

The Final Appointments

Hebrews 9:27-28

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”

We all keep some sort of record of our appointments. We thereby aid ourselves in being at the appointed place on the appointed day at the appointed time.

Missed appointments may be costly. These include missed appointments with physicians, civil courts, and deadlines for projects.

There are certain appointments you will not miss even if you endeavor to do so. These appointments will be kept whether or not you are ready for them. And being unprepared for them will be the costliest mistake you ever make. However, you know neither the day nor time of these appointments, nor where you will be when they occur.

Being genuinely concerned for your soul and mine, I here would ascertain that we know as much as possible about **the final appointments**:

1. our appointment with death;
2. our appointment with the judgment;
3. Christ’s preparation of His people for their appointment with the judgment;
4. Christ’s appointment to return.

I. Our appointment with death: “it is appointed for men to die once.”

1. *This appointment is the result of sin* (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23): “The soul who sins shall die”; “For the wages of sin is death.”

Since “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23), all shall die. (The only exceptions to this universal rule are the extraordinary cases of Enoch [Genesis 5:24] and Elijah [2 Kings 2:11], and those yet alive at the return of Christ [1 Thessalonians 4:16f].)

2. *This appointment is predestined by God* (Ecclesiastes 3:1f): “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die” (cp. 3:17; 8:6a).

Job rightly confessed to God that “[man’s] days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass” (Job 14:5).

You are no more in control of the time of your death than you were of the time of your birth. You may by reason

of advanced age and/or failing health know “the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Timothy 4:6). But the precise moment of your departure may nevertheless take you completely by surprise. God is not obligated to inform you of the time of your death. It could be today – even this very moment!

3. *This appointment is “once”* – a one-time event (Job 10:21): “I go to the place from which I shall not return, to the land of darkness and the shadow of death.” (The resurrections of Lazarus and a few others by the Lord were special exceptions to this general rule.)

There is no reincarnation affording us a second chance to make amends for the sins of this life.

II. Our appointment with the judgment: “but after this the judgment”.

1. *This appointment is inseparably linked to the preceding.* All who die will be judged.

2. *This appointment, like death, is predestined by God* (Acts 17:31): “He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

3. *This judgment will occur at Jesus Christ’s return to earth* (Matthew 25:31ff): “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, ... then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him. ...” (cp. Revelation 20:11-13).

4. *This judgment will be of all people* (2 Corinthians 5:10): “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad.”

5. *This judgment will be of all things regarding us* – including deeds performed, words uttered, thoughts imagined, and whether done in public or in private.

• “For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

• “God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Romans 2:16).

• He tells us “for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36).

III. Christ’s preparation of His people for their appointment with the judgment: “so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.”

1. *Christ prepared “many” for this judgment.*

“Many” is less than “all”, but more than “few”.

They are so “many” that they comprise “a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9).

They here in our present text are identified as “those who eagerly wait for Christ”.

These are all who will say at His return, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isaiah 25:9).

2. *Christ “prepared” many for judgment by bearing their sins and dying as their offering for sin.*

The sins He bore were not His own. For “He knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21), “He committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:22), “and “in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

Rather, the sins Christ bore and for which He died were those of God’s elect. This truth is clearly set forth in Isaiah 53. There we read of the “many” (vv.11, 12) whom Jehovah calls “My people” (v.8). And there we read:

- God’s people confess “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all” (v.6);
- We also confess “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows [i.e., the consequences of our sins]” (v.4);
- Jehovah said “For the transgressions of My people He was stricken” (v.8);
- And “we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (vv.4f);
- Jehovah has fulfilled His promise to Christ that “He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (v.11).

And as mortals die only *once*, “Christ was offered *once*” – “*once for all*” (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 10:10).

God forbid that we should attempt to repeatedly make an offering of Christ, as some do in their Mass.

IV. Christ’s appointment to return: “To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”

1. *It is appointed for Christ to “appear a second time”* – and at the predestined time (Mark 13:32f): “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.”

Many scoff at the idea that Christ will return (2 Peter 3:3f): “scoffers will come in the last days, walking

according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’”

But as scoffers perished in the Noachic Deluge because of their unreadiness for it (vv.5f), so will they perish when Christ returns “as a thief in the night” (v.10).

Believers, on the other hand, “eagerly wait for Him”.

2. *It is appointed for Christ to return “apart from sin”.*

Christ in His first coming came *for sin*: He had sins laid upon Him (Isaiah 53:6), and was “made to be sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21), and died for sins (1 Corinthians 15:3), and was “an offering for sin” (Isaiah 53:10).

But all this He did “once for all”. “He has appeared to *put away sin* by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26 – immediately preceding our text).

In His return “the Son of Man comes *in His glory*” (Matthew 25:31) and “in the glory of His Father” (Matthew 16:27). At that time “He will sit on the throne of His glory” (Matthew 25:31) instead of being nailed to an accursed tree. And at that time all sin will be forever banished from His presence.

3. *It is appointed for Christ to return “for salvation”.*

Christ in His *first* coming came to *obtain* the salvation of His people. They were saved from the *penalty* for their sins through His death for them.

Christ in His *second* coming comes to *bring* the salvation of His people. They will be saved from the *presence* of sin forevermore.

4. *Believers in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ therefore “eagerly wait for Him”.* We fear neither death nor the judgment. And when He says “Surely I am coming quickly” we reply “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

5. *But unbelievers will be filled with dread when Christ returns.* They will cry for the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from Christ’s face and wrath to them (Revelation 6:16).

Are you ready for the final appointments? Are you prepared to die? Are you prepared to be judged? Will you rejoice at Christ’s return?

– Daniel E. Parks