

'As...So also...'

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Date: 22 October 2014

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[0 : 00] Let's turn this evening to Hebrews chapter 9. I'm going to look at the last two verses of this chapter. Hebrews 9 at verse 27. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

It's always important for us to quote scripture accurately. If we're quoting verses from scripture, that will mean not just trying to remember the words as they are in the scriptures, in whatever translation we're using, but also the combination of verses that the Lord has tied together, such as these two verses, which are very closely tied together, because the two of them together are necessary in order to convey the meaning that the Lord has given us in the space of these two verses.

In other words, when we have the verse quoted, verse 27, we often hear that verse quoted, and heard it recently quoted in a service as well, not here, but elsewhere.

Usually, quite often it's quoted as if it said, it is appointed unto men once to die, full stop. But it's not. That's not what the text really says. And of course that's true. It is appointed unto men once to die. That's something that is included in the first part of these two verses.

[1 : 48] But, you notice, as, at the beginning of verse 27, just as it is appointed unto men once to die, then you wouldn't have a full stop.

If you've taken the as, something else must follow. And that's why you've got so at the beginning of verse 28. There's a very important balance in the way the Lord has given us the two verses.

As it is appointed for men once to die, so also Christ, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, will appear the second time.

In other words, if you just take the first verse, verse 27, you're cutting off what God has given us as a very important balanced truth. The balance between what is on the one hand true of human beings, ordinary human beings like you and I, that we die once, and then after that there is a judgment.

The judgment of God. But that's something that corresponds to the second thing, which is that Christ, having been offered Christ, having died once, that too is followed by an appearance on his part to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

[3 : 03] In other words, the main emphasis of the two verses, contrary to sometimes the way we find it quoted, the main emphasis is not on the fact that human beings are appointed once to die, and after that comes the judgment.

The main emphasis is on the death of Jesus, not on the death of ordinary humans like you and I. And the reference to the death of ordinary people like you and I is itself designed to lead directly into the main emphasis of the passage, which is the once for all death of Christ, and the following benefits of it.

All the way through these verses you find an emphasis on the fact that Christ contrasts in his death, in his ministry, with that of the Old Testament, and the Old Testament high priest especially, who was succeeded when he died, down through the years, until all of this was fulfilled in Christ.

And that's why he's saying here, that in verse 25, Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own.

Not only was each successive high priest followed by another one, but during their time of office, each of the high priests had to do this every year, and one day in each year on the Day of Atonement, so that the thing was repeated during each ministry of each high priest.

[4 : 34] But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages, that's in the latter ages of God's plan of salvation, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And then that's just expanded on in these balanced two verses. Just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time.

Why is that important? Does it really matter? Are we not still saying something that's true, when we say, it is appointed unto man once to die? Well, yes, of course, we're saying something that's true. But we're actually dealing with something that God has given us as a balance, so we're actually cutting something off that God has considered important to tie together and to keep tied together. And it matters particularly because of this. When the primary emphasis of the verses is on the once-for-all character of Christ's death, when you just take verse 27, then you end up not making any reference to that at all, although it is the main emphasis of the passage.

[5 : 56] That's just by way of introduction, because it's important that we notice that in these balances that God has given us in the Word, verses such as that, or two verses such as these, are actually designed to be quoted together, and especially with reference to the primary topic or subject, the death of Christ, and the fact that it was once accomplished, once done, and nothing else needed after that.

So the emphasis is between the as and the so. As it was, as it is with men, so also Christ. And the emphasis is on two things. The emphasis on once, and the emphasis then on after that. So there's an emphasis on once, as it relates to human beings, and also to Christ.

As men die once, so also Christ was once offered. And then secondly, as there's an emphasis on something after the death of human beings, that there is the judgment.

Once they die, after that the judgment. So also Christ once died, and after this, he will appear again. The second time.

[7 : 19] This time without sin. Or as it's put there, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. So let's look at these two emphases briefly.

The emphasis on once, first of all. As it is appointed for man to die once. The word that's used is appointed.

We were not created with death already in our system. There's a profound sense in which it's true that our persons, as we were created by God, we were given faculties that were not themselves able to prevent the entrance of death.

But we weren't created with death already in our faculties. We were created with perfect life. We were created with no inclusion of death at all in our experience as human beings.

Death came in to our experience because of our sin. Not because of the way we were created. There was no flaw in our creation. There was nothing in our mind, nothing in our will, nothing in anything at all, any part of our being, that made us susceptible to death.

