

One Appointment You Will Keep

Hebrews 9:24-28



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FOCAL Read Responsively Hebrews 9:24-28 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: **(25) Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;** (26) For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. **(27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:** **(28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.**^{KJV}

Illustrate I doubt there are any in this room who have not had an *appointment* with a doctor, a dentist, or an optometrist at some time in your life. These *professional caregivers* work by appointment. I can't count the number of times that I've sat in a doctor's office, often getting there early, then found myself waiting long past the time appointed. That is *so* annoying! Yet the fact is, the *appointer* has absolute control over the *time of the appointment*. Your appointment may be at 10:00 am, but the doctor may decide not to see you until noon or later. You may not like it, but the appointment is always controlled by the *appointer* and not by the *appointee*.

The Bible speaks of a coming appointment that we all have with the Grand Appointer, God Almighty. You can visit every doctor in this land, every hospital, be attached to every piece of medical equipment imaginable, but

sooner or later we will all keep this appointment. The Apostle Paul preached at Athens, as he looked at the *idolatry that was rampant in the land*:

Acts 17:31 {God} hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by {Jesus Christ} whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead.

God has given each one of us an appointment with judgment. There is coming a day when we *will* stand before the Righteous Creator of all things and be judged. The appointment is coming and, just as it is with our example of the doctor, that appointment *is when the Appointer says it is*. Let's look at our focal text.

1. All Mankind Has An Appointment With Judgment

Each and every person that is now in this room, each and every person that is now alive and on this planet called *earth* has a Divine Appointment set before them. This Appointment is described in our focal text in verse 27:

FOCAL Hebrews 9:27 ... And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

This is a *general appointment*, a *universal appointment*, and a *mandatory appointment*.

This appointment is in two parts. Our text says,

- 1. It is appointed unto men (literally, *mankind*) once to die**
- 2. After this (physical death) the judgment**

Part 2 of this appointment is *universal*. Following death there *is* a judgment for all men, women, boys, and girls. Every single person on the face of this earth will stand before God and be judged.

Ecclesiastes 3:17 ... God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for [there is] a time there for every purpose and for every work.

Judgment is sure, and God is the Sure Judge. He will weigh each work, the value of every soul, and determine the eternal and final destination of every person. This He will do *after* we pass through this life and enter the next through *physical death*.

Judgment from God follows physical death. But when does *physical death* come? God controls the *exact moment* of physical death for each and every one of us. The Bible says:

Psalms 68:20 Our God is a God of salvation, and escape from death belongs to the

Lord GOD^{NIV}

It is true that **it is appointed unto man(kind) once to die (physically), and after this the judgment.**

We must *always* remember that God is the Appointer, He controls every element of this Divine Appointment. God controls life, He controls death.

When King David sinned before the Lord and God punished him, he said:

Psalms 118:18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

He was **chastened** of God, punished sorely, but until God **gave him over to death** he would not die. **God is the Appointer**, it is He Who controls life, death, and the *universal judgment* of all. Look at a few Biblical examples of God's control of death.

a. Enoch never died

Does man *have to die*? It is up to God! The Bible tells us of a man named **Enoch** who never died.

We read:

Genesis 5:23-24 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: (24) And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

If I were to read only the Book of Genesis I might doubt that Enoch truly was translated, because the Genesis account is a *little obscure*. Yet God always gives us ample evidence of what He teaches because He loves us. We read in another place:

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

God is the Appointer, the Controller of Death. It *pleased God* to *translate* Enoch, to take him to Heaven without dying. Enoch was judged without completing the first part of his appointment because God excused him from physical death. Look now at the case of **Elijah**.

b. Elijah Never Died

Elijah was a great prophet of God, a man who stood alone against overwhelming odds, supporting His Creator even when no others would stand. It was Elijah who stood up for God and prayed that rain would not come:

James 5:17 **Elijah was a man with a nature like ours; yet he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land.**¹

Elijah prayed so that God **raised the widow of Zarephath's son from the dead**, prayed so that **the flour jar never ran out of meal**, prayed so that **the prophets of the false god Baal were destroyed**, and prayed so that **rain came back on the land.**²

When it came time for Elijah to go and be with the Lord, the Creator, **God the Appointer of life and of death** sent a flaming chariot to pick up this saint.

