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## The Appearing of the Lord Pt. 2

Like last week, I want to spend today trying to come to an understanding of the appearances of the Lord mentioned in Hebrews chapter 9.

Last week, I spent most of our time talking about the fact that outward "appearings" of the Lord have not historically or in the present day, been the kind of seeing, the kind of beholding that transforms a soul.

If you'll recall, I went into some detail about how both in the Old Testament and the New, the seeing of things with the natural eye did not profit the ones seeing unless there was along with it an appearing, a beholding with the eyes of the heart, a seeing that the Spirit makes real to the soul.

You'd think that a natural seeing, a natural beholding of power, of glory, of miracles, or of the person of Jesus, would be enough to bring faith. And yet, the coming of faith has nothing to do with these things. (define faith for visitors) We looked at how the children of Israel coming out of Egypt seeing so many miraculous things with their natural eyes were not profited by them because it did not bring them to faith. Hebrews 4:2.

We talked about how the followers of Jesus, seeing and hearing so many things with natural eyes and natural ears ended up screaming "crucify Him" when He did not conform to their understanding of Messiah. We talked about Paul, and how, though he was certainly set in a different direction after the outward appearing of Christ on the road to Damascus, was only changed, transformed, and rooted and grounded in truth when there was the inward appearing of the Lord. Or in his words "when the Father revealed His Son in me" Galatians 1:15.

We, who are born into the natural, want all things of spiritual importance to be brought into the realm that we are familiar with. We want God's teachings, purposes, realities, etc. to be that which we can grasp with the natural mind. And yet that is never the case. Paul says [1Co 2:14](#) "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."

Well, that is no different than what we are talking about. Spiritual reality is spiritually discerned. And it is spiritually discerned only in the Lord's appearing, only in the Lord's unveiling of Himself to the human soul.

Paul says, just prior to the verse we just quoted –

[1Co 2:12](#) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. [1Co 2:13](#) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom

teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

All of this has to do with the appearing of the Lord in you as the Spirit of Truth. I said last week that the appearing that the epistles are primarily concerned with is the soul's face to face encounter with the Spirit of Truth. This is not something that eyeballs see and natural ears hear. This is none other than –

**2Co 4:6** For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Here we have light shining in darkness. You could certainly call that an appearing. An appearing of Light. An appearing of Truth. What is the nature of this appearing? It is spiritual, not natural. Where is the place of this shining? It is said to be in the heart. What is the outcome of this shining? It is the true knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What then happens to those who face this appearing? Read on in verses 10 and 11

**2Co 4:10** [we carry] about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

This is a shining, an appearing, a face to face confrontation, that brings one thing, one man, to death, and Another remains and is manifested. This is the appearing that we mentioned in Colossians 3. This is the appearing that Jesus promised would be the ministry of the Spirit of Truth.

And while I'm not saying anything specific about outward appearings of the Lord – either those having to do with eschatological schools of thought, or those having to do the charismata, or gifts of the spirit – I am saying, very specifically, that you and I must come to know the soul's confrontation with the brightness of the Spirit of Truth if our goal is conformity to the image of Christ. It is in the renewing of the spirit of the mind by this manner of appearing that we are transformed.

**Psa 51:6** Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.

I'll say again what I said last week - nothing we see with the natural eye can ever transform the soul. It can excite the soul, depress the soul, or motivate the soul. But nothing that appears to the eyes of the flesh has the power to put away or change the flesh. **Natural appearings can only bring natural and temporary results.** The appearing of the Lord that you and I need to face to be changed is the soul's confrontation with the resurrected Christ in His temple. And you are that temple.

Alright, so now lets get back into our verses in Hebrews chapter 9. We'll start with verse 26.

Heb 9:26 ... but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Your Bible might read "once at the end of the world" or "once at the consummation of the ages" I mentioned last week that this verse has to do with Jesus appearing at

the end of the Old Covenant age and putting it away. I personally don't believe that many Christians have any idea how big of a deal this putting away is either in history or in the soul of man.

Lets look at the historical first. Do you realize that for some 2000 years, God had established a single relationship with humans called the Old Covenant. God was only in relationship with man in this one way, in this one covenant that He established and defined. And that covenant was given to man through the audible voice of God thundering out of a mountain. That covenant was demonstrated through miracles without number. It was written down from the very mouth of God to Old Covenant Israel. And for two thousand years there was the only way that the God of heaven related with the earth. He related with the earth in a temple, through a priesthood, by way of sacrifice, offerings, festivals, and law. He related with humans through a pattern of Christ that was given with such intricate detail that the slightest variation or alteration of that pattern required death or excommunication from those among whom He dwelled.

