**The Three Appearings of Christ**

***Colossians 3:4; Hebrews 9:24-28***

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Introduction: Colossians 3:4 says, *“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”* This verse refers to a future appearing of Christ. In fact, this is the third appearing of Christ given to us in Scripture. All 3 appearings are found in one place, Hebrews 9:24-28. Let’s read that text & then pray.

 We have looked at this text previously. We see here man’s apprehension of death, man’s appointment with death, & man’s appearance after death. Though death is an unpleasant, unknown, & often unpre-pared for subject, yet all have an appointment with death, unless the Lord comes first & raptures His Church to heaven. That appointment we all have with death is the consequence of sin & signifies the completion of this life. It is also the commencement – the beginning – of life ever after. Our appearance after death will be at one of 2 places: the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers or the Great White Throne Judgment for unbelievers. But our attention this morning is upon the 3 appearances of Christ found here: past, present, & future.

 I. Christ’s **past** appearing > Hebrews 9:26 [emphasis upon **salvation**]

 A. The term that is used, *“appeared”*:

 1. The Greek word here is *“phaneroo”* which means “to become apparent after being hidden.”

 2. The general understanding of the word is: “to be revealed; to manifest what is concealed &

 invisible.”

 B. The truth that is taught:

 1. O.T. prophecies of Christ’s appearing >

 a. Isaiah 7:14.

 b. Isaiah 9:6-7.

 2. N.T. fulfillment of Christ’s appearing >

 a. His birth – Matthew 1:18-25 (& cf. Luke 2:1-20).

 b. His life – Matthew 3:13-17 (His public presentation for baptism).

 c. His death – Hebrew 9:26 (& cf. Matthew 20:28 & I Peter 3:18).

 II. Christ’s **present** appearing > Hebrews 9:24 [emphasis upon **supplication**]

 A. Defining the term used:

 1. The Greek word is *“emphanizo”* which means “to manifest or declare openly.

 2. The general idea of this word is “to exhibit in person (cf. Matthew 27:53).

 B. Describing the task at hand:

 1. Christ’s present ministry as our *“Advocate”* as found in I John 2:1.

 a. The word is translated elsewhere as *“Comforter”* – John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

 b. The word can be demonstrated as “our Defender in the courtroom of God (who) is

 righteous & therefore effective” (Ryrie).

 2. Christ’s present ministry as our “Intercessor.”

 a. *“Intercession”* defined – a compound word meaning “to chance upon; confer with; to

 entreat; to fall in with; or to make petition” (cf. I Timothy 2:1).

 b. *“Intercession”* demonstrated – it is used only 6 times in the N.T.; only 2 of Christ:

 (1) Romans 8:34, *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is*

 *risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”*

 (2) Hebrews 7:25, *“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto*

 *God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”*

III. Christ’s **future** appearing > Hebrew 9:28 [emphasis upon **security**]

 A. The term that is used:

 1. The Greek word is *“optomai”* which means “to gaze at face to face.”

 2. The general understanding of the word – “to gaze at with wide open eyes, as at something

 remarkable” (not just a casual or voluntary observation).

 B. The task that is implied:

 1. Theologically – at His future appearing He is not bearing our sin (*“without sin”*).

 a. O.T. contrast > Isaiah 53:4-6.

 b. N.T. contrast > I Peter 2:24.

 2. Poetically – in the words of the song writer:
 a. “Saved by Grace.”

 b. “Face to Face.”

Conclusion: We have seen the 3 different appearings of Christ here in Hebrew 9:24-28. He appeared in the past as our Sin-bearer, our Substitute. I Peter 3:18 declares, *“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”* Has He brought you to the Father?

 He is appearing now in the present as our Supplicator, out Intercessor, in heaven. If you have been brought to God in salvation, born into His family as a child of God, Christ now is making intercession for you.

 And your hope, my hope, is to see Him face to face. That is the promise of John 14:1-6 & I John 3:1-2. And by the way, the verse we began with, Colossians 3:4, used the word *“phaneroo”* in describing His appearing (“to become apparent after being hidden”). That “assures us that His future appearing will be just as real to us as His past appearing was to His first disciples” (Morris). When He appears in the future – we “appear” with Him. And so shall we be forever with Him in glory! Is that your hope this morning?