

• *Christ's work is final and unique*

The final unit in Hebrews chapter 9 emphasizes the finality and uniqueness of the work of Christ in presenting his blood to the Father. We have (i) the appearing of Christ^{□1}, (ii) the singularity of his entry^{□2}, and (iii) the hope of Jesus' future exit from the inner sanctuary^{□3}.

□1 9:24
□2 9:25-28a
□3 9:28b

1. The 'appearing' of Jesus

• *Not in a building but heaven itself*

1. **The 'appearing' of Jesus.** ²⁴*For Christ did not enter into holy places made by human hands, which are only copies of the true holy places. No, he entered heaven itself, so that he now appears in the presence of God.* We are not to have 'a holy building mentality'. Our writer knows his Hebrew friends. They are admirers of the tabernacle and think how wonderful it was. People often like to admire religious buildings! The disciples were the same before the Day of Pentecost (note Matthew 24:1 where Jesus' disciples come to point out to him the marvellous buildings of the temple. But the greatest work of Jesus is much more important than holy buildings, even more important than a holy building ordained by God himself – the tabernacle. Christ did not do his greatest work in any religious building! His greatest work was done by entering a realm 'not made by human hands'. The man Jesus, risen from the dead, entered heaven itself shortly after the time mentioned in John 20:17 when Jesus said, 'I have not yet ascended to the Father'.

• *Says to the Father – look not at my people – but at me!*

Jesus 'appears' in heaven. He shows himself to the Father and says to God in effect, 'Do not look at the weaknesses of my people. Look at me! I died for them'. Jesus draws God's attention away from our sins and in the direction of Jesus' blood and the righteousness of Jesus that covers our sins. Of course the Father himself loves us! God is very delighted that Jesus should be the Advocate for his people. It was the Father who sent the Son! Now the Son of God has done his work and 'appears' before the Father as our Protector and Saviour amidst the divine glory.

2. The singularity of his entry into heaven

• *Once for ever*

2. **The singularity of his entry into heaven**^{□1}. ²⁵*Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters into the holy places every year with blood that is not his own.* ²⁶*For in that case he would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for ever at the end of the ages to put away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.* ²⁷*And just as it is appointed for people to die once, and after that to face judgement,* ²⁸*so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are eagerly waiting for him.* The key word here (a single word in Greek) is 'once for ever'. The New Testament delights in the uniqueness and singularity of what Jesus did by his own blood. The death Jesus died he died **once**^{□2}. He has no need to offer sacrifices daily^{□3□4}. We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time^{□5}. Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous^{□6}.

□1 9:25-28a

□2 Romans 6:10
□3 Hebrews 7:27
□4 see also 9:12
□5 Hebrews 10:10
□6 1 Peter 3:18

• *Achieved everything on the first occasion*

It was a once-for-ever-offering because it did everything that needed to be done on the first occasion. The Old Testament priests failed to get a full salvation and so had another attempt the following year. Jesus never needed to repeat the cross because it was effective, first time.

• *More than forgiveness*

• *We die to sin's realm altogether*

• *Sin has been dealt a death-blow*

• *A crucial once-for-ever incident in the world's history*

• *It was the end of one epoch and the beginning of another*

3. What remains is the hope of Jesus' future exit from the inner sanctuary

• *He will come visibly from heaven and we shall reign with Him forever*

The once-for-ever-offering puts away sin. This is not simply a reference to forgiveness although it begins with forgiveness. There is more. We die to sin's realm altogether. It is utterly defeated, and has no further right to rule over us. Sin still tries to get at us but it is always an intruder! Sin is doomed. It will be exterminated. Jesus will put all enemies beneath his feet.

This is now – since the Day of Pentecost – the last epoch of human history. At the end of world history sin has been dealt a death-blow from which it will never recover.

We have to die once. It is a crucial once-for-ever incident in our lives. It is followed immediately by a heaven-or-hell decision about us. The sacrifice of Jesus is similar. It was a crucial once-for-ever incident in the history of the world. It is followed immediately by an appearing of Jesus in heaven which radically takes forward the experience of God's people. A 'judgement' takes place in which sin loses its authority and its power to condemn us. Jesus is from that second onwards our everlasting intercessor. The entrance of Jesus into heaven was as radical as someone's death. It was the end of one epoch and the beginning of another.

3. What remains is the hope of Jesus' future exit from the inner sanctuary. Jesus 'will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are eagerly waiting for him'. When the high priest of Mosaic times went into the holy of holies the people were outside hoping he would not die but would stay alive (and the bells on his robe let them know he was indeed alive). Then they stayed there waiting for him to come out and declare another year's national redemption. Our position is not identical but it has the same shape. Jesus is in heaven. We know that he is alive. We are waiting for him to appear again. When he comes visibly from heaven it will be to tell us sin is abolished for ever and our salvation is to come to its final completion. In resurrected and glorified bodies we shall reign for ever in a resurrected and glorified universe. But it is all done by the power of Jesus' blood. Every blessing there is for us was bought by the precious blood of Christ.



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