

His Appearing to Save (Hebrews 9:23–28)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/16/2017)

Introduction

1. The flow of argument thus far: (1) there is an *eternal inheritance* for certain people. (2) The right and title for this inheritance is by *promise*. (3) Those designated to receive the inheritance are the *called*. (3) The obstacle standing in the way of their possession of this inheritance is their own *transgressions*. (4) The removal of the obstacle involves the establishment of a *new covenant*. (5) The efficacy of the new covenant requires a *mediator*. (6) However, the first obligation of the mediator is to *satisfy* the violations committed under the first covenant. (7) The new covenant also requires the death of its *testator*, without which there can be no inheritance. (8) Thus, the death of the testator makes the promise *sure* unto all those called to inherit its blessing.
2. One question raised by v. 23 is that while it is obvious the copies require purification, why do the heavenly things themselves also require purification?
 - a. *Purification* is used in a double sense: (1) as the *external* dedication of something to God and His service and (2) as the *internal* and spiritual cleansing of the conscience for worship “*in Spirit and in truth*.”
 - b. The significance of this is that Christ was externally dedicated and consecrated to God and His service, His body, the church, being purified internally in preparation for the eternal inheritance (v. 14).
 - c. This is what we call *sanctification*—the process that His “called” experience in preparation for the inheritance.
3. The resurrection of Christ is not specifically referenced in Hebrews, but it is clearly implied because if Christ appeared to die for the atonement of His people, He will also appear in the flesh to receive us to Himself.

I. A Divine Appointment

1. Verse 27 is often used to warn people of God’s impending judgment.
 - a. Dying is the wages of sin, and the fact that all die indicates that all are sinners.
 - b. All who sin not only die as appointed but will after death face God in judgment (Rev. 20:11–15).
2. However, notice the flow of the argument of vv. 27 and 28: “*just as . . . so Christ*.”
 - a. Just as mankind is appointed to die once, so Christ died once, “*having been offered once to bear the sins of many*.”
 - b. This death was overcome in resurrection because, as mankind is appointed to judgment, so Christ is also appointed the Judge (John 5:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1).
3. Notice also that Jesus will appear a second time not to deal with sin.
 - a. This statement must be carefully considered.
 - 1) His first appearing was not to judge the world but to save (John 3:17); so how is it that He is appointed Judge but will not deal with sin at His second appearing?
 - 2) He dealt with sin at His first appearing, and He returns a second time to save those for whom He died.
 - b. In His first appearance He bore the sins of many.

- 1) His bearing the sins of many is the reason for His death, for He died under God's judgment to expiate those sins.
- 2) Thus, those for whom He died will not face condemnation at the judgment but will receive their eternal inheritance (Matt. 25:31–34).
- 3) Those condemned at the judgment are the ones who did not believe on Him (John 3:18).

II. A Divine Intervention

1. There are four verses in our passage to speak of Christ's appearing (11, 24, 26, 28), but all are different words in the Greek.
 - a. In verse 11 Christ appeared (to make a public appearance for a purpose) as a high priest.
 - b. In verse 24 Christ appeared (to manifest or exhibit) in order to present His blood on our behalf.
 - c. In verse 26 Christ appeared (to reveal) for the purpose of revealing God's plan to put away sin by His sacrifice (Eph. 3:9).
 - d. In verse 28 Christ will appear (to allow Himself to be seen) at His second coming in order to receive His own (1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20).
2. This appearing the second time is to save His own.
 - a. Are believers not already saved? Yes and no.
 - b. There is a double sense that can be applied to this statement: (1) one evident in our verse has to do with the completion of the work of sanctification (1 John 3:2), and (2) one having to do with His rescue of His oppressed and endangered church at the end of the age (1 Thess. 5:8–10).

III. A Divine Rescue

1. The idea of Christ's appearing to save (rescue) is enforced by the phrase, "*to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.*"
 - a. The setting here is one of waiting to welcome someone or something long anticipated (Luke 8:40).
 - b. An additional aspect of this term *waiting* has to do with *timing*: certain conditions must be met before the thing expected can come (Rom. 8:19–25; 1 Pet. 3:20).
2. This phrase also presents the qualification of those who will be delivered by Christ at His second coming.
 - a. They are expecting Jesus to do what He promised.
 - b. They are earnestly longing for Jesus to fulfill that promise.

What This Means for Us

1. Christ has dealt with sin. It is now the work of the Spirit to enable and empower the "called" to deal with their residual sins because it is the will of God (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Thess. 4:3; Rom. 6:19, 22; 8:13).
2. It is His own who are longing to see Jesus the Savior and to realize the full benefits of His salvation and the eternal inheritance promised that leads them eagerly to anticipate His return.