Do you realize that it was only in that system established by God, in that pattern, that man had any relationship with God. It was only in that system that we know as the Old Covenant that man knew anything of God, and God had anything to do with man, or that God had revealed anything about Himself or His purposes to man. And that is because that system, in every way, was a picture, a figure, a type and shadow of the **ONE in whom** we have relationship with God and God has relationship with us. That system, that covenant, that age, was the type and shadow, the preview of coming attractions, so to speak, of the One whom heaven and earth have been gathered together.

So here we have, not ten years, not 100 years, but thousands of years wherein God dealt with human beings according to a strict pattern, a defined and detailed way. Incredible detail in sacrifice and ceremony and priesthood and offerings and relationships and kingdoms. So detailed, in fact, that most Christians today find the reading of it in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers to be exceedingly boring. But it was not boring to God because every single word spoke of His glorious Son. Nor does it remain boring to us when we are able to look through it and see the Son that is our salvation, our very life.

But now, here we have the entire book of Hebrews saying that that system, that pattern, that created testimony of God fell short. Here we have the writer of Hebrews contrasting that system, that pattern, that testimony with the REALITY of the substance which has come in Christ. And in every way conceivable, the author of Hebrews tells us that that system fell short of the glory of God. It missed the mark. It manifested only sin – the missing of the mark. Remember now, for those of you who have read it, we have a dwelling place that fell short, a priesthood that fell short, a rest that falls short, a mountain that fell short, blood of bulls and goats that fell short and could never make one perfect. Everything of the old fell short. And it had to, because it was just a testimony. It was just a pattern of Him who was to come.

It had glory, 2 Corinthians 3 says, but its glory was fading. It was passing. What is glory? Glory is the expression of God. Sure, that age expressed Christ in passing and natural ways through passing shadows and passing people with passing priests and passing kings. But that glory has no glory in the presence of the glory that has now come in Christ. That is exactly what 2 Corinthians 3:10 says.

And so here our author is telling us that Christ appeared, not in the middle of this age, but at the end of it in order to become the end. Christ appeared at the end of that entire age, that entire system, those centuries of patterns and shadows for one purpose – to put it away by the sacrifice of Himself. Adam, the old man, and His creation, and His covenant – gathered up into the Person of Christ and done away with.

He appeared once at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. John chapter 12 – “now is the judgment of the world, now is the prince of this world cast out. When I am lifted up I will draw all men unto myself”. And so he did. He drew all men, all of Adam, all of the old, all of the first unto Himself. He drew that entire age, that entire dealing of God with man, and every way in which it falls short in unto Himself. And He became the end of it. He brought it to an end in Himself.

Now see this is historical. This is literal. It ended in his cross. When did the Old Covenant end? The Cross. When did the priesthood end? The Cross. The cross. When did the temple come to be fulfilled in and as the true resting place of God in a people? The Cross. What about the sacrifices, the offerings, the feasts, the law, the prophets? Jesus says “All of the Law and Prophets testified to John the baptist” And then John stands there looking at Jesus and says “behold, the Lamb. Behold the axe that is laid to the root of the tree. Its all coming to an end.”

All of it came to its end, and was put away in the cross. Not put away as abolished, but put away as fulfilled. Not put away as though God changed his purpose, but put away because the fulfillment of the purpose was come. Not put away because God changed his mind, but put away because the eternal purpose of God was now summed up in the Word made flesh. Christ and Him crucified. Christ risen and living in a new temple, as a new sacrifice, a new high priest, a new kingdom. Behold I make all things new.

Paul tells us in Colossians and Galatians that all of the things of this former age were merely the elemental shadows that pointed to the substance, and the substance has come. The substance is Christ in resurrection.

You see, all of that age was like God painting a long, detailed picture of something He wanted to bring into reality. Imagine for a moment that you are single and you had a dream spouse in your mind. For some of you, you don't have to imagine very hard. But lets just say that you sit down at an easel with a canvas and some paints and painstakingly attempt to portray everything about this person that you long to see come to a reality. Lets just say this is a woman painting her dream guy. You give him dark hair, because you've always liked dark hair. You make him a certain height. You put a certain sparkle in his eye, and a look of kindness and gentleness on his face. You spend hours, weeks, months painting this picture. And you stare at this picture, you look with hope and expectation at this portrait, you find your self spending so much of your time waiting, hoping for his appearing. Every detail of your painting demonstrates some facet of your expectation.

And then, all of the sudden, you're out bowling with your friends and there he is. You look in lane 3 and there he is. Same hair, same height, same sparkle, same kindness and gentleness. Its him. It's the same guy. Hold on, I'm making a point. So what happens to the portrait? What about that painting? Well, you put it away. **But why?** Because it is no longer needed. Why was it put away? Was it put away

because you changed your mind, because you now have a different person in mind, because you're sick of waiting? No, its put away because it is now fulfilled. Because he has come. And everything of that painting, however perfectly drawn it was, however much attention you gave to detail, has fallen short of the glory of the man who has appeared.