2 Kings 2:11 **And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.**

God controls life, your life, my life. He alone is the Appointer. You live while He says that you live, and you die when God says that you die. We have seen two who *never died* – but the Bible also tells of those *who died more than once*.

c. Both Lazarus As Well As

¹ Also see 1 Kings 17:1 ff

² All accounted in 1 Kings 17-18

The Widow's Son Died Twice

Jesus had three dear friends that He often stopped and visited with when He was *passing through Bethany*³. His dear friend **Lazarus**, brother to **Martha and Mary**, fell terribly ill. The sisters knew that the solution to Lazarus' illness was the Lord Jesus Christ. So they sent for Jesus. The Master was just a short distance away, surely He would come and keep Lazarus from dying! One day passed, then another day – then Lazarus die. The sisters mourned, wrapped their dear brother in myrrh and aloe, bound his body with strips of cloth, then laid him in his grave. A stone was rolled against the door, and they mourned the loss of this dear brother.

Death had won. Jesus had not come!

After Lazarus lay in the grave for four days⁴ the mourning sisters looked and, behold, there came Jesus – but O so late! Their beloved Lazarus was dead, no more to walk or talk with them, to love them, to sing with them. But Jesus, the Precious Savior, ordered that their brother's tomb be opened. “Roll back the stone”. He had told Martha:

John 11:25-26 ... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (26) And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

³ John 11:1

⁴ John 11:17

God is the Appointer, the Controller of death. God is the One Who took **Enoch**, Who took **Elijah**. Now we see Jesus standing at the tomb. We see the stone rolled away. We see the Master shout:

John 11:43-44 ... Lazarus, come forth. (44) And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

He who was dead comes from the grave. **God is the Appointer, the Controller of death.**

God stood at the mouth of that tomb and cried out "Come" - and Lazarus came!

Lazarus died, was raised, but *Lazarus eventually died again*. He grew to a ripe old age, I am sure, telling his friends of that wonderful day when Jesus raised him from the grave. God is the Appointer, and He controls life and death. God came into a little city called **Nain** and raised the **widow's son**:

Luke 7:14-15 {Jesus} came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. (15) And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his

mother.

God is the Appointer, the Ultimate Controller of death. He lengthens physical life, He shortens physical life. There was a time when people understood this principle of Scripture. You are here, today, alive and listening to this message because *God has willed it to be so*. Your life is not guaranteed. The Bible says of life:

James 4:13-15 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: (14) Whereas ye know not what [shall be] on the morrow. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. (15) For that ye [ought] to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

People have begun to believe that *life is guaranteed to a certain age or a certain time*. This is one of the reasons why health care has become such a booming industry in America. Let's see a doctor, let's extend our lives, let's keep on going. Listen Beloved, the Scripture does not support *eternal life in this flesh*.

We should live *every moment as if it were our last, every minute as if judgment from God is impending*.

This is what the Scripture teaches us. Death is not to be feared by those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for

salvation. For the believer the promise is:

Job 5:26 Thou shalt come to [thy] grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

You have a Divine Appointment, I have a Divine Appointment, and *immediately following our physical deaths* – If God call us through death – we *will be judged*.

2. All Mankind Has An Appointment With Judgment - Is Jesus On YOUR Side?

Reading further in our text we see:

FOCAL Hebrews 9:27-28 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but **after this the judgment: (28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.**

The Lord may take you by physical death – this is the way that most of mankind will go. The Lord may, as He did with **Enoch and Elijah**, take you *apart from death*. We believe in a coming day when Jesus will *return for His Bride* to gather her into Heaven. We believe in a time when our Savior will, like the bridegroom of the Old Testament era, come to *quickly gather His Bride to Himself*.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

If you are here on that wonderful day, and you are *saved by faith in Jesus Christ, bound to Him by faith in His shed Blood*, then you will be among those who **are alive and remain, caught up together with them (the other believers) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**. Blessed be the Name of God, I so look forward to that wondrous day!

Whether the Lord take us by *physical death* or, as He took **Elijah and Enoch**, by *catching up*, is of little difference. We will all be judged! What is important is *what basis you are judged on*.

Let me say that again so you understand me clearly. What matters most is not *how* you get into the **Presence of the Appointer**, but on *what basis you are judged* when you get before Him.

