



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 9:23-28

“Climax of History”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] In our evening service we are going to have a brief ceremony in which the elders will lay hands upon Dan in token of their identification with him in the work of elder, and we invite you to come and be with us for the observance of the Lord's supper as well as for the observance of the recognition of Dan Duncan as an elder. Believers Chapel has always followed the principles to this point that it is not we or the elders who appoint elders. It is the Holy Spirit who appoints elders, and so consequently we expect that when the Holy Spirit appoints elders that they will be manifested as those who have oversight and are suitable and equipped for it by the life that they have lived, and we feel that very much so that God has put his hand upon Dan to serve with the elders in that respect.

In Acts chapter 20 in verse 28 the Apostle Paul speaking to the Ephesians elders said, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, bishops, elders, (the terms are synonymous) to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.” So we invite you to come this evening, observe the Lord's supper and share with us in a brief recognition of Dan for his work and also to pray for him and for the elders as they continue their work of oversight.

The Scripture reading today is in Hebrews chapter 9, and we’re reading verse 23 through verse 28. This is one of the truly important passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the subject of ministry of the word today, The Climax of History, is derived from the 26th verse of our passage. Verse 23 of Hebrews chapter 9,

“Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a the holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor was it that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own; otherwise he (That is Christ.) would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world: but now once at the consummation of the ages (We could call this the climax of history. In fact I believe one of the well-known versions has translated these words the climax of history.) He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And in as much as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes the judgment: So Christ was also (You might wonder why this text comes to the floor here, but the reason is simply this, that the author is laying stress upon the fact that our Lord contrary to the high priests of Israel who year after year had to offer sacrifices on the day of atonement for Israel to be ever covenantly renewed and restored to fellowship with the Lord God, Christ dies once.) So Christ also having been offered once to bear the sins of many; shall he appear the second time not to bear sin to those who eagerly await him for salvation.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word? Let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee as we reflect upon the season of year that the second person of the Trinity our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, has accomplished his mission of coming of offering the sacrifice for sinners that saves, and now waits to complete the work that he has been doing. We look forward Lord to the coming again our Lord Jesus Christ, but today we give Thee special thanks for the fact that the purpose of the ages reached it's climax and the coming of the Son and his sacrifice for sinners. How marvelous it is to know that the finished work of the Lord Jesus is ours. We are grateful. We give Thee thanks Lord, for the forgiveness of sins for the righteousness of God given us through Christ as a gift, free gift for membership in the family of God as sons and children of God for the possession of a great high priest who still lives to accomplish all of the things for which he has come.

We thank Thee, Lord, and on this as we thank of Christmas day we express to Thee our gratitude of devotion. We thank Thee, Lord, for all of the other blessings of life, so many that if we were to attempt to name them we would be here for the rest of this day. We thank Thee for this country in which we have been placed by Thee in the sovereign providence of our great God. We pray for our county, for our president, for others in places of authority. Give wisdom and guidance to them. We especially pray for the church of Jesus Christ and for all of the manifestations of that body over the face of this world.

We pray for each individual body of believers that meet in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and honor him who died for sinners, and then Lord we pray for those who are not able to be here with us for various reasons, and especially for those who are ill or sick, confined to a bed, who have serious and deep problems, we Lord, pray for them. We ask that Thou will give comfort and consolation to them minister to them in such a way that they sense Thy presence with them. Enable them as they reflect upon the truths of God to truly enter the realities of the salvation that Thou hast accomplished for us. And, Lord, we ask that at this time of the year Thou wilt enable us as individual believers

to be a testimony to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, to our friends, to our family, and to those with whom we come in contact. We thank Thee for the opportunities that are ours at this time of the year. Lord, let us not fail to be responsible for the propagation of the great truth, which has come to us. Now we ask Thy blessing upon us as we sing, as we listen to the word of God expounded. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] As I mentioned in the Scripture reading, the subject for today's message is really taken from the 26th verse, and the translations that sometimes have been given of it when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes otherwise he would have needed to suffer often since salvation of the world, but now once at the consummation or at the consummation of the ages or better at the climax of history. He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. So we want to look at our Lord's saving work as the climax of history, for when he died upon Calvary's cross in that sense it was the climax of history. Not the consummation, but the climax in the sense of the high water mark. The things that follow afterwards all flow out of what transpired there so marvelously and successfully.