Ok, that's cheesy and weird, and it reminds me of a movie my wife made me watch, but it makes a point. Everything of that painting, even if it was perfectly painted, perfectly represented, falls short of the substance. Likewise, everything of the Old Covenant age, even when it was most perfectly carried out and obeyed, fell short of the substance and Person which came in Christ. And in the coming of the person, that which was partial, that which was shadow, that which testimony but had no substance would be put away.

Can you imagine if Mr. Perfect called you up the night after you met him at the bowling alley and asked you on a date and you said "no thanks, I'm just going to stay home and look at your painting". Sadly that's what we do. But what I'm trying to say is that Christ appeared once at the end of that age to put it away, to put away all that fell short, to put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself. I know that we often think of sin as just that which is apparent in our eyes as falling short, but I would suggest to you that the sin Christ put away at the cross was everything that, in His eyes, had fallen short. It was the entire painting, regardless of how perfect it spoke of the person.

Someone might ask – why throw away the painting if it's a perfect testimony. God's answer would be "because every time I ask you on a date, you'll prefer the painting every time, because that's what you've come to know". The natural man, the adamic man, will choose the shadow over the substance every time because the shadow exists in a realm that he knows and can control, but to know the substance he must leave behind all He has formerly known. He must be born again and the first life behind. He must come out of Egypt, and Egypt must come out of him. He must say goodbye to his country, his kindred, and his father's house and go forth unto a Land that will be shown to Him.

The Old Covenant age was God's painting of His perfect Son. It took him several thousand years to paint a good picture of it. The first brush stroke was when He said "let there be light". The last, as Galatians 4:4 says, is "when fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law." He started it in the consummation of the old creation. He ended it in crucifixion of the old creation. He started it by breathing life into a living soul – Adam. He ended it with the Last Adam who became the Second Man. Now, I'm just quoting Scriptures to you. You can look them up. But what I'm trying to say is that when Mr. Perfect walked into the bowling alley, it was time to put away the painting.

What was wrong with the painting? **It simply wasn't the Person.** What was wrong with priesthood? It simply wasn't the High Priest. What was wrong with Solomon's kingdom? In Jesus' own words "a greater than Solomon had come". What was wrong with the Sabbath? The Lord of the Sabbath had come. What was wrong with the Temple? It wasn't the true dwelling place of God. It all fell short. Even if they would have been able to maintain a perfect testimony of Christ by faith in that age (which, Lord knows, they did NOT), it would still have needed to be put away by the appearing of the Person. And so it was. It had all fallen short. It had all missed the mark.

He has appeared once, at the end of the age, at the end of that world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Here is where Christ puts away the shortcomings. Here is how Christ removes the old man together with his lusts. Here is where, as Paul says, "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world". Once. Here. This appearing.

And historically speaking, this appearing is described by the four gospels. This appearing, naturally speaking, is witnessed by the writers of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

But now let's get real for a minute. Let's get personal. I realize that this appearing is a historical reality. I realize, and so do you, that it was – according to natural time – in roughly 30 AD that this took place as a historical event. But let me say this very strongly – **unless this very same reality appears in and to your soul, then you will continue to live in and for what God has already put away.** That is a fact. Let me say that another way. **Unless He who appeared at the end of the age also now appears in you as the end of that age, that man, that covenant, and that creation, then you will find yourself abiding in, looking to, bound up in, and enslaved to, something that God has cut off forever from Himself.**

Let me try to say it one more way. God has removed forever the painting – everything created in the Old Covenant Age – of His Son through the appearing the true Son. But unless that true Son appears in you, unless you face Him as the end of the painting, the end of that age, the end of that man, that creation, and that covenant, then your heart will remain enslaved to a picture, a shadow, an imagination, of Someone who has already come in fullness and in substance.

So, like all of the appearings of the Lord that we're going to look at in Hebrews 9, there is a literal and historical element. A work of God finished in Christ. And yet there must be an inward appearing, a confrontation with the Spirit of Truth, Light, understanding, shining in the heart to bring His finished work into experience and expression in our soul. That's what we're talking about.

So this appearing here in Hebrews 9:26 speaks, contextually, of the literal and natural appearing of Christ in the body of flesh to become the end of that age. This is the appearing described in the four gospels, where He bears in Himself the end of that man, the man of sin. He puts it away once and for all.