Illustrate Just the other day I received what I like to call

“a letter from a loon”. This strange creature wrote me to tell me how *God was now prophesying through her*, warning me of impending judgment. It seems there were a few things that God forgot to write in His Holy Scriptures, so He repaired His deficiency by contacting this nut case to tell her everything that He neglected to tell His Apostles and Prophets of old. I started to write her back, but in the end just threw her letter in the trash. Never start nor continue an argument with the confused – you cannot win.

We will all stand before God and be judged. The loon will be judged, and so will I. Who will stand with you on that Great Day of Judgment? I don't want some loon standing with me who, disregarding God's Word and God's Power, has set herself up as a modern day prophet. Phooey on that! I do not want to stand before God and be judged on *your works* nor *on my works*. There are flaws in both, and perfection is far away from all of us.

One day many years ago God the Holy Spirit stripped away my arrogance, my certainty, my belief in my own so called loony *goodness*. On that day I stood before God and asked the question:

Acts 16:30 ... what must I do to be saved?

What *must* I do to be saved from that final judgment? I know my works are not sufficient to save me. I know that I am a sinner – how shall God *ever* receive me as a Son? One day I asked that question, and on that wonderful day I received this all sufficient answer:

Acts 16:31 ... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

When I stand before God at that *last Great Judgment*, when the **Divine Appointer** looks at me, it is not I that He will see but *Christ Jesus in me*.

I want you to notice what is said in our focal text:

FOCAL Hebrews 9:24 For **Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:**

Break this down, My Beloved.

Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands

Jesus Christ did not enter into the Holy of Holies with the blood of a lamb. Among the ancient Jews the High Priest had to *enter into that holiest of places* once a year to *pay for the sins of the people*. Unless he carried the blood of the spotless lamb into this place Israel stood before God *judged for salvation according to her works*. Jesus Christ never did that. Jesus Christ is the **Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world**. He died on Calvary for you and for me. When He entered into the

holy of holies it was not the little room on planet earth that Israel's High Priest entered. No, but Jesus entered into *the very Throne room of God*.

Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands ... but into heaven itself

Jesus Christ entered into Heaven itself. He stood before God's Judgmental Throne, presenting Himself for *every believer in Him*.

now to appear in the presence of God for us

If you have accepted Christ as Savior, He **now appears in the presence of God FOR US**. Jesus Christ stands *for you and with you*, if you have accepted Him as Savior and Lord.

We who believe have an Advocate, a Legal Defense that cannot be overruled. We have *Jesus Christ as Savior*. Our text states:

FOCAL Hebrews 9:26 ... but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Jesus Christ died once and for all on that Cross of Calvary for all who believe. If you have accepted Him as

Savior then you need not fear death. When you stand before God at **your Divine Appointment** Jesus will stand with you. If you are a Christian your works will be judged for reward or loss (**1 Corinthians 3:15**). If your life is *built on the foundation of faith in Christ* then you will enter Heaven.

But if your life is built on *any other foundation* you will not stand in that Great Judgment Day. Oh, how terrible it will be to stand before God and be judged *based on your own merit*. It is the height of insanity to believe that our own innate goodness will grant us entrance into God's Kingdom! Unless you have Jesus Christ on your side, unless you see Him, *by faith*, standing with you, then you shall be cast out of the presence of God and into a place of *eternal torment*. Jesus must have stood in your place on Calvary's Tree, or else you will stand alone on that Great Judgment Day.

FOCAL Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation

- Jesus Christ ONCE SUFFERED: There are no other ways to salvation in God.
- Jesus Christ ONCE SUFFERED FOR YOU AND I: Have you believed on Him for salvation?
- We all have ONE COMING JUDGMENT: Will we stand before God *unclothed*, or shall we stand before God having *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*?

I pray that God leads each and every one of you to trust in Jesus, building your life upon this Firm Foundation this very day. Do not believe for one moment that “I always have tomorrow”. You don't have tomorrow guaranteed to you, you just have today, this moment, this time. The Lord reminds us:

2 Corinthians 6:2 ... "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.^{NIV}

I beg you, do not cast aside this moment. Heed the call of God, and surrender your lives to Him while there is yet time. Once God calls you through physical death, you will not have another chance to be saved. The Bible speaks nothing of *purgatory* – to day is the day of salvation.

May God bless your hearts with these words.

