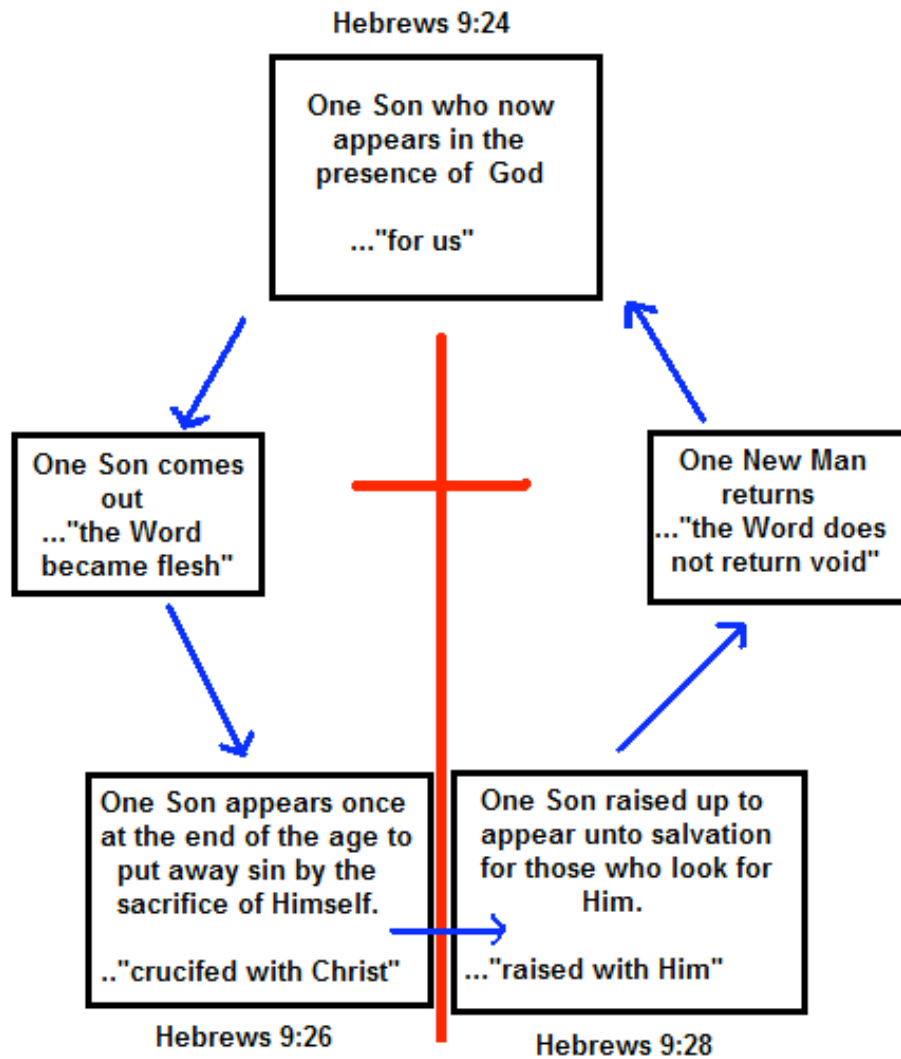


The Appearing of the Lord
Pt. 3

Diagram: The Father's View of Salvation



Today we're going to wrap up our series on the appearing of the Lord. Again, we've been taking a few week break from our Ephesians study in order to try to understand more fully some of what JW Luman shared with us a few weeks ago.

If you're visiting with us today, we've spent the last two weeks talking about the appearings of the Lord specifically mentioned in Hebrews chapter 9 verses 26, 28, and now 24. That is the order that we have been looking at these appearings.

I don't have the time I would like to go back and review the first two appearings, but the CD's are available for free in the bookstore, or you can always download the audio online. The diagrams that I use, and will be referring to today are also online in the notes. For those of you who are listening to this, you may want to put your CD or MP3 player on pause for a minute and look at the diagram on the first page of the notes online. I will be referring to it quite a bit, and it would be good to at least have a picture of it in your mind.

Ok, let me very briefly review what we've said so far about the appearing of the Lord. First of all we spent quite a bit of time talking about how, though there are natural appearings of the Lord in the flesh, or in the resurrection (which is the historical reality that Hebrews 9:26 and 28 refer to), there must be an inward appearing, an inward seeing, beholding, revealing, comprehending of these realities or they are of no benefit to you.