If we read further on into Hebrews chapter 10, we would see this same appearing spoken of in greater detail. The writer of Hebrews quotes the Old Covenant showing that God didn't really ever want the sacrifices and offerings of the shadow. He never wanted the painting. He always looked beyond the painting. In fact, those things were never pleasing to God. The entire Old Testament, in this passage called "the volume of the book", testified, painted a picture of One who would come. And finally He did come. He came in a body prepared for Him. He was given a body so that he could die. And this was in order to accomplish something very specific - to take away the first and establish the second. I'll just read you Hebrews 10:5-9.

**Heb 10:5** Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME. 6 IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAD NO PLEASURE. 7 THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME— IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS

WRITTEN OF ME— TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.' " 8 Previously saying, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING, BURNT OFFERINGS, AND OFFERINGS FOR SIN YOU DID NOT DESIRE, NOR HAD PLEASURE IN THEM" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD." **He takes away the first that He may establish the second.**

And it is the appearing of the second that Hebrews 9:28 speaks of. That is our next verse. He appears once as the end of the first, and consequently brings the judgment, the separation, the division. But to those who will look for Him, He appears as out from the second, He appears as the reality of the second, He appears literally in Greek "from the second" to those who look for Him.

Now that too has its historical fulfillment in the resurrection. That is where He appeared again having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. That is where He appeared unto salvation to whoever look upon Him, call upon Him, turn their hearts to Him. The Apostles in the book of Acts are continually trying to get the Jews to look to Him as the one who put away sin and is in fact their salvation. The salvation promised. The salvation that they have been waiting for.

Remember Simeon in the Temple when He looks upon the baby Jesus. He says "behold, my eyes have seen the salvation of the Lord". This man had some true spiritual understanding. But Christ did not appear as salvation in the first. He appeared as salvation in the second. Do you follow me? First he appeared to put away sin. First he appeared to take away the first. First he appeared in a body prepared for Him to die. But then, to all who look for Him, there He is again as the salvation that has no reference, no connection with sin. As JW said - He appeared in one form to put away that form. Then, in the second, as the second, he can be seen as the salvation of all who will turn.

Again, this is the second word appearing in Hebrews 9:28. The Greek word has to do with allowing ones self to be seen. And as I mentioned, I don't believe this particular verse has anything to do with a futuristic bodily appearing of Jesus in the air. That doesn't make any sense in context. That doesn't fulfill what the high priest did. And that isn't the appearing for salvation. Listen, this verse says that this appearing is "unto salvation". Does your soul come to salvation when your natural eyes see the body of Jesus in the sky, or when your heart sees the resurrected Christ as the one who has put away sin now appearing to the eyes of faith in the second, as the resurrection and the life? A futuristic interpretation of this passage doesn't make sense for a multitude of reasons.

I mentioned this last week, but the high priest of old had to enter into the holy place once every year bearing the sins of many. Putting away, through death, all of the trespasses, both done knowingly and unknowingly, for that entire year. And then he would appear, having gone into the presence of God with the blood of bulls and goats, he would appear again to Israel who were eagerly looking to know if the sacrifice was accepted, if sin was atoned for. He would appear again, apart from sin, now separated from sin, now entirely removed from Israel's sin from that entire year which He carried and put away in the death of the sacrifice. The high priest would appear again unto Israel as the one by whom and in whom they had been accepted of God.

First He went in bearing a body for sacrifice. Second he appears, apart from sin, without reference to sin, unto salvation for another year. And then the cycle repeats

itself year by year by year. The cycle repeats itself again and again and again. More sacrifices, more offerings, more priests, more feasts...year after year after year. Until what? Until the end of that age! Until the end of that system. **Until the painting finds its end in the Person.**

And then...ONCE...at the end of the age He appears to put it all away. He takes away the first to establish the second. And now, He allows Himself to be seen as salvation, for all who will look for Him.

So again, to conclude, these are realities that have their actual fulfillment in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But these realities will not be known by you, experienced by you, or manifested by you, until each of these appearances becomes personalized by the Spirit of Truth. Simply put, you must see Him, know Him, as the end of first. He must appear to you, in you, as the putting away of everything that fell short. Now this is progressive. But nevertheless, **that finished work of God must become what God is allowed to finish in your heart. The truth as it is in Christ MUST become the truth as it is in your soul.** Or what? Or it will forever remain something that you and I simply "believe in" and sing songs about, but it will never transform a soul.

He has indeed taken away the first and established the second. He did it once. He did it through the body that was prepared for Him. He did it in answer to all that was written of Him in the volume of the book. But the journey of spiritual growth for us can be adequately summed up in this sentence – He must appear in our hearts to take away the first and establish the second. Because it is already a finished work of God in Christ, it must become a finished work in the soul of those who have become His body. Amen.