express faith in Christ alone for salvation.

I believe it was Dr. Barnhouse who uses to say that the epistle of Hebrews is teaching the Hebrew people stop being Hebrews. In other words, they were to come to grips that Christ as the typical fulfillment and final sacrifice on the cross that takes away all of our sins forever. The Bible repeatedly teaches that Christ died only once to provide salvation, forgiveness, and justification for sinners.

Hebrews 7:26-27 follows the same line of reasoning:

“For such an high priest (Jesus Christ) became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily,

as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

Hebrews 10:12

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

Hebrews 10:14

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever (provided full and complete forgiveness before God) them that are sanctified."

1 Peter 3:18 also declares:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins (paid the dreadful penalty or punishment for our sins), the just (Jesus) for the unjust (sinners), that he might bring us to God (provide us with acceptance in the very throne room of God), being put to death in the flesh (the cross), but quickened by the Spirit" (the resurrection).

Christ died only once, and you can receive the spiritual benefits of salvation and eternal life through His death by expressing faith in Christ to be your Savior.

"Once for all, O sinner, receive it!
Once for all, O brother, believe it!
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall.
Christ has redeemed us once for all."

The Roman Catholic Mass teaches the doctrine of the perpetual (ongoing) offering of Christ's sacrifice which undermines the saving power and significance of Christ's one-time sacrifice that can take away the sin of believing sinners forever. The term "Mass" portrays a continual sacrifice of Christ. As defined by the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent, in the Mass, "The same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross, is present and offered in an unbloody manner."

One Catholic theologian describes it like this:

"The representation means that because Christ is really present in his humanity, in heaven and on the altar, he is capable now as he was on Good Friday of freely offering himself to the Father.

According to Catholic Theology or teaching, in the mass Christ is reoffered. He makes Himself present again with His Body and Blood. This is called transubstantiation which is the idea that during Mass, the bread and wine that is used becomes the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is central teaching of Roman Catholicism. But it is not the teaching of the Bible. Although Catholic theologians will tell you that Christ was offered only once on the cross, they teach He is also reoffered in some literal way during each Mass. You cannot have it both ways!

The Bible teaches that the sacrifice of Christ can never be repeated over and over again (millions of times) in the pagan Roman Catholic Mass. Catholic doctrine teaches that Jesus is being repeatedly crucified in the ceremony of the Mass which essentially is a reoffering of His sacrifice. According to Catholic Theology, God's satisfaction regarding sin and a person's salvation depends upon the weekly mass or reoffering of Jesus upon the cross. This conclusion denies the central teaching of the Bible and Christianity. It is a form of apostasy to say Christ's sacrifice is never finished. The cross is empty! The penalty for sin has already been paid! Jesus died once and only once to provide complete forgiveness for your sins and rescue you from damnation and hell forever.

On the cross He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The fact that Christ's work of redemption was finished means that it can never be repeated literally or mystically in any fashion to transfer grace and forgiveness into a person's life.

"It is finished, loud he cried;
Oh what love for me He died.
In my stead he bled on Calvary;
Once for all Christ rescued me."

Outside Madrid stands an ancient monastery where the kings of Spain have been buried. The architect designed an elongated arch so flat that the reigning monarch insisted it could not hold the structure above it. Against the architect's protest, the king ordered that a column be placed underneath the arch as a safety precaution. After the king died, the architect revealed that he had deliberately made the column a quarter of an inch too short, but the arch had never sagged! His work was perfect and nothing needed to be added to it.

Here is the point. Nothing needs to be added or can be added to the finished work of Christ on Calvary to sustain the weight of the world's salvation. Our Savior's cry from the cross, "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30), is a translation of a single Greek word (tetelestai) which more literally could be rendered as "Ended!" "Completed!" or "Accomplished!" or "Paid in Full!" The sin debt of the sinner who places faith in Christ is completely cancelled.

Vernon Grounds said:

“That one word tells of the greatest miracle our Lord performed, the work of redeeming a lost world. Because our redemption was perfectly finished, it is impossible for us to add even one submicroscopic work of our own to what was already done on the cross.”

Christ died on the cross once and finished the work of redemption and salvation. If we believe in Christ alone and His finished work on the cross of Calvary and in His resurrection from the dead we can be sure to enter Heaven when we die.

Many Catholics express unbelief toward the cross of Christ by rejecting the sufficiency of Christ's one-time death on the cross to take away all their sin forever. They refuse to believe that Christ's one sacrifice can give them permanent forgiveness and justification in God's presence forever. They feel that they need continual Mass ceremonies, confessions to priests, acts of penance, or prayers to saints to obtain salvation, which becomes added requirements to Christ's finished work.

I like to ask Catholics several questions. Where do you look for your salvation and forgiveness? Is your salvation in the Mass ceremony that you received today or yesterday or the one you will have down the road? How many Mass ceremonies does it take to provide salvation and justification before God? How many recreations of Christ's sacrifice on the cross does it take to remove your sins? It's no wonder that in Roman Catholicism a person cannot possess assurance of his or her salvation. This is because they are placing their hope in the recreation of Christ's death in religious ceremonies to keep taking away their sins throughout their entire lifetimes, hoping that the last Mass will cover their sins until the next Mass, which can then provide forgiveness for more of their sins.

Forgiveness to Catholics means eating and drinking something over and over again throughout one's entire lifetime but never obtaining complete and eternal forgiveness before God. It means you must repeatedly do something (eat or drink something) to receive God's grace and forgiveness through Christ. However, the Bible teaches that we can express faith in the one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ without eating or drinking and receive eternal forgiveness before God by simply trusting in the finished sacrifice Christ already made on the cross for us.

Galatians 3:26

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

This is not faith in a lifetime of Mass ceremonies that provide only temporary forgiveness for sins or faith that through ritual ceremonies God's grace will somehow be temporarily transferred into your life until your next Mass. This is not placing faith in Christ but faith in Mass, sacraments, and ceremonial forgiveness as the way to Christ.

Expressing faith in Christ's one sacrifice to remove all your sins is a one-time event. It's not a series of ongoing events that pertain to eating Christ's body and drinking His blood (Mass). Faith in Christ happens once, and you receive complete forgiveness and salvation instantly and forever. Eating Christ, confessing to priests, and praying to Mary is a barrier that keeps people from trusting in Christ ALONE to be their Savior. If a person must do all these things to obtain grace and salvation before God, then your salvation is resting on the things that you do and not in what Christ has done to save you (Eph. 2:8-9).

Faith in Christ is not faith in the Mass ceremony. It's not faith in a ceremony to transfer grace and salvation into your life. Faith alone must be placed in Christ alone once and for all and forever to save and forgive you.

Romans 10:13

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Belief or faith in Christ is likened to calling upon Christ at one point in our lifetime. It's asking Christ to save us forever at a specific time in our lives, believing that His sacrifice will grant us total forgiveness.

I want you to think about something else if you're a Catholic. You have tens of thousands, millions upon millions of sacrifices of Christ being made by priests all over the world, and your Catholic dogma teaches that it is the same Christ, the real Christ, the actual Christ (not just a spiritual Christ) but the real Christ - Body, blood, spirit and divinity. Did you ever ask yourself, "How can this be? How can Christ be literally sacrificed millions of times on Catholic altars? The fact of the matter, it can't be happening. The Bible teaches: "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26).

Jesus died only once, and His death is sufficient to save you forever! You cannot recreate His death, physically, mystically, or spiritually in any way to transfer grace and salvation into your life.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us" (CCC 1131). Catholic Church Catechism 1129 also states: "The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation ..." "In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ, the only author and liberal giver of salvation, wills to use in order to efface our sins and give us the grace of justification" (Catholic Church Catechism, par. 987).