This passage is a passage that is marked by a number of great biblical words, notice for example these words, first of all “sin”. In verse 26 he says, “He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” And then in verse 28, he will appear a second time not to bear sin. That's where the theology of the word of God begins, with the recognition of human sin, our human pride with its peacocks feathers would like to forget it, but it would be fatal for us to forget that we are sinners.

A couple of days ago, I was looking through a book with some quotations in it, and one of them that I read across that I don't remember ever seeing before was a quotation by W.H. Auden he said, “All sin tends to be addictive, and the terminal point to addiction is what is called damnation.” It's an interesting quotation from someone who is not a minister of the gospel. There is the word judgment in verse 27, “And in as much it

is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment.” In that same verse there is the word die, or death. “As it is appointed for men to die once.” Death, the great mystery. In fact Henry Ward Beecher as he was dying himself a famous preacher, some of his last words were these, “Now comes the mystery.” Death, sacrifice, in verse 23 as well as in verse 26, but in verse 26, “He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and then the word “blood” in verse 25, “Nor was it that he should offer himself often as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.”

All students of the word of God know that the theme of the blood of God or the blood I should say is something that begins in the Book of Genesis and does not conclude until the book of Revelation. In fact it is the crimson thread as it has been said from Genesis to the cross to the throne of God. In Revelation chapter 1 in one of the last references the apostle writes in his greetings to the seven churches, “And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth to him who loves us and released us from our sins by his blood” -- blood, another of the great biblical terms in this passage and then salvation. Everyone who listens to the word of God knows the common reference in preaching is to salvation. As evangelicals we underline the fact that salvation is not by works. It is rather by grace through faith in him who offered the atoning sacrifice sufficient for sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ, salvation. So he shall appear a second time verse 28 states. “Not to bear sin to those who eagerly await him for salvation.” And then of course the last and final word is heaven, and twice the word heaven occurs, verse 23, in which the author speaks about the heavenly things themselves, and then verse 24, “For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, mere copy of the true one, but in to heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Now if you have read the Epistle to the Hebrews, or if you have reflected upon the history of Israel, you know that this author is drawing upon the greatest of the feasts

of the children of Israel, the feast of Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. And the things that transpired on the Day of Atonement represented the high mark of the liturgy of Judaism, and that's that which lies in the background of the verses that we have just read. Let me just remind you of the key features of the ceremony of the Day of Atonement. It was Aaron's duty as the high priest to officiate at the ceremony. Aaron ordinarily wore some garments that were garments of glory and beauty, but on the Day of Atonement he took them off and put on the holy garments, the white garments with which he carried out this particular ceremony. It was that significant. It was special. It was one once a year. The purpose of this ceremony was in effect to renew the covenant of God with Israel for one more year because of course they had violated any provisions that might have been laid as conditions upon them through the year and every year there was the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement or the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement in order that Israel may again be restored to proper relationship within the covenant that God had made with them.

Aaron took off his old clothes, put on his special garments for this day, selected a bullock for a sacrifice for himself so that he himself might be able to approach the tabernacle and ultimately enter into the holiest of all. You remember the tabernacle was divided into two parts, the holy place and the holiest of all, and inside the holiest of all was the arc of the covenant, and the mercy seat upon which the blood was sprinkled. The blood of the sacrifice, and so on this day the priest and only on this day only the priest, the high priest, and only on this day he could enter into the place where symbolically God dwelt and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat. So he selected a bullock for himself and a sacrifice for himself that he might have the relationship with the Lord God that enabled him to do that.

He also choose some incense with which he would approach the holiest of all and put the incense upon coals that were taken off of the burnt alter and thus filled that little part of the tabernacle with the smoke of incense suggestive of course of the fact that he

was approaching the Lord God and also suggested perhaps since it would have been filled with smoke that the view that Aaron had of God was not completely accurate. That is God still was a God with whom we have no direct relationship like visible personal relationships and also to in a sense cover Aaron from the holiness of the Lord God, but at least the incense filled the place where the arc of the covenant was.

Two goats were selected and this, the important sacrifice for this is the sacrifice for the children of Israel. One of those goats was slain and the blood was taken into the holiest of all, and there Aaron sprinkled the mercy seat and the arc of the covenant seven times with blood token of the perfection of the atoning work, and then having come forth he laid hands upon the other goat, the goat that was for *azazel* or for departure. The other goat that had been slain was for Yahweh, the selected the two goats by lot. The one lot that was slain was said to be for the Lord. The other for *azazel*, and over that goat Aaron laid his hands in token of identification with the goat, confessed that sins of the children of Israel and then the goat was sent off into the wilderness in token of the removal of sins.

