

## One funeral, judgment and a wedding - Hebrews 9:24-28

*James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 23 September 2007*

---

In this morning's passage, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews again points to the work of the old covenant high priest in the temple. Again he shows that the work of our new covenant high priest, Jesus Christ, is better. In **Hebrews 9:24-28**, we see three "appearances" of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### i First Appearance

**v25-26** tell us all about our Lord's first appearance. In **v25**, the writer points to the Day of Atonement so as to show, by way of contrast, that the work of Christ is better. How many times did the old covenant high priest have to bring offerings to God? Every year. How many times did our new covenant high priest, Jesus Christ, have to bring an offering to God? Once.

Notice that Jesus did away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. When our Lord sacrificed himself, he annulled sin. The sin of all of his people is now treated as though it were non-existent. That's how thoroughly Christ's sacrifice took away our sin. There is no need for any other sacrifice, or for that sacrifice to be re-presented. The job is done.

Some people struggle because they find it hard to accept that past, present and future sins were all atoned for at the cross. But that's exactly what happened. Any sin which was not atoned for the moment Christ sacrificed himself on the cross remains not atoned for for ever. The penalty was paid in full when Jesus died, even for the things I'm going to do wrong tomorrow.

Also notice that Jesus came at "**the end of the ages**". You could translate that, "**the culmination of the ages**", or even, "**the climax of history**". The appearing of Christ (and in particular, the atonement he brought) was the peak of history, the climax of time, the culmination of the ages.

That being the case, you need to trust in Jesus Christ. You need to trust him to forgive you for your sin. You need to trust him to be your Saviour. You need to trust him enough to devote the rest of your life to following him. You need to trust in Jesus Christ.

### ii Second Appearance

**v24** tells us about our Lord's second appearance.

Notice that Christ appears in God's presence, before God's face. That's personal and intimate. Jesus appears before the face of God the Father himself. It's direct access.

But notice also that Jesus appears there for us, on our behalf. That's a magnificent truth. He represents us before his Father. The mere sight of Jesus satisfies God the Father on our behalf. It's enough that Jesus shows himself to the Father. He brings before the face of God an eternally valid offering, an eternally valid sacrifice. As soon as God the Father sees Jesus (so to speak), there is no wrath left for us.

Christian, meditate on that! Whenever you sin, repent, and meditate on Christ before his Father's face. Whenever you have a guilty conscience, repent, and meditate on Christ before his Father's face. Whenever you wonder whether you're too bad to be saved, meditate on Christ before his Father's face. You will be saved to the end because of your Saviour, representing you, interceding for you, in heaven itself.

### iii Third Appearance

**v27-28** tell us about our Lord's third appearance.

**v27** tells us about mankind in general. What happens to every man and women who ever lives? Firstly, they die. Secondly, they face judgment. It's inevitable.

But the writer only mentions the destiny of mankind in passing, really. His real purpose is to illustrate something about our Lord in **v28**. Men and women die once, then face judgment; so Christ died once, and then... But the writer does not say anything about Christ being the judge. Instead he shows that Christ's third appearance is all about bringing salvation to his people. He will complete the salvation of his people by perfecting us and translating us into his recreated universe, the new heavens and the earth. At that moment, our salvation will complete.

And so we have all three tenses of salvation. Christ's first appearance saved us. His second appearance is saving us. His third appearance will save us. We have been saved in the past. We are being saved in the present. We will be saved in the future. All is catered for! And that's great!

Christians respond to that by waiting for Christ with an eager, trembling, excited expectation. And no wonder! On that day, we will see him as he really is. We'll be transformed into his likeness. We'll be perfected. We'll bask in his eternal glory eternally. We'll be satisfied, complete, whole, fulfilled, for ever and ever and ever. And all because of him.

Are you ready for that day? If not, please trust in him today. If you are, are you eagerly awaiting Him? If not, raise your eyes heavenwards and be excited about the future glory stored up for you.