Sacraments are viewed by Roman Catholicism and other religious denominations as the means of bringing God's grace into one's life over and over again throughout a person's entire life. They are seen as the vehicles or channels that transfer God's grace, forgiveness, and salvation into one's life. In other words, to get to Christ one needs sacraments. To experience Christ's saving work a person needs to partake and participate with sacraments.

In Catholic teaching, the sufficiency of Christ's death for one's salvation (Rom. 1:16) becomes lost in the Mass, Confession, Penance, Indulgences, the Rosary, Last Rights, Purgatory, Lent, and many other rituals. The Roman Catholic Gospel is basically this: Christ died for you, He takes away Adam's original sin, and then gradually removes all of your other sins through the administering of the Roman Catholic sacraments such as Mass, Confession, and Last Rites. And finally, after an undetermined period of time in Purgatory, you are purged of the rest of your sins.

The Bible never teaches anything like this. It teaches that Christ died on the cross to remove all our sins forever on the cross.

Ephesians 1:7

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Colossians 1:14

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.”

The Bible repeatedly talks about being redeemed forever and forgiven forever through the one sacrifice of Christ. Our salvation, forgiveness of sins, and justification before God is never viewed in Scripture as temporary installments that we receive in piecemeal throughout our entire lifetime. It views salvation and forgiveness as being full, final, finished, and forever.

- Is your faith in a ceremony or in Christ alone?
- How many ceremonies does it take to provide forgiveness of sins?
- Isn't Christ's one sacrifice enough to grant forgiveness for all your sins forever?
- Are you depending on the sacraments of Mass or baptism to save you?
- Have you ever expressed faith in Christ alone and His one-time sacrifice on the cross to save, forgive, and justify you forever?

One Catholic, who came to realize the truth that salvation, forgiveness, and justification before God was only through faith ALONE in Jesus Christ ALONE (Acts 16:31), wrote these lovely words: “It was an overwhelming realization that none of my past sins had ever been dealt with, even though I had confessed them to the priest and performed the prescribed penance! Going to confession had given me a counterfeit peace and security that my sins had been forgiven by the words of the priest plus the doing of penance. The time had come for me to make a decision. Acting on the Bible, as my sole, absolute, and final authority of faith, I received Christ as my Savior in May of 1973. I wanted to shout from the roof tops so all the world could hear what Jesus has done for them by His substitutionary atonement and shed blood. ‘And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’ (John 8:32).”

b. The reason for Christ's death.

Hebrews 9:26b goes on to say that Christ "hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

The reason for Christ suffering and dying on the cross is expressed in the words "to put away sin."

The term "sin" (singular) may refer to all sins of humanity in a collective sense appearing here under the umbrella of the word "sin." Peter and Paul often talk about the "sins" Christ was penalized for while hanging on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3; Pet. 2:24). It seems that John is likely speaking of "sin" by which he means the totality of the world's sin instead of viewing individual acts of sins committed throughout the human race. The word "sin" may also be focusing on Adamic sin (original sin) which has been inherited by all mankind (Rom. 5:12). But Adamic sin (the transgression of Adam's sin) is the root cause of all other sins which flow forth from this inherited sin.

John 1:29

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

In a universal and provisional sense, Christ's bore the sin (the totality of the world's sin) when hanging on the cross. In bearing the judgement and weight for this sin Christ could in a provisional way "take away" the sin of the world, providing the necessary sacrifice to forgive each sinner that would ever live on earth. Since Christ is said to have died for the whole "world" (John 1:20; 3:16) this means that a provisional sacrifice was given to provide acquittal or forgiveness for everyone who has ever lived.

I was handing out some Gospel literature just yesterday. There was a nice family with young children sitting on a blanket in the shade. I offered them a tract but the wife said she was a universalist which believes that in the end everyone would be forgiven of their sin and saved – even the Devil. When the Bible says Christ died for the sin of the entire world it does not mean the entire world of humanity will eventually be forgiven and saved. It means that He provided the necessary sacrifice for everyone to be saved.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon is history's most widely read preacher. Today, there is available more material written by Spurgeon than by any other Christian author, living or dead. One day the preacher was testing the acoustics in the vast Agricultural Hall, Spurgeon shouted, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." A worker high in the rafters of the building heard this and was saved as a result.

This is what the expressions "taketh away sin" and "put away sin" mean. Christ suffered and died on the cross to forgive your sin and provide you with justification and acceptance before God. Let me ask you a question: Have you ever had your sin put away? The putting away of your sin does not happen automatically or by default. You need to bypass the sacraments and place your faith alone in Jesus Christ (His saving provision on the cross) to have your sin put away forever or find forgiveness and acquittal before God.

Acts 16:31 says:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."

The Bible does not say believe on Christ through taking sacraments your entire life. This is not believing on Christ – it's believing in sacraments. You cannot believe on Christ to save and forgive you forever through taking the Mass, the Eucharist, or when being baptized. You do not take Mass to repeatedly transfer grace into your life and save you. Instead, you by simple faith in Christ take the free gift of the water of life (eternal life) which saves you from hell.

Revelation 22:17 is not referring to calling for Christ's return as some suggest but inviting sinners to receive eternal life through Christ as the end of the verse seems to suggest: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come ("express your faith in Christ"). And let him that heareth say, Come ("I will express faith in Christ"). And let him that is athirst come ("express your faith in Christ"). And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

What does coming to Christ mean? What does taking something mean? These are metaphors of what it means to place faith in Christ. They are descriptive ways of inviting a person to place faith in Christ alone to be their Savior. Faith involves a decisive action to trust in Christ to be one's Savior. John taught earlier that taking the water of life is not referring to physical but spiritual water which is compared

to an eternal well of water bubbling up and which never runs dry (John 4:14; 6:47).

Again, this is another way of saying or expressing faith alone in Christ alone for the offer of eternal life through His death and resurrection. Eternal life is pictures as a refreshing drink that satisfied us forever. So today you can believe on Christ alone to save you and transfer His grace and salvation into your life once and for all through His finished work on the cross. Grace is NOT transferred to us through a lifetime of taking sacraments but comes directly into our lives one and for all and forever when placing faith in Christ alone to be our Savior.

Beware! You don't want a sacrament-based faith in baptism and Mass but a Christ-centered faith in Christ alone. You do not get to Christ through the sacraments, you get to Christ through Christ!

John 14:6

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Jesus Himself is the only means of grace to Heaven – not the sacraments. Jesus taught that salvation was through His death and resurrection - not through any church, sacrament, or good deeds. If you place your faith in Christ alone to save you, instead of depending on the intermediacy of a church, the sacraments of baptism, Mass, or communion, then you can know that your sins are forgiven forever and that you have eternal life.

Only the final sacrifice of Christ can “put away sin” (Heb. 9:26) providing your complete acquittal before God and save you today and for eternity. Again, the putting away of sin means that Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross was the provisional sacrifice that came to provide complete and total forgiveness (acquittal) for each believer in God's presence for all their sins (past, present, and future sins). Christ died on the cross one time to wipe the slate clean before God and give us complete and eternal forgiveness forever.

c. The retribution that follows death – Hebrews 9:27

Hebrews 9:27 declares:

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

Reincarnation is excluded by this verse! When you die in your unsaved state, you are not coming back as a dog, cat, or some other person.