Some of the texts such as the Authorized Version, read that the goat was sent off into a land not inhabited, underlining again the fact that the goat was not to return, the sins were taken care of for none more year. That's in the background. So I think if you will reflect upon it, you will see that Aaron had to stand at the alter of sacrifice, the brazen alter and then he had to, once a year, and this day he entered into the holiest of all and he stood before the arc of the covenant and the mercy seta, and then having done that that third of his great works that day would be his final appearance to the children of Israel who were gathered around on this date to observe the ceremony. The appearance was very important because they had to have assurance if they were thinking theologians, and some of them were, they had to have assurance that the covenant was truly renewed for another year, and they could only be sure of that when Aaron returned. And so when he returned coming out of the holy place, they would have recognized that God had

accepted the sprinkling of the blood of the goat as the renewal of the covenant for one more year.

Now if you will think about this for a moment, there was an appearance at the brazen altar. There was an appearance of Aaron within the holiest of all, and then the appearance as he came forth from the tabernacle at the conclusion of that part of the service.

Now the author of the Epistle of the Hebrews has all of that in mind it lies in the background. He expected his readers to understand this just as I now expect you to understand it, and he constructs his treatment of the atonement with that as the illustration that lies in the background, so we'll look at these three positions.

Now the Authorized Version made it very easy because the Authorized Version rendered this text in such a way that the term appear was used three times. For example in verse 4, the Authorized Version had, “Now to appear in the presence of God for us.” In verse 26, “He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” You'll notice the variation in the order historically in the text. You might have expected the manifestation appearance to put away sin to be given first place, but the author looks at the second appearance first then comes to the first, and then in verse 28 the Authorized Version rendered, “Shall appear a second time.” So the passage all creatures know this passage as the passage of the three appearings.

Now the New American Standard Bible is not very nice because the New American Standard Bible has rendered two of the verbs as appear, but the central one in verse 26 it is rendered as manifested, incorrectly because the three verbs are different verbs. One of them actually means to appear openly, in other words not simply to be seen but to appear openly. The second word is a word that means to manifest. And in verse 26, we have it properly rendered in the New American Standard Bible, and then the one in verse 28 is a verb that means simply to be seen.

Now appear to could be used for all of them, but in my text it's not. And I am just going to speak of it as three appearings, but you'll understand that there is a slight difference in the translation, but it's easier to do that in exposition. So our author looks first now at the first appearing, and he especially stresses it in verse 25, and verse 26 where he says, “But now he has once at the climax of history, he has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” So he understands our Lord's appearance at the cross of Calvary. That corresponds to Aaron standing by the brazen alter of sacrifice. There the great high priest the eternal high priest, the Lord Jesus stood by the alter of Calvary and offered the sacrifice, not offering an animal, not a bullock, nor a goat, but offering himself as the fulfillment of all of the types and shadows of the Old Testament revelation. So this the final climactic revelation of the atoning work, and when you think of the Old Testament and how in the Book of Genesis centuries before the story of divine salvation begins is carried on for literally thousands of years, and finally the Lord Jesus is at Calvary's cross, and if you'll reflect upon him and compare him with the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament you cannot help but say what they said, when our Lord changed the water into wine, “Thou hast kept the best wine until now.” For the Lord Jesus is the final word of the Lord God regarding the sacrifice and the forgiveness of sins.

As he said in the first part of this book, God after he spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways in these last days has spoken to us in his son. And there God spoke when the Son of God bore our sin.

The writers of the New Testament and especially the apostolic writers lay stress upon this. The Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16 in a text that is very, very familiar to most of us has said, “And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness, he who was revealed in the flesh (The verb is manifested.) manifested in the flesh.” And then Peter in 1 Peter chapter 1 in verse 20 makes this statement. “For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared, has been manifested in

these last times for your sake.” So he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Now I would like to stop for a moment, and underline a few things here. “To put away sin.” Now let me just try to say the things that it’s not first. The Lord Jesus did not come to deny the existence of sin. He came to put away sin. He did not come to soften what Scripture says about sin. “The wages of sin is death.” Carolyn Whales says “The wages of sin is alimony.” [Laughter] But actually it’s far more serious than that. “The wages of sin is death.” He did not come to redefine sin. He did not come to say that sin was a mistake or sin is an error of the moral mind as some religions seek to say. He didn’t come to affirm that sin is simply a disease. Oh how we like to kid ourselves, and so we use the euphemisms of disease.

