
Words of Truth

Hebrews 9:26-28

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We have been studying about the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the bringing in of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:1-25). We left off our last study with the difference between the priests of old offering sacrifices annually and Jesus offering Himself once and then appearing before our Father. What we will be discussing in this study are the following passages of Scripture: *“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. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 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”* (Hebrews 9:26-28).

Take a moment and reread the text above. It starts with the point that if Jesus were to be like the priests under the Law of Moses, He would have had to be put to death often since the foundation [conception] of the world. In this, we are reminded that sin entered this world in the days of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-24). The plan for Jesus to be the Savior was in place before Adam and Eve transgressed (1 Peter 1:18-20). It is unimaginable that Jesus would have been put to death annually since those days. Rather, God’s plan was for this to happen once. That once was preplanned to be in the end of the world.

In thinking about the phrasing of Jesus dying in the end of the world we gain great perspective. This epistle opened with these words: *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”* (Hebrews 1:1-2). The last days were foretold through the pen of the prophets (Isaiah 2:1-3 and Micah 4:1-2). The last days began as the Apostles received the Holy Ghost and began preaching the Gospel of Christ to the world starting at Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-21). So, while it is not the main focus of this context, we are reminded that they and we live in the final days of this world.

While Jesus did many things while He walked this earth, He came into the world to sacrifice Himself. As Jesus approached the last week of His life in this world, He stated the following: *“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour”* (John 12:27). Jesus came into this world to give His life for a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).

The sacrifice of Jesus also had multiple purposes. We have already addressed the bringing in of the New Covenant and will again in chapter ten. We know Jesus died to purchase the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25). The emphasis of this context draws to the putting away of sin. The Greek word “ἀθέτησις” translated “put away” means: “cancellation (literally or figuratively): — disannulling, put away...” (Strong’s # 115). Think about that. His blood was shed to cancel sin. We can understand that by considering how that those converted are washed by His blood (Revelation 1:5). Meaning, for those of us who have been converted, His blood has washed away our sins (Acts 22:16). From that point, all we have to do is keep ourselves pure (I Timothy 5:22).

When Paul wrote to Timothy he wrote about his own selection as a servant of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 1:12-14). In that context, the inspired Apostle wrote this: *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief”* (I Timothy 1:15). Jesus was manifested to take away sins (I John 3:5). Thanks be to God that Jesus accomplished His part. He finished it. He is not coming back to die again and again. So, what’s that mean going forward?

Going forward, all of humankind has death ahead of us. There is an exception to that. We are in the last days, so at some point Jesus is going to return. If Jesus were to return today then those alive at His coming will not experience physical death (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The Holy Spirit did not have the penmen of this letter focus on that at this point. That will come in the next verse. Instead, the first century readers of this letter are first directed to consider death as a certain conclusion to this life (Genesis 3:19, II Samuel 14:14, Psalms 89:48, Ecclesiastes 3:20, Ecclesiastes 12:7-14, and Romans 5:12).

After death, there is the certainty of the Day of Judgment (Matthew 24:35-25:46). While it is not directly stated in this context, the Judgment Day is the day of the coming resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29). Regardless of what we call that day, all will stand before the Judgment seat of Jesus Christ (Romans 14:7-12 and II Corinthians 5:10). The words of Christ will be the standard all will be judged by (John 12:48 and Romans 2:16). That is why Jesus, while He was in Hades, preached the Gospel there too (I Peter 3:18-4:6).

As the chapter concludes, the mind of the reader is reminded again that Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of many (cf. I Peter 3:18). Then, the return of Christ is brought into light. He is coming back. It may seem long in the coming, but that day will come (II Peter 3:1-14). When Jesus returns, He will return the way He departed (Acts 1:1-11). Part of that is that He will come back as sinless as He was while He lived in the flesh (Hebrews 7:22-28). When our sinless Savior returns, salvation will be realized for the faithful. We cannot overlook that. While it is right to say you’re saved (II Timothy 1:9), it is wrong to think that your salvation has been realized (Philippians 3:4-16 and I Peter 1:3). That is the end of the chapter. It is a fitting point of conclusion. For us, press on to a faithful end and salvation to come.