We will all face death but if you are unsaved, you should possess fear in dying for judgment will follow your death and for all eternity. Sarah Winchester’s husband had acquired a fortune by manufacturing and selling rifles. After he died of influenza in 1918, she moved to San Jose, California. Because of her grief and her long-time interest in spiritism, Sarah sought out a medium to contact her dead husband. The medium told her, “As long as you keep building your home, you will never face death.” Sarah believed the spiritist, so she bought an unfinished 17-room mansion and started to expand it.

The project continued until she died at the age of 85. It cost 5 million dollars at a time when workmen earned 50 cents a day. The mansion had 150 rooms, 13 bathrooms, 2,000 doors, 47 fireplaces, and 10,000 windows. And Mrs. Winchester left enough materials so that they could have continued building for another 80 years. Today that house stands as more than a tourist attraction. It is a silent witness to the dread that death holds over millions of people who are unsure about salvation and the afterlife.

One man, who was an atheist, said to me, “I Just want to die a peaceful death.” But Isaiah 57:21 says, “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Death is a horrible thing for the unsaved. This is because the moment they die with their sins unforgiven their soul ends up in hell and they will be judged by God forever! There is judgment in the afterlife for those who reject Christ. You cannot wiggle out of it. You won’t bypass it if you fail to believe on Christ in this life and receive His forgiveness.

One minute after you die, you will know that there is a hell! You can’t escape the judgment of God without Jesus Christ. There is no hope without Jesus Christ. If you reject Him as your only Savior, you will die in your sins and suffer the vengeance of a righteous God. If you are trusting in anything or anyone else to save you other than Jesus Christ, then you will wind up in hell after you die.

There are many people today who are claiming to have what they term as “out-of-body experiences.” They are said to have seen their grandmother, bright lights, and experienced many other phenomena. Some have seen their old pet dog that died! They had a euphoric experience. Sadly, and while being deceived by Satan, people are claiming that you can enjoy the other side without believing on Jesus! Many of the books written about these out-of-body experiences mention nothing about faith in Christ! Listen folks, Satan wants people to believe there is no judgment after death.

I pleaded with one man on his death bed while the medical experts were attending to him in the emergency room. I mean, the people were right there working on him, and I was there with them sharing the Gospel. At one point, he turned his head away from me rejecting the offer of eternal life. If you turn away from Jesus Christ in this life you will suffer the righteous vengeance and justice of God in hell within the next life. One minute after you die, you will know that hell is real, and you are facing God’s judgment for your sins. Far better to let Christ be your substitute and find deliverance and salvation through Christ.

I’m not teaching you pop psychology – I’m teaching you God’s theology! You can only find forgiveness for your sins and be saved from hell only through Jesus Christ. Death is certain for all! The Bible says, "It is appointed for me to die once" (Heb. 9:27). For some of us that day is closer than we think. The sensible person faces up to the fact of death and makes provision for this final episode of his earthly life. There's only one way to prepare for eternity – believing on Christ to be your Savior. Are you ready for the inevitable? Death is coming. You need to be saved and prepared for eternity.

“Here Him knocking, Hear Him pleading
For He loves you my friend.
Jesus love you my friend today.
Jesus came to earth by a humble birth.
And He died to pay man’s way.
O believe Him, O receive Him for He loves you my friend.
He died and rose that we might be.
His children for eternity.”

We finish out first major point on a positive note.

d. The rescue from death.

Hebrews 9:28

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many...”

Here is the good news! We need good news today! There is so much bad news out there! Jesus died to rescue us from spiritual death and damnation.

Christ died as the sinner’s substitute to “bear the sins of many” (many people). The “many” refer to the great masses of people within humanity who are lost and in need of salvation and who actually are saved through Christ’s sacrifice. The reference to the “many” is not to be understood as Christ dying for only a limited number of people called the elect. Rather, this means as in Isaiah 52:12; Hebrews 2:10; Mark 10:45 and Mark 14:24 that Christ’s sacrifice for the world becomes applicable to those who benefit from it through placing their faith in Christ.

The old saying is true:

“Christ death is *sufficient* to save all but *efficient* for those who believe.”

Jesus died for everyone without exception for He “tasted death for every man” (Heb. 2:9) but Christ’s death has special value for those (the “many”) who embrace Christ as Savior and actually receive forgiveness and salvation. Folks, you can be one of the “many” if you place your personal faith in Christ. Let Christ save you today!

The idea behind the word “bear” means that Jesus became a substitute (replacement) for sinners. 1 Peter 2:24 speaks of Christ when stating: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree...” In other words, Christ died on the cross taking the penalty (judgment) that sin required and provided forgiveness before God for every sinner on the face of the earth. And there were many!

Isaiah 53:12 prophetically anticipates Christ’s death:

“...and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Yes, Christ appeared on this earth to bear the sins of the lost when He suffered and died on the cross. He became the sinner's replacement and opened up the pathway to God.

The late venerable and godly Dr. Archibald Alexander of Princeton had been a preacher of Christ for sixty years and was a professor of divinity for forty years. On his deathbed he was heard to say to a friend, "All my theology is reduced to this narrow compass - Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

Friend, Christ faithfully appeared for us on the cross as our Substitute.

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

Again, I must ask. Have you believed on Christ, trusted in Christ alone to be your Savior? Have you ever placed your full confidence in Christ alone to forgive you of all your sins forever and save you from hell?

Remember that Christ did not die for good people. He died for bad people! And we are all bad.

Romans 3:10

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."

Kariel was riding home from a children's program at church with her neighbor friends. Admiring the sunset, she said to Gini, the driver, "That sunset is so beautiful it looks like heaven!" So Gini asked her, "Do you know how to get to heaven?" Kariel, who was only 5, answered confidently, "You have to have Jesus as your Savior—and I do!" Then she began to ask her friends in the van if they knew Jesus too. That same evening, Kariel's 13-year-old sister Chantel was at another church, where someone asked her if she knew Jesus as her Savior. She told the person she did. Early the next morning, fire swept through Kariel and Chantel's home, and tragically, they both died. They were in Heaven with Jesus at sunrise!

Here is the point. No one has the promise of tomorrow.

Proverbs 27:1

“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

Don't plan to believe on Christ and receive Him as your Savior at the 11th hour for you may die at 10:30. The crucial question is this: Have we admitted our need for God's forgiveness of our sin and trusted Jesus as our Savior? Our sin separates us from God and requires judgment, but Jesus gave His life in our place (Hebrews 9:27-28). Make sure you have the same confidence that Chantel and Kariel had. Then, when your time comes to die, you'll be in Heaven with Jesus at the next sunrise.

“When I shall come to the end of my way,
When I shall rest at the close of life's day,
When ‘Welcome home’ I shall hear Jesus say,
O that will be sunrise for me!”

Comedian W. C. Fields (1880-1946) could make audiences roar with laughter, yet he himself was chronically unhappy. Religion apparently played no part in his life. But it's been said that as he faced the possibility of dying, he started to devote time to reading the Bible. When he was asked about his new interest in Scripture, Fields, always the comedian, replied, "I'm looking for loopholes, my friend. Looking for loopholes."

Friend, there are no loopholes in the Bible and God's plan of salvation. When we admit that we are sinners (Rom. 3:23) and believe on Christ to be our personal Savior (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13), we are brought into a right relationship with God and will enter Heaven when we die (2 Corinthians 5: 8, 18-19).

There are no loopholes in the Bible and Gospel plan of salvation. Are you prepared to meet God?

“How can you go another day?
Respond to Christ, do not delay;
Just trust in Him, His Word believe
Eternal life you will receive.”