We do not say that man is an alcoholic, and he is addicted and therefore he has sinned in this respect and become that. We say he has the disease of alcoholism, or he has the disease of addiction to drugs or has the disease of something else. Scripture never says that. Scripture sets those things forth as sins, and therefore they stand under the judgment of God, but we have allowed our psychologists and others to redefine the terms of Holy Scripture and we have not because we are not acquainted sufficiently with Scripture. We’ve allowed their definitions to become standard partlets in the latter part of the 20th century. The Lord Jesus came to put away sin. He did not come to lull us into a false sense of security, and so weakened the concept of sin that we do not see its condemning factor in our lives, and he did this we read by the sacrifice of himself.

Now bear in mind it’s a very hard thing put away sin. You cannot put away sin by religion. You cannot put away sin by impressive ritual. You cannot put away sin by beauty. You cannot put away sin by culture. Now all of the things that you might think if you had a philosophy like that, all of the things that you might think could put away sin existed in Judaism. There has never been a religion like the religion of Judaism, this religion contrary to Roman Catholicism contrary to other forms of religion all over the face

of this globe. This religion was given by divine revelation. It could not put away sin, and yet a divinely unfolded religion. It's the greatest of all. It could not put away sin. If you speak about impressive ritual we have a startling thing in evangelicalism today. We have individuals who are actually leaving places where the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed because they want more significant ritual and at the same time in almost every case are sacrificing truth in the exposition of holy Scripture.

We live in a day in which I say impressive ritual has gripped us because the reality of the relationship to the Lord God has slipped away, and so we sense a need for something to put in it's place and so to sit in an audience and observe a ritual impresses us and we think fills the emptiness that exists in the heart. If there was any religion that had impressive ritual it was Judaism. And if there was ever an impressive ritual with divine authorization given by God it was Judaism was so significant to Jewish people that they called it *yomah*, the Aramaic term for the “the day” and in the Hebrew text *heyome*, “the day”. It was “the day” the day of the year, and the impressiveness of the ritual no doubt gripped the people who observed it year after year, and I can just imagine them saying, “No other religion has what we have in Judaism, and this given us by divine revelation.” It couldn't put away sin however.

Think of the beauty, the beauty of laying aside the robes of glory and beauty, putting on these magnificent garments, that Aaron and the priests had, and then the remarkable ceremony together with the incense, incidentally imitated in some of our protestant churches today, the incense just derived from the Old Testament not the New Testament. The New Testament churches never knew anything about meeting with incense floating around. They met simply, and in fact they met so simply that the heathen thought of them as having a different kind of heathen religion. They met so simply they had no God, [laughter] no sign of a God because the God of Christianity is the invisible eternal almighty God who is in heaven with the Son of God at his right hand, and so it's hard to put away sin. No person could possibly put away sin. No religion can put away

sin. No impressive ritual can put away sin. We hardly appreciate significant Judaism is by divine revelation.

There is an old story about Disraeli, the Jewish British prime minister, who once was insulted by of some the people in the House of Commons or the House of Lords, and one of the meetings, I assume it was in the House of Lords, but at least he had been insulted about his Jewish ancestry, and he stood up and he replied in words like this, “When the learned Lords ancestors were savages tracking nuts in the forests of Germany, mine were writing the psalms and other sacred literature which has enriched the human race as no other writings have.” A marvelous rebuttal because God by divine revelation instituted Judaism. Of course by divine revelation in the ministry of the Lord Jesus he sat aside that magnificent religion. If we were saved by religion we should be saved by Judaism, but the text says, “Christ has put away sin.” What a work. “Speak of the labors of Hercules.” Mr. Spurgeon says. The labors of Emmanuel are greater. He has put away sin.

Luther says somewhere, “For Christ to have ascended profits us nothing if he ascended for his own sake, but now our glory and joy is in this that he went there to our advantage, and not to our disadvantage.” And Luther goes on to say that because we have the sense of the forgiveness of sins, we don’t care what happens to us ultimately. We can say strike Lord for I am forgiven. How significant it is to be forgiven. Ultimately that’s the reality of the human life, to be forgiven. The other experiences of life, they are painful at times very difficult. Some have to bear some awful sufferings, but in the light of the fact that we are forgiven and in the light of eternity, I can sympathize with Luther who suffered a lot, “Strike Lord I am forgiven.” So by the sacrifice of himself not by his life, not by his prayers, great prayers, what greater prayer could we have than the great high priestly prayer in John 17, or the prayer in Gethsemane? What greater prayer than that? All those prayers our Lord Jesus watered the hills of Judea with while the others were sleeping, they cannot save. The good works of our Lord the tears of our Lord the