In other words, what God has finished and put away through the death of Christ must also be put away from your heart in an inward appearing, knowing, working of the Spirit of Truth. What God has raised up and established in the resurrection of Christ, must also be established in your soul as its own resurrection and life. If we fail to know Him in this way, then we fail to truly know Him. If we fail to see Him or have Him appear in **this way**, then this death and this Life are going to be "things" or concepts that we believe in, but never realities that cause our soul to bear His image.

I spent most of the first week talking about that reality. Then we spoke last week about the appearing of the Lord once at the end of the age, the end of the Old Covenant age, that world wherein God related to His people through natural sacrifices, priests, temples, offerings, and feasts. In that age we had a type and shadow of heaven relating to earth. That's what Hebrews says. It says that "these things were a figure, a shadow, a type of the heavenly things". So we have an old view of heaven relating with earth. You could say an old heaven and earth, summed up in God's relationship with Old Covenant Israel.

Everything of that age spoke beyond itself. Everything of that age spoke of that to which we have come. Once, at the end of the age, at the consummation of the ages, at the end of the world (however your Bible translates it) He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. So here we have Jesus appearing at the end of that age, the end of that time, and putting away everything that fell short.

Several verses say the same thing. Paul, in 1 Corinthians was recounting God's dealings with the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt and rebelled in the wilderness. He writes:

1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages have come.

Again, the King James translates that "end of the world". Its not the Greek word kosmos, but nevertheless, it was the end of that Old Covenant world.

Peter says something similar:

1Pe 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: **20** Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

As we said, that age was like a giant painting that pointed to a Person. And when that person appeared, the painting needed to be put away. He appeared to put away everything that fell short. He appeared not only to put away the bad things that you did, and then to leave you there to do them again. No, he came to put away Adam, that hopeless fallen kind, and His entire realm. He came to bring us with Himself, through His death, into His resurrection. And so Paul can say "yes, I've been crucified with Christ and its no longer I that live but Christ lives in me". But Paul can also say "May it never be that I would boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ by whom THE WORLD has been crucified to me and I to the world".

You see, the entire first man, the first creation, the good, the bad, the ugly...all of it missing the mark...was put away in that first appearing. And you have been brought with Christ out of one realm, out of one man, and into another.

Yes, I realize that your body is still of and on the earth. We have this treasure in earthen vessels for as long as we have the earthen vessels. And yet we do have the treasure. What is the treasure? Resurrection Life. The reality of being in the heavens with Christ. There is the treasure and the realm of the treasure.

Do you realize that the entire book of Hebrews, the whole New Testament for that matter, is trying to get you to come out of the earth with all of its shadows and learn to dwell with Christ in the heavens where you have come. I'm not talking about trying to believe you're in Never-Never Land. I'm talking about a work of the Spirit of Truth in the inner man showing you what is real I Christ. This is not the revealing of what is **to come**. It is the revealing of what **HAS come**.

And that brought us to our second appearing. He has to appear to you from the second, having put away the first. Having judged and divided the first from the second, He appears unto you that look for Him. You see Him. Now again, this appearing spoken of here in verse 28 happened in the literal resurrection of Christ according to the natural eyes of those who witnessed his resurrection. But this appearing, this knowing must work in your soul, or it remains a belief system and not the reality of full salvation.

But now I want to focus on the reality of where you now are. Where you now dwell, in whom you now dwell, and how salvation is complete from the Father's point of view. This thrills the heart if you can see it.

I've drawn this diagram to help illustrate what we're going to be talking about. In summary, what I want us to see is that salvation was a round trip ticked for the Son

of God. He started in the presence of God and ended in the presence of God. Picture in your mind a round-trip bus route where Christ, the one Son, is the bus. One Son left the Father. One Son put away the first. One Son came out in the second. And one Son returned to the Father.

But more than that, I want us to see that we "got on board", so to speak, in His death, and came back with Him, joined to Him. Not many returning, but One dwelling in many. Not many as many, but many as one – all having no life but Christ. This is Jesus' prayer in John 17. We came back with Him and live with Him in the Father right now.

If the church could just get ahold of the Father's view of salvation, it would forever change our view of all things.

At the top of our diagram we have one Son in the presence of God. This is the beginning of the round trip. Here we have John 1:1 – in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. Here we have John 17:24 – the glory that the Son had with Father before the foundation of the world. Here we have Proverbs chapter 8 where Wisdom is personified as the Person in whom God delighted before the earth was formed. Here we have Hebrews chapter 1 verse 2 – Christ "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person"

Ok. Well, as JW Luman said when He was here, that is wonderful and true, but it does not profit us one bit. Christ the eternal Word with the Father was not our salvation until He appeared.