II. Christ's present appearance in Heaven as our intercessor – Hebrews 9:24

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Christ's present appearing in Heaven is based upon His past appearing on the cross. He could not appear in Heaven on the believer's behalf if He had not first appeared on the cross bearing the penalty for the sins of the world. The penalty had to be paid before Christ could rise from the dead and become our great High Priest in Heaven – declaring the sufficiency of His sacrifice before the Father as being enough to save and justify His people forever.



If you doubt your salvation today, it's because you have never understood about the present appearing of Jesus Christ in Heaven for you. You have not fully understood about the High Priestly work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. The Intercessory work of Christ in Heaven provides us with the security we need as we face eternity.

Christ not only died on the cross to save you forever by providing the necessary sacrifice to take away all of your sins (supplying forgiveness for all of your sins – past, present, and future), He also lives today in Heaven for us reassuring us that His redemptive or saving work is complete and represents us as totally acquitted in God's presence forever.

Romans 5:10 also speaks of the ministry of Christ in Heaven on our behalf: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son (*the cross where the penalty for our sin was paid*), much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (*the resurrection/ascension of Christ as our heavenly High Priest and where the confirmation and continuation of our salvation and justification is maintained before God*).

Christ's resurrection and High priestly work in Heaven means that He stands before the throne of God showing His wounded hands before the Father and says, "I paid the price of judgment and hell for their sins; therefore, those who have believed on Me are forgiven forever. They have a standing of acceptance before the Father forever."

Hebrews 9:12 announces this regarding Christ's ministry in Heaven:

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood (which Christ shed on the cross) he entered in once into the holy place (God's presence), having obtained (past tense) eternal redemption for us" (*setting us free by releasing us from all our sins forever and appeasing God's wrath or anger against us when dying on the cross*).

In other words, in Christ's finished work on the cross He obtained our eternal redemption (release from all our sins). Today, Christ's presence in Heaven reassures us that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father, and we are eternally redeemed and secure in our salvation.

Pope John Paul II disagrees with the Bible on this matter of eternal redemption and does not believe Christ's work is actually finished. He writes, "The Church (Catholic Church) is the instrument of man's salvation. It both contains and continually draws upon the mystery of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ constantly enters into God's sanctuary thus obtaining eternal redemption."

You will note that this is not what the Bible teaches regarding the priestly ministry of Christ. Jesus Christ is not constantly entering God's heavenly sanctuary to keep obtaining eternal redemption for us. The word "entered" in Hebrews 9:12 is in the aorist tense which means a completed act with ongoing results. It is not a present tense action as the pope says. The pope says "constantly" but the Bible says "once" (once for all!) Christ paid the fine for our judgment (Heb. 9:12). The pope also changes "having obtained eternal redemption" (a past event) so that it reads "thus obtaining eternal redemption" which is an attempt to teach the perpetual or ongoing sacrifice of Christ in the Mass.

Jesus Christ is not obtaining redemption for us today; He already obtained it when He died upon the cross! Our eternal redemption or release from sin's penalty

occurred through the one-time sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. And today He is in Heaven declaring the sufficiency and finality of that sacrifice to save our souls forever. Blessed noonday truth!

“Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Now we are free, there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
"Come unto Me," O hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all.

Once for all, O sinner, receive it,
Once for all, O friend, now believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.”

Let's consider the teaching of Christ's present appearing in Heaven.

The truth is explained in two ways.

a. The atoning sacrifices – Heb. 9:21-23a

Years ago, when I was younger, I listened to records. The old records sometimes would get stuck and keep repeating the same thing over and over again. “His eye is on the sparrow, His eye is on the sparrow, His eye is on the sparrow,” etc. In other words, they would just keep repeating unless you bump the needle and move the song along. As I think of the repetition of a stuck record, I'm reminded of the repeated animals sacrifices that were given prior to the cross. The Old Testament era was in one sense stuck on the repeated sacrifices of animals. Again and again, over and over again animals sacrifices were made on behalf of the people.

The many repeated sacrifices of the Old Testament were designed to point us to the final sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

These sacrifices are explained in two ways.

1. They provided temporary cleansing – Heb. 9:21-22

Atoning sacrifices were for temporary cleansing, but they could not produce full and final cleansing of a person's sins.

The writer of Hebrews is referring to the many repeated animal sacrifices that prefigured Christ's sacrifice. They provided a temporary and ceremonial purging or cleansing in relationship to sin.

Hebrews 9:21-22a

“Moreover he (Moses) sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission.”

The expression “all things” refers to the extensive nature of the blood that was used. Blood was used at the beginning of the ministry of the Old Covenant, but it was used in the regular administration of the tabernacle service. Under the Old Covenant both people and objects were purified by blood (Num. 31:21–24). This was, of course, ceremonial purification that portrayed how the persons and objects were now officially consecrated and acceptable to God.

We can be sure of one thing; nothing could be acceptable before God without the shedding of blood! Hebrews 9:22 declares that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (forgiveness).

This is God's standard! It may not be man's standard – but it is God's standard for salvation. It does not matter what the standards and traditions of men are. The animal was sacrificed by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement upon the altar and it provided forgiveness for the people. It was a temporary forgiveness and covering of one's sins until the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, came to take away the people's sins forever.

Hebrews 10:1

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

The writer of Hebrews is very clear about this. Animal sacrifice cannot save anyone – only Christ can. Therefore, Christ had to appear on this earthly scene to save and put away the sins of all the Old Testament saints since they were only temporarily and ceremonially cleansed of their sins by animal blood. It would take Christ's shed blood on the cross to actually take away their sins!

Romans 3:25-26

“Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past (Old Testament saints), through the forbearance of God (holding back and delaying His judgment until Christ came to die on the cross); To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness (judicial righteousness before God's throne): that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

During a recent vacation in Florida I was putting many purchases on the credit card. After about two weeks, I said to my wife, “Honey, I think it's time to go home!” We use a credit card to purchase things in advance. This is the way Old Testament believers were saved. They were in one sense saved in advance of the cross of Christ by a credit card – God's credit card. And the value of God's credit card was based upon the future sacrifice of Christ who would one day take away their sins and provide actual forgiveness, redemption, and justification based upon His suffering and death on the cross.

In one sense, the faith of each Old Testament saint was credited to God's card which awaited future payment when Jesus would actually die on the cross. To state is even more succinctly, the believers living during the Old Testament era (before Christ's died on the cross) were saved on credit in anticipation of the coming of Christ's death. And when Christ died on the cross the credit card bill came due and Jesus at that point paid it all – He paid the full penalty for everyone's sins! There on the cross He endured the wrath of God for the sins of everyone who lived in the past, present, and future.

People still ask why? Why blood? Why must blood be shed and life laid down?

- Blood was demanded by the holiness of God!

Habakkuk 1:13 says, “*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*”

- Blood was demanded by the government of God.

Psalm 97:2, “... righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.

God is a righteous God and cannot accept sin and sinners in His presence. If your sins are not taken away (forgiven) through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you cannot stand in the presence of God for a split second!! Psalm 1:5 declares: “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” Why? It’s because “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” God said it!

2. They were patterned after the heavenly – 23a

The Bible goes on to say that it was “necessary” which means that the shedding of blood was necessary to provide atonement for the people living during the Old Testament! The same is true today. God demands the shedding of blood or else you must go to hell! You can’t get any clearer than this! Blood, the sacrificial nature of Christ’s shed blood on the cross makes the difference! Christ’s shed blood is the difference between Heaven and Hell – hope and hopelessness – God’s grace and wrath.