[8 : 55] It was simply, although we use the word simply, but it's profound nevertheless, it was the fact of our own disobedience against God, the fact of our own sin, that let death into our system, into our lives, into our experience.

That's why the word appointed is used. Just as it is appointed for man once to die. Because the appointment is something that was applied by God.

It is something that was consequent on our sin. It is something that was applied by God according to what he had said. The day that you eat of this tree that I have said you must not eat of, you shall die.

It was appointed because that is how God put it. And now we say, as it is appointed for man to die once.

And the emphasis again is on the once. We are appointed to die once. There will be some people, as Paul tells the Thessalonians, who will still be alive in the world at the coming of Christ.

[10 : 05] But they will undergo a change, as he puts it there. We shall all be changed. And it will be a change that corresponds to the change that we undergo when we die and then are resurrected again from the dead.

But he is talking here, the writer is talking about the generality of death as it affects all human beings, given that there is an exception at the end of the world, as we said, with Christ coming, when some will still be alive.

But apart from that, every human being dies, but only dies once. Not twice. No such thing as reincarnation, as you find in some Eastern religions, some things that are now borrowed into the thinking of people of our own nation, of our own society.

Taking all of these things that apply like that to mystic religions from other parts of the world, and trying to tack that onto the Bible, or onto the Christian ideology.

There is no reincarnation in the Bible. There is resurrection, but no reincarnation. No repeated cycles of life and death, and life and death, ad infinitum.

[11 : 22] Nor is there annihilation. There is no such thing as death being the very end of all things in human experience. No evidence whatsoever, no reference, not even the tiniest reference or suggestion, that when you die, that's it.

There is nothing conscious after that for any human life. death, no reincarnation, no annihilation. Death, followed by judgment.

That's what it says, as it is appointed, for man wants to die. That does raise questions, doesn't it? Just leave it with you.

Did Lazarus die a second time? He died once. He was taken back from the dead by the Lord, came out of the sepulcher.

He was loosed. He was seen by people after that. He sat with them and ate. People wanted to put him to death because because of him, people were going to follow Christ.

[12 : 26] They were turning to Christ. Did he have to die a second time? Would seem strange, wouldn't it, that a man who had died and then been taken back from the dead by Jesus would then die again?

Was his being brought back to life? Was it this side of death? Was it the other side of death? Was he in the resurrection state? You can think that one out for yourselves.

But here it says, as it is appointed for man to die once. And so also, it is the case with Christ.

So also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many. That's the correspondence.

There shall once in the death of human beings and there shall once for all in the death of Christ.

But it doesn't just say, so also it was appointed for Christ to die. What he talks about is, he changes the words and he says, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many.

[13 : 31] It's not just that he died, his death was an offering. There was a sacrifice in the death of Christ. His death was a sacrifice. It was the offering of himself.

And it's interesting here that it's put in the passive, having been offered once. What does that tell you? It tells you that someone else was involved in the death of Christ.

It wasn't just his own doing. And of course, you have to go then to the rest of the New Testament, especially. And you see that God the Father is involved actively.

He gave his Son. He offered up his Son. He gave him as an offering. But then also, Jesus offered himself too because you can see verse 14.

It gives you the balance again to this whole thing. How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without blemish, without spot to God.

[14 : 30] So it's true at the same time that he was offered and that he offered himself. He was offered by God the Father. God the Father, if you like, acting in a priestly way, giving this Son of His as a sacrifice.

And at the same time, the Son is actively involved in giving himself. He also is the High Priest of His people and he's the sacrifice. He gave himself.

He offered himself. And he was offered. And he was offered once to bear the sins of many. You have to die that, connect that with the word die and judgment in the previous verse.

is appointed for man to die once. After that, the judgment. So Christ was offered once. In other words, it's assuming that the offering up of Christ was also an appointed thing.

But it's also a matter that the offering was a real death, an actual death. Because it was an offering for the sins of many, to bear the sins of many.

[15 : 40] Christ Himself entered into judgment through the death that He died. Just as it is appointed for man to die after that judgment, so also Christ was offered up to bear the sins of many.

There was a judgment in that death of Christ. Whose judgment was it? It was the judgment of God. What was the judgment of God doing in relation to the death of Christ?

What was it doing in the death of Christ? What was it doing in the experience of the Son of God?

How was there such a thing as judgment, condemnation, God's view of Him as guilty?

Well, again, that's not dealt with here, of course, but it's something that is assumed because it's elsewhere in the New Testament in abundance, as you know very well. Indeed, as it's put here, He was offered once to bear the sins of many.