pains of our Lord the groans of our Lord, are not help. Our author says, “He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Now that was the appearing at Calvary’s cross, the first historically. Also our author talks about a second appearing in verse 24. He says, “For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” So just as Aaron slew the animals but then went into the tabernacle, and into the most holy place to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat, so the Lord Jesus has offered the sacrifice, and now he is at the right hand at the throne of God in heaven itself in the presence of God as the God man, not simply as the second person of the Trinity, but the God man the second person of the Trinity who now possesses an additional nature having assumed an additional nature, the God man, man in the presence of God. What a comfort, man in the presence of God. Think of it no man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son. He’s led him forth into revelation, but he has also given us the assurance that man may dwell in the presence of God for he is there.

Now the text says he appears in the presence of God for us, for us. My Christian friends realize what that means. He appears there for us, the God man for me, me. I have acceptance in him for us. That’s what the Scriptures speak about when it speaks about union with Christ. It’s what the Scriptures speak about when it talks about the new covenant. He’s our covenantal head. He’s our great representative, and so what he accomplishes he accomplishes for his people, and he is there for us. He is there for his people. He’s not there for everyone. If he were everyone would be saved, universalism would be true, but he is there for us. Let us never forget that. This is the special work, the distinguishing grace of the Lord God. Stumble over it if you will, but ultimately we shall see the manifestation of the correctness and righteousness and justice of it as the revelation of the Lord God in heaven for us.

Luther goes on to say, stressing the importance for those who knew Christ practically and experimentally, and not merely speculatively. He says, “Those who know him speculatively believe that Christ appears before the face of God for others. The latter that Christ appears before the face of God for us.” And then he adds, “That’s why a Christian should be certain that it is for him that Christ appears and as a priest before God.” That is important. Do you know Christ? Are you really his? Have you believed in him? Do you have the sense of the forgiveness of sins? If you do it’s because our Lord is appearing there for you, for me. Well there’s a third appearing, and he speaks of it in verse 27 and verse 28 in a kind of comparison because he says he’s been once manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And so in order to compare things a bit, he reminds his readers that men die once.

Daniel Webster towards the end of his life mentioned how he attended a certain church service. I presume it was something like this one, and he said the clergymen who stood up, we don’t have clergymen in Believer's Chapel, but this was a clergyman. And he stood up, and he was he said a simple hearted pious old man. Well I am an old man, but I don't know how simple hearted and pious I am, but anyway this man stood up and Daniel Webster said after the opening exercise as he arose and pronounced his text and then with the utmost simplicity and earnestness said, “My friends, we can die but once.”

Mr. Webster said, “Frigid and weak as these words might seem at once they were to me among the mostly impressive an awakening I had ever heard. My friends, I repeat we must die or we can die only once. So we have an appointment to death and judgment, and in as much as it is appointed for men to die once, the reason the author is saying this of course is that if you thought of Christ’s work as only like Aaron’s then Christ would be dieing every year. But he wants to make the point that one death of Christ is sufficient for all of the deaths of all the high priests who ever lived, for this one death is the death of the infinite eternal Son of God, which infinitely satisfies the claims of God against sinners. So in as much as it is appointed to men to die once and after this comes

judgment, so “Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many shall appear a second time, (Not to bear sin. It has been born.) to those who eagerly await him for salvation.” We have an appointment.

Epicurus made a statement once. I think I have it somewhere in my notes that illustrates the blindness of people who are very, very intelligent in their day, but nevertheless are blind to spiritual things. He said, “Thus that which is the most awful of evil’s death is nothing to us since when we exist there is no death.” I look out over this audience you are alive. There is no death for you, so when you are living there is no such thing as death. And then he added, “And when there is death, we do not exist, so we need not worry about death.” The only problem is the divine revelation says that when there is death we still exist. And so consequently the great man was wrong, and wrong on the most fundamental fact of life, and that is that there is a judgment before which and under which we must stand. So we have that appointment.