Colossians 1:20

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

However, we discover that the earthly tabernacle only provided the “patterns” (representations or copies – note Hebrew 8:5) of the heavenly counterpart or reality of what they pointed to which is termed as “things in the heavens” (a reference to Christ and His present work as our High priest). When using the word “patterns” (representations or copies) the writer is talking about the earthly tabernacle with all of its articles of furniture, vessels, and rituals that involved a ceremonial purification through the use of blood. The earthly patterns were a

type of the heavenly reality of Christ and His High Priestly ministry on behalf of His saints.

Many of us use a copy machine. I need to make things bigger today so I can see them! What we do is take the original and place it on the machine and it runs off a copy of the original document. Well, the tabernacle system with all its furniture and sacrifices, priests, and ceremonially cleansing was but a faint copy or replica of the originals in Heaven (Christ and His saving and High Priestly ministry). The earthly things actually portrayed in picture form what Christ was going to do someday in Heaven for His saints.

3. They produced ceremonial forgiveness – 23b-c

- There is earthly cleansing or consecration to God – 23b

The concept of cleansing speaks here of consecration to God's purposes.

Hebrews 9:23

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens (the patterns of the heavenly counterpart like the tabernacle with all of its furniture, vessels, priests, and rituals were created after a heavenly blueprint) should be purified (this means the objects of the tabernacle were ceremonially cleansed and consecrated to God) with these" (the Old Testament animal blood sacrifices).

God demanded blood for the earthly furniture of the Tabernacle to be dedicated and consecrated to God. A comparison is now made between the earthly and heavenly ministry of Christ at it pertains to consecration.

- There is a heavenly cleansing or consecration to God – 23c

The verse goes on to say "but the heavenly things themselves which is a reference to the new arrangement of Christ's work as High Priest and the believer's access and acceptance before God (Heb. 10:20). What is the writer of Hebrews teaching here? As a result of Christ's ascension into Heaven, Heaven was in a ceremonial way (not a literal way) cleansed or consecrated to the new ministry and heavenly work of Jesus Christ. In other words, when Christ entered Heaven, it was

comparable to a ceremonial consecration or setting apart of God's new work of the High Priestly ministry of Christ.

So what are the "things in the heavens" and "the heavenly things?" (23) The "heavenly things" in a GENERAL way point to Christ's work as our High Priest (the One who lives for us in God's presence). The "heavenly things" refer to the new priestly arrangement that involves Christ's living in Heaven as our Advocate and High Priest.

In a more SPECIFIC way, the "heavenly things" refer to the believer's way to approach, obtain access, and have spiritual fellowship with God in Heaven through Jesus Christ, who is our acting High Priest. These are the heavenly things that bring us into God's favor and acceptance. The "heavenly things" are NOT necessarily referring to any physical objects such as the heavenly Tabernacle, angels, or people as so many conclude. They are referring to spiritual realities such as the believer's way, access, fellowship, and acceptance into the very throne room of God through Christ's priestly work! The "heavenly things" refer to spiritual realities of what Christ is doing for us today in Heaven. And the reality is this: I need Jesus! I need Christ's High Priestly ministry, working on my behalf, so I can be accepted in the presence of God Almighty.

Something very wonderful is happening in Heaven today! Christ as our High Priest has given every believing sinner direct access to God, and we have been declared forever forgiven and accepted (justified) in the site of an absolutely holy and righteous God. This is because Jesus Christ is in Heaven declaring before the Father the efficacy (value) and importance of His sacrifice on our behalf.

Of course, Heaven itself did not need to be cleansed of literal defilement? Never! Heaven itself is not spiritually defiled! This is because no sin can defile the great city of God! Rev. 21:27 declares: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

We often think of cleansing in relationship to something that is dirty. My wife and I were painting the bathroom together a few years back. It was very interesting. Don't worry, we already had our marriage counseling after working together for two days in the bathroom! At one point, I did get some paint in my eye! Anyway,

we were working hard. I was painting the ceiling and after I was done, I had more paint on my clothing than on the ceiling. My clothing became soiled with paint and needed to be cleaned.

Well, the purification of Heaven is not referring to spiritual cleansing from the actual defilement of sin or spiritual filth but to a ceremonial cleansing or new consecration process whereby the believing sinner, through Christ's death and High Priestly work, can now be fully accepted in God's presence forever. When Christ died, rose again, and went back to Heaven the Bible teaches that Heaven itself was in a ceremonial way officially cleansed, or we might say, that it became newly consecrated to God's eternal plan and purpose of Christ's High Priestly ministry on behalf of His Church.

Think of it this way. As a result of Christ's death on the cross and His High priestly work, Heaven would become a place where sinners can now be accepted and justified in God's presence, through Christ's shed blood and His priestly ministry occurring in the presence of God for us. In one sense, Heaven experienced an official consecration process that was the result of Christ's death, resurrection, and High priestly ministry.

Expositors Greek Commentary seems to have the best explanation of this heavenly cleansing: "And so our heavenly relations with God, and all wherewith we seek to approach Him, need cleansing. In themselves things heavenly need no cleansing, but as entered upon by sinful men they need it. Our eternal relations with God require purification."

In other words, it's not the objects of heaven that need cleansing but the way of approach to God which came to pass when Jesus died, rose again, and went back to Heaven to be our intercessor. This is what the writer meant when in Hebrews 9:23 he speaks of "the heavenly things." In other words, "the heavenly things themselves" (the spiritual realities of the believer's access, approach, and acceptance through Christ's High Priestly work) were in some sense officially and newly consecrated to God's eternal purpose "with better sacrifices" (the sacrificial work of Christ to which all the repeated O.T sacrifice pointed).

Again, I must repeat for emphasis. The cleansing that occurred in Heaven is NOT a literal cleansing but a ceremonial cleansing just like the Old Testament tabernacle

with its vessels were ceremonially cleansed. The Old Testament tabernacle and altar needed to be CEREMONIALLY cleansed or CONSECRATED to God's sacred purpose. In a similar way, the heavenly altar was CEREMONIALLY cleansed or CONSECRATED to God's purpose which refers to "the new (freshly slain sacrifice of Christ) and living way" (the resurrected and ascend Christ as our High Priest - Heb. 10:20). This is referring to Christ's appearance in Heaven on behalf of His saints, securing their salvation forever before the Father's presence as He pleads the value of His finished sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary.

There is some important application in this teaching of Christ's High Priestly ministry. My salvation is not about what I am doing but what Christ HAS DONE for me on the cross (paying sin's penalty on my behalf) and what He IS DOING for me today in Heaven (representing me as forever pardoned, eternally forgiven, and justified in God's presence).

Here is a theological reminder. We must remember that the Old Testament saints did not have the privilege of access and acceptance into God's presence like we do today. This is because Jesus had not yet died on the cross and rose again, ascending into Heaven. Only one priest would through a ceremonial reenactment enter God's presence once a year with a blood sacrifice. But one day Jesus actually did enter Heaven when He rose again and ascended back to the Father. As a result, Heaven was in a ceremonial way cleansed and consecrated to God's official and eternal purpose which is to allow every one of His blood-washed saints to now approach God through Jesus Christ. Through Christ's sacrificial blood and priestly work believer's can now approach God and be forever accepted and fully forgiven in His holy presence.

I remember being at a Phillies game many years ago at Veteran's Stadium. They were honoring some past player who was very famous and up in years. They brought him out in some kind of fancy car and drove him around the field. Everyone was cheering and waving their hands as he passed through the field in the car. The cheers went on for a long period of time.