That's why there's a judgment in His experience. That's why the cross is an act of judgment in Christ's experience because He is not there for Himself.

[16:58] He's there for His people. He's there bearing the sins of the many, the many that will be saved by Him. And that's a direct quotation, pretty well, from Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 12.

He shall bear the sins of the many. That gives you an insight into how that passage was looked at in the days of the apostles when these books of the New Testament were written.

It was obviously for them a passage that naturally made itself known as in reference to Christ. He bore the sins of many and this is a direct reference to Christ so that quotation from Isaiah 53 is directly applied and it was obviously something in the preaching of the apostles, something that was set before the church in a very early time that Isaiah 53 referred not to a Jewish nation, not to anyone else but to Christ himself, the Son of God.

He shall bear the sins of the many. And so, there's the way the balance goes. As it is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of the many.

There's the correspondence between the two verses. and the emphasis then is on after that, the judgment, the judgment as it's put there is a judgment of condemnation.

[18:36] Now, it doesn't mean here the judgment for human beings immediately at the point of death. There's a sense in which that's true because as soon as we die, we go to eternity, either to be among the saved or to be among the lost in our disembodied state.

But what this is dealing with is judgment in the sense of the final judgment. And the final judgment has to await the coming of Christ. That's why it's dealing here with the appearance of Christ.

Just as it was for man to die once and after that comes the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time.

Not to deal with sin, or this time without sin, it's really what it says literally, without sin, to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

There are two appearances then of the Lord Jesus Christ in this passage. There's the appearance that's mentioned earlier on, where He appeared in verse 26.

[19:47] He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. That's the first appearance. That was when He came to deal with sin.

That appearance that led to the cross, followed by His resurrection, followed by His ascension to glory. That's the first appearance. That's the end of the first appearance, when He has ascended to heaven.

And the second appearance still hasn't taken place. The second appearance will be when He appears the second time at the end of the world, at the very last day, the day of judgment, on that day of judgment itself.

The second appearance of Christ will actually be revealed to us. God's and it's interesting to compare that with the Old Testament ritual on the day of atonement.

Because there were appearances, two particular appearances, by the high priest. An appearance at the altar out in the courtyard, where He was seen by the people, and then He went into the holy place, the most holy place, where nobody saw Him, but God, with the blood that was sprinkled, as we read earlier in the passage here, but also in Leviticus 16, where the blood was sprinkled there before the mercy seat.

[21:17] Nobody saw that. Only the high priest was in there. But then when He came out, and He appeared again to the people, they would be eagerly anticipating His return.

because their safety depended on the survival of the high priest. If the high priest made some serious error, there would be judgment for the people.

They were looking for His appearance again the second time, after having gone in with the blood. If He came out the second time, it showed that God had accepted the blood again.

The sacrifice had been approved of. The high priest was free to come out and face the people again. And they acknowledged that the ritual was completed, in the sense in which the blood had been effective as far as it went in those days, in the presence of God.

Now it says that, so also Christ, having once offered Himself to, having once been offered to bear the sin of many.

[22:39] Now if you go through the passages we read it together, you can see that, verse 24, Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into

heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

In other words, think of the Old Testament tabernacle or temple, tabernacle particularly where the high priest goes into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, he does what he is required to do there with the blood, the ritual is completed, he comes out again, he then eventually comes to be seen by the people, and as he's seen by the people, they know that the sacrifice has been accepted.

But that's, as Hebrew says, a copy of the heavenly realities. Corresponding to the tabernacle on earth is the sanctuary of heaven where God is.

And as the high priest went in on earth, to the earthly tabernacle, so our high priest Jesus Christ has gone in with his own blood, that's what it says, not with the blood of bulls or of goats, but with his own blood, once for all.

He's gone into the sanctuary above, he's gone into the true tabernacle, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Now we know that he's not inactive.

[24 : 13] While we're waiting for him to come back out again, what's he doing? The sacrifice is finished in the offering of it, but it's not finished in the presentation of it, because he makes intercession for us.

The sacrifice that he himself is, is finished, it's accomplished, he died on the cross, he rose from the dead, he's gone back to glory. But the power of that death, the efficacy of that sacrifice, is constantly before God in the person of Jesus himself.

He ever lives to make intercession for us. That's what Hebrews says earlier in the previous chapter, such a high priest was fitting for us. One who would not be subject to the kind of repeated rituals of the Old Testament, but one who would go into the presence of God with his own blood and actually remain there for us till he appears again.