Now we can die two ways. We can die in the wrong way. Many men have died the wrong way. We have in the Bible many men who have died the wrong way. There is Jehoram the king of Judea. You would have thought that Jehoram would have died the right way. His father was Jehoshaphat, one of the godly kings of the Old Testament. Guess who his preacher was. Elijah. So was as a godly father, and a preacher who preaches the word of God with remarkable power, but this man died in such a way that Scripture says he departed without being desired, or as the New King James Version renders it, “To no one’s sorrow.” That’s the wrong way to die. Absalom, we just finished a long series on David and you know the story of Absalom and you know the story of how Absalom died the wrong way, and David mourned and wept over the son with such great promise, but who missed his promise and died wretchedly a lost man.

Now it is possible to die the right way. The Bible gives us instances of individuals who die the right way. One of the men who preeminently died the right way was Stephen. We read in Scripture in Acts chapter 7, the last two verses, “And they went on

stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord, and said, Lord Jesus receives my spirit and falling on his knees he cried out with a loud voice, Lord do not hold this sin against them.” And having said that he fell asleep, Stephen the kind of man who preached in the midst of men who were anxious to slay him long before this, and individuals testified that they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel as he defended the truths of the word of God before the enemies of it in his day. The Old Testament says, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” To die the right way, I pray oh God help me to die the right way.

And then there is the appointment to salvation. The last text says, “Christ also having been offered once to bear the sins of many shall appear a second time not to bear sin to those who eagerly await him for salvation. There’s a glorious day every year at *Yoma*, or Yom Kippur when they observe the priest with the blood go into the holiest of all, and then they waited and finally when Aaron reappeared no doubt there were great shouts that arose. The covenant is renewed. God has accepted the sacrifice for a father year, and so our author thinking of that says, “Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many shall appear a second time.” Just like Aaron did, but the second time for Christ is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall appear to them that look for him. I think this refers to all. That is all the elect, all the believing ones, he shall appear.

The reason I say that is that’s characteristic of the believing ones. The characteristic of believing ones is that they look for him. As a matter of fact, Paul says that. He said that to a group of sinning believers. He said that to the Corinthians who had all kinds of things in their assembly that needed correcting by the apostle and the apostle’s teaching, but he said this of them in his introduction. “So that you are not lacking in any gift awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It’s characteristic of the saints to look for our Lord’s return eagerly, and anticipate it.

May I ask you a personal question? Is that part of your hope? When you get up in the morning does it really mean something to you to think affirmatively about our Lord's return? It's characteristic of believing individuals to look forward to. “And he will appear apart from sin unto salvation. No more death. The inevitable word “death” will give way to the eternal word of life, life, life. So our time is up. Let me summarize briefly in a beautiful way these verses summarize the New Testament. He hath appeared in the past. He does appear in the present in the presence of God. He shall appear in the future for salvation. He has appeared at Calvary. He appears in heaven now. He shall appear in the air. And we expect to meet him in the air. He has appeared to accomplish propitiation. He now appears carrying on his work of intercession for those for whom he died and in the future we look forward to him to appear for our deliverance. There are many things that could be said further. I don't have time to do that.

The two appearings have taken place, the appearing at Calvary, the appearing in the presence of God. There is one more appearing that is to take place. The appearing when our Lord returns again. Are we truly those who await his coming with anticipation? Listen to the Apostle Paul who in 2 Timothy chapter 4 in verse 8 says, “In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will award to me in that day and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.” To refuse the priests work, to refuse Aaron's work to not afflict one's soul as Aaron carried on his exercise of the Day of Atonement. Scripture tells us in chapter 16 and chapter 23 of the Book of Leviticus to not afflict themselves, that is to enter into what was happening personally was to be cut off from the people, and so to refuse the cross as salvations instrument is to choose as an instrument of judgment. In the Gospel of John the 12th chapter and the 48th verse we read, our Lord speaking, “He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings as one who judges him, the word that I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.”

If you are here and you have never believed in Christ we call upon you as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus to cast away trust and anything else your religion, your good works, your culture, your family, your education, all of the other things in which we so often place our trust and come to the Lord before him without righteousness, without hope and cling to the free gift of eternal life. Offered to sinners who recognize their lost condition and lean upon him. Come lean upon Christ and be saved. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, at this Christmas season as we reflect upon the great event, the incarnation, not the coming of a prophet only, the coming of the great prophet, not the work of a priest only, but the work of the great priest and not simply the word of men. Let the word of the Father as we have sung oh God how grateful we are that the coming of God himself in the Son of God is authenticated all of holy Scripture as being Thy word. Lord if there are some in this audience who have never believed may the sense of the peril that hangs over them grip them, and at this very moment return to Thee and confess their need and lean upon Christian in grace from now and forever. For Jesus' sake.
Amen.