As I think of this day, I can only imagine what kind of day it must have been when Jesus went back to Heaven to become our Advocate and Intercessor before God. No doubt all of Heaven rang and sang with jubilation as the Son returned to Heaven as the great Victor of salvation to officially consecrate this new approach

and acceptance before God and represent all of His redeemed children in Heaven, securing their eternal salvation which was purchased upon the cross. This is how Heaven was cleansed when Jesus returned to Heaven to be our High Priest. Heaven was ceremonially cleansed and consecrated to God's eternal purpose and plan which involved Christ becoming the High Priest of His saints.

Romans 4:25

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (the proof, verification and confirmation of our justification before God).

a. The better sacrifices – 23b-24

Hebrews 9:23-24

“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Who makes better Christmas cookies? You will never get an answer from me because everybody that gives me Christmas cookies has good tasting cookies. But in my opinion, the best tasting Christmas cookies are all of them! As I think of better Christmas cookies, I'm reminded of what the Bible calls “better sacrifices.”

Two questions need to be answered at this point.

1. What are the better sacrifices? – 23b

These sacrifices refer to Christ's completed work on the cross of Calvary. The plural used for the “sacrifices” of Christ does not mean Christ re-offers Himself again as our substitute for sin and since His offering took place only once upon the cross. The whole argument of the Book of Hebrews is that Christ only offered Himself once (Heb. 10:12). Most likely the plural “sacrifices” (23) are used to parallel themselves with the previous statement about the “patterns” or copies that were connected with the earthly tabernacle and all the sacrifices that were made throughout 1500 years. There was a sea of blood in the Old Testament.

So what is this teaching? The writer is looking at Christ's sacrifice through the lens of the Old Testament sacrifices (plural) and is seeing a PICTURE of Christ's sacrifice in every one of the animal sacrifices. This is why it's seen in the plural (sacrifices). The sacrifice of Christ was represented TYPICALLY and PICTORIALY in the Old Testament sacrifices. In other words, there were many pictures of Christ's sacrifice being portrayed and the repeated PICTURES of Christ sacrifices that were representative in these animal sacrifices were better than the sacrifices themselves which were being made.

Let's set the record straight. There were many PICTURES of Christ's sacrifices in all the animal sacrifices, but all of these pictures of Christ's sacrifice came to a head in the ONE sacrifice of Christ on the cross, which was a typical fulfillment of them. So, in one sense Christ's sacrifice was repeated again and again in picture format through animal sacrifices, but the reality of Christ's sacrifice pictured in these sacrifices was far better than the animal sacrifices themselves.

A young boy said to his parents that his Sunday School teacher was talking to the children about the book of Hebrews. The parents thought that the book was a bit hard for the children's age bracket. But then the boy said, "Whenever the teacher spoke about something in Hebrews, she kept showing us pictures of Jesus!" This is exactly what the animal sacrifices did. They kept on showing repeated pictures of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

2. Why is Christ's sacrifice better? - 24

Who makes better milkshakes? I will answer this one. Chick Filet! I could really go for one of them right now. They make the best milkshakes. Why are their milkshakes better? I don't know exactly how they are better, but I can tell you how Christ's sacrifice is better than the animal sacrifices. Christ's sacrifice is better because as a result of His sacrifice on the cross He takes away our sin (Heb. 9:26). We've seen this already. But more than this, Christ then enters into Heaven itself "to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24) and maintain our salvation, justification, forgiveness, and acceptance before God as He declares the sufficiency of His sacrifice before the Father.

Christ never entered into the EARTHLY "holy places" or the inner sanctuaries of the second temple in Jerusalem which were "made with hands" (human hands).

This is a repeated emphasis in the epistle of Hebrews (Heb. 8:2; 9:11, 24). The fact that Christ did not enter into the earthly temple that was made by man reminds us that salvation has nothing to do with humanity. It has everything to do with Christ! The earthly was but a figure (literally – a parable – teaching lesson – Heb. 9:9) of the heavenly work of Christ. You see, Jesus entered into “heaven” where he is right now (at this very moment) appearing for us in the presence of God (“now to appear in the presence of God for us” – Heb. 8:24).

So what is Jesus doing in Heaven as our High Priest? One thing is certain, Jesus is NOT re-offering His sacrifice again and again in Heaven (Heb. 9:28). As we have already discovered, the writer of Hebrews dogmatically asserts that Jesus only offered Himself once upon the cross (Hebrews 10:12). Once for all Christ rescued me! Jesus is NOT in Heaven dying for us again or reoffering Himself or blood over and over in the Father’s presence. A thousand times no!! Jesus is not dying in the Father’s presence – He is living in the Father’s presence! Jesus continually lives in the Father’s presence which indicates that the one sacrifice He made upon the cross has been accepted by the Father as full payment (judgment) for your sin and mine.

Hebrews 7:25

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

That Christ “ever lives” means that His life in Heaven makes the difference regarding our salvation, eternal safety, and security. As our intercessory, and lawyer in Heaven, Jesus’ risen presence before the Father signifies that He paid the necessary sacrifice for our sin and the Father has accepted that sacrifice as sufficient payment for our sin forever.

What is Jesus doing for you and me today in Heaven? He is appearing in Heaven for us!! As the living Christ, He represents us as a lawyer would represent a client. Jesus represents us before the Father and declares that we are fully acquitted and finally pardoned in God’s presence because of the blood He shed on the cross. He is appearing in Heaven “for us” (Heb. 9:24) the Bible says. Christ is in Heaven today appearing before the Father on our behalf! There in Heaven Christ’s living presence reminds the Father of the efficacy or value of His blood sacrifice on Calvary. As a result, we are forever accepted, justified, and safe in the presence of

God. "We are saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). This means that Christ's intercessory work in Heaven proves the Father had accepted His sacrifice or payment for sin on our behalf and that we are forever justified and saved from hell.

My friend, the truth is this. Jesus Christ is alive forevermore and today He is representing me in Heaven, as being fully, forever, and finally pardoned through His blood, which grants me eternal acceptance in God's presence and gives me absolute assurance and confidence that God will always accept me!!

We see this blessed truth in Romans 8:33-34:

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Yes, Jesus right now is appearing in Heaven for us! He is there pleading the value of His one-time sacrifice on the cross which He made on our behalf. As a result, we are forever accepted in the presence of a holy God both today and forever!

To an 11-year-old boy, D. L. Moody's visit to his house seemed like a visit from God. So, when Mr. Moody mentioned that he had left his umbrella in a neighbor's home, the boy was thrilled to run over and get it for him. On his return, while playing along the way, he stumbled and broke the umbrella. Guilt and fear swept over him. Then he thought, I'll tell my dad and he can tell Mr. Moody. Rushing home, the youngster poured out his heart to his father. So his father went to Mr. Moody, but Moody then called the boy to come visit him.

Moody was speaking to the little boy and said: "When you broke my umbrella," he said, "you became afraid. Then you thought, if I tell my father, he can go between me and Mr. Moody and fix things up. Now that your father has done this, you can come to me." The boy's eyes brightened. Moody continued, "My boy, that's the way it is with all of us. We are sinners, afraid of God. But He has provided a mediator to go between us and Him--and it is Jesus."

Friend, Jesus has fixed up things for you and me!! And now we can live in the Father's presence, fully accepted and forgiven. Through His death upon the cross (the final and finished sacrifice for sin) and His appearance in Heaven for us (declaring the sufficiency of His sacrifice), we have everything fixed!