So that's where he is. And that's why he goes on to say he will appear the second time, not to deal with sin, or literally it says without sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Now it means that without sin or not to deal with sin, when he appears the second time, it will be a very, very different appearance to the first time. And it would be with a very different purpose to the first time.

[25 : 50] He came the first time to die in the bearing of his people's sins, to bear their sins in his death. He was offered to bear the sins of many, but when he appears the second time, it's without sin, it's not to deal with sin, it's to complete the process, and to actually bring his people into the final phase of their salvation.

Not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Just go back again to the Old Testament and the ritual of the high priest. What are the people waiting for?

When they can't see him for the time that he's actually ministering in the tabernacle, in the sanctuary, what are they waiting for? They're waiting for him to come back out. Why is that important?

It means their sin has been dealt with. Ritualistically their sin has been dealt with. What are we waiting for? We know that our sin has been dealt with.

But, while we have the word of God certainly as our confirmation, if you like, the sealing stamp of confirmation awaits the return of Christ.

[27 : 06] how will we know, apart from what God's word tells us, or in addition to what God's word tells us, how will we know that death will never hurt us again?

That sin will have no part anymore in holding us guilty before God. We will know it because Christ will appear without sin.

When he appears without sin, and when it is obvious in his next appearance that he is not coming to deal with sin, then you and I as we see him will say, I now have the absolute guarantee I have got the final piece of the picture.

Christ without sin means everything to do with sin for me is finished. There will never be anything of it against me again. death will never come near me, will never hurt me.

Now you know that already. You know that because Christ died for you. You know that because he has forgiven your sin. But it is going to be sealed. It is going to be finally confirmed in the glorious appearance of Christ without sin to save those.

[28 : 31] To finish the salvation. To complete it. Notice how they are described. Those who are eagerly waiting for him. These are words that are quite often used in the New Testament with

regard to the return of Christ or how we anticipate the return of Christ.

They are eagerly awaiting him. how many times in the course of our lives, in regard to ordinary everyday worldly things, we very often ask people or have people ask us, are you looking forward to it?

Maybe it's a holiday, maybe it's a special event, maybe it's an anniversary, something like that, something that's been maybe prepared for some time, or you've been thinking of for some time, and somebody comes up to you and says, are you looking forward to it?

Of course, the answer usually is, well, yes, of course I'm looking forward to it, I've waited quite a while for it, it's important to me, but this one surpasses all others.

We shouldn't really have to be asked, are you looking forward to it? Because the description there is that they are eagerly waiting for him. They're looking forward to with excitement, with anticipation, with eagerness.

[29 : 59] That's why the scripture elsewhere says in Paul's second letter to Timothy, speaking about his own departure, and all that's laid up for him in heaven, this crown of righteousness, not only, he says, for me, but for all those who love his appearing.

And that really clenches it, doesn't it? We don't just anticipate his coming, it's not simply that we're eagerly expecting or longing for his coming.

The word love is appropriate. We love his coming. We love the thought of his coming. We love the fact that he shall appear the second time without sin for our salvation.

He was once offered to bear the sin of many. And as it is appointed to man once to die, and after this the judgment, so also Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

And afterwards he shall appear the second time without sin unto our salvation. Let's pray. Gracious Lord, we thank you for the great things that are still to come for your people.

[31 : 33] Help us, we pray, to anticipate them eagerly. Help us to never tire of hearing of your coming. Help us, we pray, ever to be more and more in preparation for it.

For your word tells us that we must prepare for it, that we must be ready for you when you come, that we must be anticipating it in the daily course of our lives.

We thank you, Lord, for the revelation that accompanied you in your first coming, for the many things that were made so clear that were but dimly received and perceived in the Old Testament days.

We thank you for the revelation that will accompany and attend upon your second coming, for the way in which you will bring to us a sight of your glory that has never been seen before.

We bless you, O Lord, that as it has been seen in heaven, so it will be seen on earth too, and the whole earth and the whole universe will indeed come to acknowledge that you are the King, that you are taking your rightful place on the throne of the universe, that you are the one before whom every knee must bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[33 : 00] Lord, help us to carry that conviction in our hearts daily, help us to show in our lives as we live them, that we are an anticipating people, a people who eagerly look forward to the return of our Lord, so that when that announcement is made, that we will, Lord, go forth running with our lamps lit, anticipating your coming, and welcome you when you come.

Hear us, we pray, for your glory's sake. Amen. Amen.