So out from this top square in the diagram you see the one Son coming out. Here we have John 1:14 "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us". Here we have Philippians 2:7 "He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man"

Now, follow the arrow down to the next box, and here we find our first verse - Hebrews 9:26. Here we have the same Son appearing ONCE at the end of this entire age, putting away this form, putting away this realm, putting away the first to establish the second. Here we have one Son sacrificing Himself, becoming the end of all that fell short.

And I put the box right there at the cross, because all of this is put away in His death when He says "it is finished". This is the judgment. This is the end. John 19:28, Jesus is hanging on the cross, it reads "Jesus, knowing that all things were NOW accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled said, I thirst". And that wasn't a physical thirsting, although I believe He probably was physically thirsty. That was the thirsting for the water of Life that every Psalmist had cried out for by the Spirit of prophecy. That was Christ thirsting for the union He had forever known now that the Father had turned His back on Him.

That's off our topic. I'm just trying to make the point that right here is where all of the first, the old, the dead, is put away. Finished in His death. Forever judged. Many in the church act and teach as though Christ started a work that we must finish. **No, Christ finished a work that we must realize and walk in the good of.**

Joh 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

Joh 5:36 But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

Joh 17:4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Well there it is finished. What is finished. Again, Adam crucified. The old creation put away. The consummation of the ages in which God related to man through natural, material, temporal shadows and types. Sin, everything that fell short. All of this put away. It is finished here at the cross. Let me say this as plainly as I know how: **God has given you nothing to finish. Let us not be so arrogant and blind as to think that we could finish anything of God's true work. God has given you a finished work to know, to grow up in, to abide in, and to manifest to the earth. That is your part in this story.**

And so Christ, the one Son who came out, the one Son who put away, is now over on this side the one Son who is raised up from among the dead. Now, some of the literal translations will say "from among the dead" and not just "from the dead" because it doesn't just mean that He came back from being dead. It means He came out of the realm of death, from the land of death. He came out from among the dead. The dead he told to go bury their dead. The dead that He told could hear His voice and live. He came out from among the dead.

And here we have our second verse in Hebrews 9:28. One Son was raised up. Having put away the first, the one Son appears out from the second for the salvation of all who will look for Him. Now he appears, out from among the dead, as the salvation of all who will know Him as their very life.

Now, before we get into the return to glory – which is the matter of Christ's ascension and our ascension with Him, that where He is we are also – before we get into that let me make sure to emphasize the place where we got on this round-trip bus ride. There are two horrible mistakes that I believe are predominant in much Christian teaching. One of which we'll get to shortly. But the first one is a misunderstanding of where and how in this diagram we are joined to Christ.

We join Him, not over here (pointing to resurrection side of diagram), but over here in His death. This is absolutely essential to knowing the truth. You are joined to Christ in His death, and then He becomes your life. You are not joined to Him in His life – like his life was added to or mixed with yours. No. First you were crucified with Him. First you were baptized into His death. First you were circumcised without hands, the removal of the body of flesh. That was Galatians 2, Romans 6, and Colossians 2. Your way in is through Christ dying your death. I don't mean Christ dying instead of you, I mean Christ putting you to death.

Perhaps the greatest misconception about Christianity in the world today is that we believe, we teach, we think that we were joined to Christ's life without first being baptized into His death. What's the big deal? What's so bad about that misunderstanding. Friends, that is why religion exists in the place of life. That is why Christians spend their entire life trying to be like Jesus rather than knowing His

life living in them. That is why we come to Christ and look and seek and strive to find a better version of ourselves. Isn't that what Christian religion preaches? 7 steps to how Jesus can give you into a better version of yourself. What a contradiction of the cross. What a contradiction of Scripture. What a contradiction of the eternal plan of God.

This misunderstanding is why we write books and teach in pulpits how to act like Jesus, and how to make Jesus work for us. This is why we sell workbooks and videos on how to apply biblical principles to **our** life...when in fact OUR LIFE was left behind at the cross. Left behind...that would be a good name for a book! ☺

This is why hopelessly discipline ourselves trying to transform the old man. A man that no longer even exists in the sight of God. This is why we will travel over land and sea trying to find a person, a prophet, a teacher that can tell us what God wants us to do with our life. My Lord, **your life was lost in order to gain His**. I didn't say that, Jesus said that time and time again. You'll never know His will until His life is formed in you! I don't care how many prophetic words you get.

This misunderstanding is why we hope for what is impossible and wait for that which has already come. This misunderstanding is why we spend our lives trying to get something we already have, but refuse to see. This misunderstanding is why we fight and strive and condemn ourselves for what God has already put away. This misunderstanding is the father of all religion.