Our salvation is fixed forever! The father accepts us forever through the intercessor work of Christ (Heb. 7:25). Why? It's because our sin debt had been paid in full and the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son on our behalf. We need not fear. Jesus is for me! He is now appearing in Heaven on our behalf declaring the sufficiency of His sacrifice. And the Father says in return to each one of us today, "I accept you in my presence forever because Jesus is representing you in Heaven." Jesus is for you!

Jesus Christ faithfully appears for you in Heaven, representing you before the Father as being blood bought, blood washed (forgiven) and blood justified. If that is not good enough for you salvation, then you are spitting God in the face.

Ascension Island lies in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean between Africa and South America. It was so named because it was discovered on Ascension Day, 1501, by the Portuguese mariner Juan de Nova. It has served as an important defense from the time of Napoleon to World War II. In a similar way, the ascension of Christ into Heaven as our High Priest becomes a similar defense position for every Gospel believer. Christ's High Priestly ministry is our defense against the fear that the cross may not have been enough. It is our defense against the charge that the resurrection was not real.

Christ's intercessory ministry in Heaven is very significant doctrinally and theologically. Without the ascension of Christ, to appear in Heaven on our behalf, representing us as forgiven and justified forever, we have no hope!

"And now for me He stands Before the Father's throne.
He shows His wounded hands and names me as His own.
His grace has planned it all, 'Tis mine but to believe,
And recognize His work of love and Christ receive.
For me He died, For me He lives,
And everlasting life and light He freely gives."

Now we must move on to the final appearance of Christ mentioned in Hebrews chapter nine.

III. Christ's prophetic appearance in the air as our deliverer – Hebrews 9:28

The Rapture of God's Saints



Someday the world will hear the breaking news story that there are “Millions Missing.” The news on a worldwide scale will out of shock and amazement share that there has been some kind of supernatural disappearance of untold millions of people who have identified themselves as Christians or Christ's followers. The experts will try and analyze what has occurred. Perhaps they will sell the story that a worldwide alien

abduction has occurred. Maybe they will try and explain away the Rapture of God's saints. We don't know. There will likely be some information floating around of a Christian legend about a Rapture that would take away the Christians. Whatever the case might be, we know as God's people that Jesus is coming again (a second time) to receive us unto Himself and take us back to Heaven where we will live with Him.

Hebrews 9:28

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Three observations are given about Christ's second appearance.

- It refers to Christ's coming in the Rapture.

Most of the references in the New Testament epistles speak of the wonderful moment when Jesus will return for His Church, change their bodies, and rapture or transport them back to Heaven. This is what Paul is alluding to when using the word “appear” in relation to Christ's coming. It is referring to the event of the Rapture when God's people will be “caught up” to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13).

This is the third time the word “appear” is seen in these verses (Heb. 9:24-28) as it relates to Christ. This final appearing of Christ will be glorious and wonderful! The best is yet to come! The Bible also reveals that Jesus Christ is coming back a second time to deliver us from our present state of living on earth and give us a new glorified body.

The “second time” is juxtaposed or contrasted with Christ’s first coming to earth on the cross to save us from sin’s penalty or when He “once offered to bear the sins of many.” When He appears the second time in the air it will be to save or deliver us from our corruptible bodies that are suffering from disease, wracked with pain and old age, and which have the sentence of death upon them.

The expression, “unto them that look for him” means that we are to be eagerly waiting and longing for His return. Jesus is coming again!

“Marvelous message we bring,
Glorious carol we sing,
Wonderful word of the King,
Jesus is coming again!

Coming again, Coming again,
May be morning, may be noon,
May be evening and may be soon!
Coming again, Coming again;
O what a wonderful day it will be –
Jesus is coming again!”

Yes, Jesus is coming a “second time” to deliver us from the physical ravages of a sin-cursed body and provide for us a newly redeemed and pristine body that will live on forever with Him.

Philippians 3:20-21 gives us this same blessed hope:

“For our conversation (*living, dwelling, or citizenship*) is in heaven (*we are a colony of Heaven*); from whence also we look for the Savior (*with eagerness, expectation, longingly*), the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile body (*a body of lowliness or humiliation subject to sin, disease, age, suffering, sickness, and death*), that it may be fashioned (*transformed*) like unto his glorious body (*a glorified body, a body of splendor and magnificence like Christ’s body which is free*

from sin, a body that will never suffer and die), according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (the transformation of our body will occur by the same power Christ will use to subject the entire world under His reign and power – 1 Cor. 15:23-27).

Yes, we are to be looking for Jesus to return the “second time” (Heb. 9:28) to give us a newly redeemed body that is sinless, painless, and deathless. What a moment! What a redemption! We will be changed in the twinkling of an eye! We must keep looking up for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (James 5:8). The word for “look” in this verse means to literally thrust forward the head and neck as in anxious expectation of hearing or seeing something. We are to keep our eyes to the sky and possess a blessed hope of the any moment return of Christ to free us from the present condition of our bodies. We will not look like a carbon copy of Christ but share the moral characteristics and physical transformations that Christ went through when receiving His transformed body at His resurrection.

The second appearance of Christ is referring to His appearance in the Rapture and the time when God’s children will be taken away from planet earth and rescued from all their trials and troubles. This is the blessed hope of New Testament saints.

Titus 2:13 looks forward to this time:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Christ’s appearance the “second time” provides us with tremendous hope! The blessed or happy hope of our hearts is that Jesus could come at any moment and transform our present bodies, giving us a sinless, painless, and deathless body that will live on for eternity. This is a specific happy hope to be experienced at Christ’s return for His Bride – His Church Age saints. It would be a blessed hope for when Jesus returns His saints will experience their final redemption from sin, suffering, and be rewarded for their lifetime of living and service for Jesus Christ. They would also be delivered from the terrible seven-year Tribulation Period that would be unleashed on planet earth after Christ’s return for His saints. In every way the return of Christ for His children was a blessed or happy hope to look forward to and patiently wait for as they suffered and experienced trials.

Colossians 3:4 looks forward to Christ's appearance the second time:

"When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Here is another reference to Christ appearing the second time for His saints. When Jesus returns, He will reveal Himself to His beloved Church in all of His resplendent glory. This means Christ will return and unveil to His people His own moral excellence and perfections. When we see Jesus for the very first time, He will display to us His own moral glory in a perfect body that is eternal, sinless, and deathless. But the wonder of it all is that we will also share this glory in our newly redeemed bodies!

Our future "glory" relates to sharing Christ's moral glory and perfections when possessing our own redemptive body (Col. 3:4; 5:2; 8:18, 30; 2 Cor. 4:17; Gal. 5:5; 1 Pet. 5:10). We will be like Christ morally in that we will live in a perfect body incapable of sinning. Someday we will be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, possessing glorified bodies like Jesus Christ, which are sinless and deathless bodies, and sharing in His glory as joint heirs of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17-18). What an exciting future awaits us! The best is yet to come.

1 John 3:2 reveals the same wonderful truth:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Someday at Christ's return we are going to behold Christ in all of His glory. But the wonder of it all is that we will share Christ's glory in some measure when receiving a body of glory that is pure and sinless like Christ's body. It does not yet appear what we will be like (morally and physically) when Jesus comes to rapture and change our bodies. This is because in our present sinful, diseased, and dying bodies we do not portray what we will be in the future. Our state today is one of suffering and sinfulness as it related to our mortal bodies. There is no hint of what is coming or what is on the horizon. But one day Jesus will return and redeem our bodies, by giving us a newly transformed body that is sinless, painless, and timeless. Being like Jesus means to share His moral perfection, to receive a new body that is without sin, without pain, without disease, and which can never die.

