

**Last Judgment Sunday
November 8, 2015**

"Jesus Went to the Cross Once for All"

HEBREWS 9:24-28

For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary 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 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 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 waiting for him.

Home repair projects usually require several trips to the hardware store, especially plumbing repairs. The shower is leaking, just a few little drips. How many trips will it take to the store to get the right parts for the repair?

I am born into this world thinking I can repair my problem of sin so that it will not be held against when judgment day comes. It doesn't work to try to fix a leaky pipe with duct tape, and it certainly doesn't work to put a few nice things you do over the bad you have done with the hope that this will help you escape the all seeing eye of God on judgment day.

The day is coming when our God will bring this world to an end and usher in the final judgment. Some will hear the words, "Depart from me you who are cursed into the everlasting fire reserved for the devil and his angels." Others will hear the words, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." If I depend on repairing my life and making myself worthy of the kingdom of God, then I am hopelessly lost. If I depend on Jesus to remove my problem of sin, I will inherit the kingdom he has prepared for me.

The words before us this morning from Hebrews tell us, **"Jesus Went to the Cross Once for All."** Our hope is not in the repairs we make in our lives but in Christ and Christ alone.

He went to the cross to bring us forgiveness

"For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary, that was a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, not to appear for us in God's presence." In the Old Testament the priests entered often into the temple of God to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. Over and over again they sprinkled blood and sacrificed animals that were a copy or picture of Jesus the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. Once a year on the great day of atonement the high priest would take the blood of a goat and enter into the Most Holy Place. There he would sprinkle blood on the gold cover of the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant contained the ten commandments. God's glory was

in the Most Holy Place. Without this blood that pictured the blood of Christ the high priest would die, just as we would perish forever in the presence of God on judgment day if we did not have the blood of Jesus to wash us clean of our sin.

These Jewish or Hebrew Christians were facing the very real danger of taking their eyes off this sacrifice Jesus made for them. The Roman government was persecuting Christians. If they remained Jews they could escape the threat of death. If they became Jewish Christians they faced persecution for their faith. How much easier it would be to simply say, "I am Jewish" and not confess Christ. An even greater danger came from false teachers who were saying you can take Jewish laws and apply them to your Christian faith to make it more meaningful and valuable.

You know what happens when you try to add anything to what Christ has done. You actually destroy what Jesus has done for you. Christ plus anything equals nothing. Christ plus nothing equals everything. I can take a bottle of water, open it and drink it, trusting it is safe. I would not think of adding dirty and polluted water to this bottle and then drinking it. So it is when I try to help Jesus remove the sinful things I have done in my life by adding what I do to what he has done. I am adding something sinful to the perfect payment for sin at the cross. I am thus destroying it.

Jesus did not enter into a man-made sanctuary as the priest did when he offered sacrifices in the Old Testament. Jesus entered into heaven itself, into the presence of God. The word "heaven" can refer to the sky above the earth. It can refer to the place Jesus has prepared for us. It can also refer to the presence of God. That is how it is being used here when it says that Jesus "entered heaven itself now to appear in God's presence." We think how Jesus was in the presence of his heavenly Father when he prayed in the Garden, "Father if it is possible let this cup be taken from me." We think of him in the presence of God when he cried out from the cross, "My God my God why have you forsaken me?" We think of him speaking to his heavenly Father when he said, "It is finished" and "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." We think of Jesus in the presence of his Father in heaven when we read the words of Isaiah the prophet, "Surely, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted."

Jesus did not have to enter into heaven to offer himself again and again to his heavenly Father as the Old Testament priest who went before God again and again to offer animal sacrifices that pointed to Christ. "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." While Jesus lived on this earth he repeatedly lived the life that you and I could never live. That happened again and again and again. But when it came to offering the perfect sacrifice for our sin, that happened only once.

Look at the emphasis here on this one time act of Christ that does not have to be repeated. "Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do with sin by the sacrifice of himself." When Jesus suffered for your sin he did it perfectly. Hebrews four compares this perfect and complete sacrifice of Christ at the cross to the perfect work of creation. It says, "There remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his." When God rested on the seventh day, he rested because the work was done. When Jesus finished his payment

for sin at the cross he said, "It is finished." There was nothing left for Jesus to do. He did not have to go before his Father with more sacrifices as the Old Testament priest had to do.

If I fall into the false belief that I need to add something to what Jesus has done for me to make it truly worthwhile and real, then how do I ever know when I have ever done enough to get rid of my sin? It is similar one of those endless plumbing jobs in an old house where you find yourself breaking a pipe and then breaking more pipe to repair that pipe. I certainly is true that I can repair the damage I do when I hurt other people, but I can do nothing to repair the damage that sin has done in my life when it comes to being accepted by God on judgment day. Think of all the times you have made up to someone you have hurt by simply saying "I am sorry." That works with people but it cannot get on the good side of God. Our only hope is Jesus doing away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

What comfort we find this morning in these words, "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself." What really happened at the cross? It is so simple, so clear and so beautiful. Jesus did away with sin, not just our sin, but the sin of the world. John 1:29 says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Some cars get so old and run down they are not worth repairing. Jesus could easily have taken one look at us and said, "They are not worth repairing." Instead he looks at us and does away with sin by the sacrifice of himself so that when judgment day comes we will have an eternal home of joy waiting for us instead of eternal death and suffering.

He went to the cross to give us eternal life

We look forward to the day that Christ returns to destroy this present world and bring on the final judgment. We are ready for that day because Jesus went to the cross once and for all. "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 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 waiting for him."

Jesus came into this world once to go to the cross for our sin. He is coming a second time not to go to cross again, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. I was saved from my sin when Jesus went to the cross for me and I will be saved from this sinful world when Jesus comes in glory and destroys this present world and creates a new heaven and new earth.

Just as the blood of animals served as signs to point to Christ's first coming as the Lamb of God, so there are signs all around us that the second coming of Jesus could be here anytime. There are wars, rumors of wars, signs in the sun, moon and stars, false teaching in the church, earthquakes, floods and other disasters. All of these signs keep flashing that the end is near. It will not be long before Jesus comes in clouds of glory. When that happens the present heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire. There will be a new heaven and new earth, a place where God wipes away all tears from our eyes, a place where we see Jesus face to face in all his glory.

It says here that Jesus will bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Oh how

eagerly we wait for Jesus to come in clouds of glory. We pray for him to not delay his return in glory. For we know that when he comes we shall see him as he is. We will share with him in his glory and the glory he has had with the Father since the foundation of the world. God will wipe away all tears from our eyes. There will be no more pain and sorrow.

There was only one sacrifice that Jesus made for us and there is only one lifetime here on this earth to believe in what Christ has done. "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." See your friends and family members. See the people at work and your neighbors still believing in their heart of hearts that a few little repairs here and there can cover their problem of sin. This is the only lifetime they have to believe that Jesus went to the cross for them. A frontier prairie farmer looked out into the west and saw a large cloud of black smoke. The wind was blowing and it was dry. There was only one way to save his home and buildings. He took a torch and started light fires in the grass around his farm. When the big fire came the area around his buildings was already burnt. This life time on this earth is the only time we have to believe that God's judgment was poured out on Jesus when he went to the cross. Judgment day is coming. The only safe place is beneath the cross of Jesus. By God's grace you are standing in that safe place where Jesus went to the cross once for all. Amen.