

Without Reference to Sin

Hebrews 9:23-28

There are two sections in the six verses that form our text. The first half (vs. 23-25) shows how Christ has fulfilled the very thing that the ancient high priest pictured and foreshadowed within the Old Covenant. For example, Jesus entered heaven (v. 23), appearing before the presence of God (v. 24), offering His own blood for His people (v. 25). The difference is Jesus offers Himself just once *"at the end of the ages."* We have taken our time examining the types of the Old Testament, but we now focus on the end result. After the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with the blood, he came back out in order to bless Israel. Jesus fulfills the type in this as well. There is coming a day when Christ will *appear a second time*.

I. Christ's coming for His people is either through personal death or His return to a redeemed earth.

One of the problems I have with people who emphasize end times, lining out how and when Jesus is returning to the earth, is the fact that a focus on world events crowds out a focus on personal death. *"It is appointed for men to die once and after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). We do not know how this age, the age of grace, will come to an end. What we do know is how each of our lives ends.

A. The Bible never refers to the end of the world ...

Jesus said *"The meek will inherit the earth"* during His sermon on the mountain and Solomon declared that *"the earth shall endure forever"* (Ecclesiastes 1:4). When Christ ends this age of grace (the New Covenant) and *"folds it up like a garment"* (Hebrews 1:12), He will unite our eternal home which he has been preparing for us (John 14:1-5) with the earth--the earth that has been *"groaning, waiting for the day of redemption."* God redeems the earth and creation.

B. The Bible constantly refers to the end of your life ...

You will die. It is appointed. And when you die you will face judgment. You will meet your God. The prophet Amos sought to focus people by crying *"Prepare to meet your God"* (Amos 4:12).

II. Christ's coming for His people the second time is 'without reference to sin.'

This is an amazing verse of Scripture. When Christ appears the second time (either at your death or at His coming to consummate the age of grace), He will appear *"without reference to sin"* (v. 28). This phrase is translated *"without sin"* (KJV) *"not to bear sin"* (ESV), but I like the NAS translation. *"Without reference to sin"* (NAS) has various shades of meaning and application for us:

A. This phrase speaks of His purpose ...

The first time He came to do the Father's will and *"bear sin,"* and *"become sin"* for His people. The second time He comes it is to bless the people in the same manner the high priest came out of the Holy of Holies and pronounced the blessings over the people through an atoned God.

B. This phrase speaks of His people ...

When Jesus comes the second time it is *"without reference to sin."* That means that no sin of yours is referred to by God. There is no judgment. There is no condemnation (Romans 8:1). You have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and the coming of Christ is a time of blessing.

C. This phrase speaks of His promise ...

The promise is that God comes to give to His people the inheritance that He promises in the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15). This inheritance is called *"the unfathomable riches of Christ"* by Paul (Eph. 3:8) and it is said we will spend *"the ages to come"* unfolding the riches (Eph. 2:7).

III. Christ's coming for His people the second time is something we *can* eagerly anticipate.

How can you eagerly anticipate Christ's coming? By knowing the riches of God's grace in Christ. He comes a second time for deliverance without reference to sin *"to those who eagerly await Him."*