“What a day that will be
When my Jesus I shall see
And I look upon His face
The One who saved me by His Grace
When He takes me by the hand
And leads me through the Promised Land
What a day, glorious day
That will be!”

1 Peter 5:4

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

Christ will not only give us a new body the second time He appears, but He will also reward His people (the Church). A lot of great and wonderful things are going to happen when Jesus appears the second time. Jesus could come today! Glad day!

“Jesus may come today,
Glad day! Glad day!
And I would see my Friend.
Dangers and troubles would end
If Jesus should come today.

Glad day! Glad day!
Is it the crowning day?
I'll live for today, nor anxious be,
Jesus my Lord I soon shall see;
Glad day! Glad day!
Is it the crowning day?”

After church, where she had been taught about the rapture, a little girl was quizzing her mother. “Mommy, do you believe Jesus will come back?” “Yes.” “Could He come today?” “Yes.” “In a few minutes?” “Yes, dear.” “Mommy, would you comb my hair?” The doctrine of the immanency of the Rapture, when Christ comes the second time, should motivate us to be ready for it. We should be serving the Lord and living for the coming day of reward.

Beloved, we are to be looking with great anticipation and expectancy for Christ to return and appear the second time, the time He returns to remove His Bride (Church) from the world and transport them back to their heavenly destiny. Jesus taught about this special appearance and rapture to Heaven for His disciples.

John 14:1-3

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.”

When Jesus returns for His beloved Church, we are going home!

“Why should I anxious be?
Glad day! Glad day!
Lights appear on the shore,
Storms will affright nevermore,
For He is "at hand" today.”

Dr. Horatius Bonar, as he drew the curtains at night and retired to rest, used to repeat to himself the words, as if in prayer, and certainly with expectancy, “Perhaps tonight, Lord!” In the morning, as he awoke and looked out on the dawn of a new day, he would say, looking up into the sky, “Perhaps today, Lord!” He expected the Lord to return at any moment. Bonar was in the Lord’s service for over 60 years.

Three observations are given about Christ’s second appearance.

- It has a different purpose.

The Bible says that the second appearance of Christ is “without sin” (Heb. 9:28) which means without reference to our sins and the sin question since this was settled in His first coming in relation to Christ’s death on the cross. In other words, Christ’s second appearance to His people has a different purpose that is not related to the sin question since Christ provided the necessary sacrifice for sin during His first entrance into the world.

Christ's first advent (coming) was to bear our sins away (Heb. 9:26) as our substitute upon the cross but when He comes the "second time" in the Rapture it will be "without sin." Again, this means the second appearance of Jesus Christ in the Rapture will have nothing to do with His sacrifice upon the cross and the taking away our sins. What Christ will do for His children when He returns the second time is glorify them (give them a new body). He will bring their final deliverance by changing their mortal body and giving them an immortal, sinless, and perfect body.

➤ It relates to our final salvation.

We have mentioned this already. The word "salvation" speaks of deliverance and is referencing the final aspect of our salvation or deliverance which is the believer's redemption of his body from sin, heartaches, pain, and all sadness. The Bible actually speaks of salvation in three tenses – a past (2 Tim. 1:9), present (Phil. 2:12), and future deliverance (1 Pet. 1:5). Hebrews 9:28 is a reference to our future and final deliverance when our body is transformed and delivered from sin and death. It's the time when we will receive a brand-new body. No more bifocals, trifocals, heart problems, cancer, or parting from our saved loved ones! A great day is coming!

Romans 13:11 looks ahead to this ultimate deliverance that we will experience someday: "And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed."

When Christ returns the second time, it will not be to deal with the problem of sin: He finished that work at the cross. He will come to take give His people a new body and then take His saints home to Heaven to live with Him. This will be the culmination of our salvation experience. We will receive our glorified bodies and be forever beyond the reach of sin, pain, and death.

1 Peter 1:5 also anticipates our final salvation or deliverance:

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith (*security of the believer up to the Rapture*) unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (*salvation of the believer at the Rapture*).

This again refers to salvation in the future tense. Peter is looking ahead to “the last time” which is a phrase related to the set and proper time of Christ’s return and our redemptive bodies that we will receive at this time. Peter is referencing a set and proper time or fixed and special occasion (the final episode) which relates to the exact and decisive moment of the Rapture, our final redemption, and the end of our existence on earth as we know it. In the last time and second time when Christ returns, Jesus will come and transform us into His likeness and then transport us back to Heaven to live with Him forever in the place He has prepared for us (“that where I am, *there* ye may be also” (John 14:3).

Let’s wrap up this study by looking at a wonderful Old Testament illustration that portrays the three appearances of Christ in Hebrews chapter 9. On the Day of Atonement, after the high priest had gone into the holy of holies to minister on behalf of his people, he always reappeared and showed himself to His people, confirming that his sacrifice had been accepted. The people would hear the bells ringing on his garment and they would know he was going to return to his people that he was serving, and they would once again meet with the high priest.



Exodus 28:33-35

“And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he

goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not.”

In other words, the bells kept ringing while the priest provided the necessary sacrifice and as he returned to once again reveal himself to his people. The bells on the garment never stopped ringing during the sacrifice and as the high priest

returned to his people. This way the people knew the priest was still alive, serving, and would soon return and be reunited with them.

This parallels to what we have learned in Hebrews 9:24-28. In like manner, Jesus served us when He died on the cross and took away the judgment that we deserved for our sins. And when He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven the bells were still ringing! The Father had accepted the sacrifice of His Son. And all of Heaven was consecrated to this new purpose of Jesus Christ representing His justified people in Heaven, declaring them eternally forgiven, acquitted, and justified in God's presence (Rom. 4:25).

Someday, Jesus Christ, our great and merciful High Priest, is going to return for you and me. He will return and take His people from this world and bring them back to live with Him in the great heavenly city and place He has prepared for them. The bells are still ringing and Jesus is coming again!

Coming! In the opening east
Herald brightness slowly swells;
Coming! O my glorious Priest,
Hear we not thy golden bells?"

- Are you anticipating His arrival?
- Are you living serving in light of His return?
- Are you longing for the redemption that you will receive in the coming day and are you keeping your present, temporary suffering in perspective?
- Are you keeping yourself pure in view of His imminent return?
- Are you saved?

Jesus Christ will faithfully appear the second time for His children to glorify them and take them home to Glory! Jesus is someday going to return and take us out of this world faster than a jet! In a moment, our bodies will be changed, and we will experience our final "salvation" or deliverance from sin, sadness, and sickness!

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory
To take the saints on high,
What a shouting in the skies
From the multitudes that rise,
Changed in the twinkling of an eye.”

Dr. McGee walked down the steps one day and was groaning a bit because of the aches and pains he was feeling. His wife said, “Why don’t you stop groaning?” Well, Mr. McGee answered, “It’s Scriptural to groan for the Bible says in Romans 8:23 that we “groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”

Well, there may be moaning today but at any moment Jesus could return and take all the moans and groans away! Yes indeed, He will appear the second time for His children and when He does, everything will be made right. We will forever be released from pain, suffering, and sin. You can take that to the bank!

“It could happen in a moment, In the twinkling of an eye,
It could happen in a moment, He could break the Eastern sky,
Tho our hearts will feel unworthy, yet how happy we will be
When the Savior comes from heaven, When His blessed face we see.

I am listening every moment for the mighty trumpet sound,
What a time we'll have together
When the saints shall leave the ground.
All our toiling will be over, all our sorrow and its pain,
It could happen in a moment, Jesus Christ could come again!”