

022325

“Christ Appears for Us”

Hebrews 9:23-28

series: Christ Before Us #25

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Background

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Many outside the Jewish or Christian faiths know it. God created everything. The earth we can understand. But what about the heavens? The word has multiple referents, in English as well as in biblical Hebrew and Greek. The birds fly across the heavens. Further out, the sun, moon, and stars shine in the heavens. Still further, beyond our gaze, are the supernatural beings in the transcendent heavens.

There is another realm of heaven that is not part of this creation; it is beyond creation, above creation. It is beyond space and time. This is the realm where the uncreated God exists in radiant glory, in the loving communion of the Trinity.

Heaven is an important element in the Book of Hebrews, but the book’s cosmology might seem rather complex. So let’s start with Luke’s account of the ascension of Jesus into heaven. Forty days after his resurrection, and after multiple appearances to his disciples, Jesus was taken up into heaven. Luke records this event twice: briefly at the end of his gospel (Luke 24:50-51), then in greater detail at the beginning of Acts (Acts 1:6-11). So for Luke the ascension of Jesus into heaven is a defining moment.

Sermon Text: Hebrews 9:23-28

²³ It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world, but he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Discussion Questions

Preparation

1. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
2. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

3. What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

Sunday Questions:

Understanding Christ's Role in Heaven and Earth

1. Hebrews 9:24 states that Christ entered heaven itself to appear for us in God's presence. What does this mean for our relationship with God today?
2. The sermon emphasizes that Christ has appeared, is appearing, and will appear again. How do these three aspects of Christ's work shape our faith and daily walk with Him?
3. The Old Testament tabernacle was a copy of the heavenly reality (Hebrews 9:23-24). What does this tell us about the significance of Jesus' sacrifice compared to the old sacrificial system?

Christ's Sacrifice and Forgiveness

4. Hebrews 9:26 says that Christ appeared once for all to do away with sin. How does this truth challenge the way we think about sin, forgiveness, and grace?
5. Under the Old Covenant, the high priest offered sacrifices repeatedly, but Jesus sacrificed once for all. How does this give us confidence in our salvation?
6. The sermon highlights that through Christ, our sins are forgiven and remembered no more (Hebrews 8:12). How can we fully embrace this truth instead of holding onto guilt?

Living in Expectation of Christ's Return

7. Hebrews 9:28 tells us that Christ will appear a second time to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him. How can we actively prepare our hearts and lives for His return?
8. The preacher of Hebrews encourages believers to keep their eyes on Jesus to avoid drifting away. What distractions in life can cause us to lose focus on Christ, and how can we stay spiritually anchored?

Encouraging One Another in the Faith

9. The sermon urges believers to meet together and encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25). How does Christian community help us stay faithful in our spiritual journey?
10. The sermon concludes with the declaration: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." How can this truth bring hope and strength in difficult times?