Where were you joined to Christ? How did you get on the bus? Where were you incorporated into Him? IN HIS DEATH. You will find that in every single New Testament reference to salvation that exists, and yet you are hard pressed to find it preached from many pulpits. I'm not trying to be critical. The Lord knows my heart. I'm saying this as one who has been part of the problem. But for heaven's sake, lets just look at the Scriptures.

You were not raised with Him before you were dead with Him. He was not your resurrection and your life before He was your death and burial. And friends I'm not talking about a theological understanding here. I'm talking about a face to face encounter with the Spirit of Truth. I'm talking about seeing this reality with the mind of Christ. I'm talking about the reality working in your soul where you see, you know, it APPEARS, that He has put you away by the sacrifice of Himself, and He is raised up as the resurrection and the life.

I cannot make you see it. I cannot make the Spirit reveal it. But I can say to you this morning, and to you who are listening to this, that if this has not dawned on your heart with world-altering severity, then ask the Spirit to make it so. Why? Because to believe that you got on the bus without bearing His death, then it will be YOU living over here, on the resurrection side, in His place.

Do you realize that everywhere you still live for Him, He cannot be seen? Do you realize that everything that is still you living by the tree of your knowledge of good and evil is still a place where there is no tree of life? **What's the big deal? There is no bigger deal.** Its the very purpose for your existence. And our failure to see that our entrance into this thing was through our death with Him will hopelessly distort our understanding of living in and by Jesus Christ. It thwarts God's eternal purpose for our lives.

No, we were not first joined to Him in His life, we were first joined to Him in His death so that in His resurrection He can be our life.

I said there were two horrible mistakes in much of Christian teaching. Two tragedies of understanding. Perversions of spiritual reality. This is one of them – that we skipped the death and got on the bus in the resurrection. That He bore the death so that we wouldn't have to, and now, because of what He did, we can live in His place. That is tragedy number one.

Tragedy number two is that the bus got a flat tire sometime shortly after Christ's resurrection and didn't bring a people directly into the presence of the Father.

Now that may sound cute, but I'm not really trying to sound cute. You see, here on the other side the cross you have a people in whom Christ lives, a people who live in Christ, returning to where He was before. And this is not a future event. This isn't even an event, PERIOD. This is the very spiritual reality and purpose of salvation.

The bus took a people into Christ's death, and then Christ was raised up as the One in whom they now live, and then He brought a people in Himself, as His body, back into the presence of the Father. And here we have our third verse in Hebrews 9 :24. "Now to appear in the presence of God for us".

And, as JW said when he was here, these words "for us" do not mean "instead of us", but "on behalf of us". You see, we had one Son leave the Father. One Son bear the end of the age in Himself, and we died there with Him. 2 Corinthians 5 "when one died, all died". And then we have one Son resurrected, and in Him we live, and move, and have our being. And then that one Son, together with His body, returns to His Father, bringing us with Him to glory. One Son presenting Himself on our behalf before the Father as the consummation of the eternal plan of salvation.

The second tragedy in much of Christian teaching is that this return to the Father is either a future event or something that awaits the death of the body. Another horrible denial of Scripture. Another terrible slap in the face of a finished work.

What does Paul say to the believers in Colossi? He gives them the whole picture. He shows them the whole bus ride. "You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God". What a compact little sentence. He just summarized in that statement our entire diagram. You have died, your life now is hidden with Christ in God. You've returned to glory.

How does Jesus put it? After my death I'm coming again to take you were I am. Where are you going? I'm going to the Father. Jesus, I don't know how to get there? (pointing to the diagram) I am the way. And in that day you will understand that I am in the Father, you are in me, and I am in you. THIS IS THE FINISHED WORK OF SALVATION.

Those of you who went on the women's retreat hear Julie share about Mary Magdalene, and how Jesus, after the resurrection, would not allow her to cling to Him until He had ascended to the Father. Why? Because He didn't like her? No, because any clinging in the flesh could not hold a candle to where He was bringing them in His ascension. Do you see, its when you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God, that you can truly "cling" to Him. But not just to his garment.

Not to His flesh. But you are forever together with Him in the presence of God. That's the "clinging" that Jesus wanted Mary to know.

Brothers and sisters, the presence of God is not some THING that happens at meetings. I know that there can be manifestations of that reality in the natural. I know that you can feel sensations of that reality in your body at certain times. But in itself, it is not some THING that happens, IT IS WHERE CHRIST HAS BROUGHT YOU. It is where He now presents Himself to God on your behalf. It is you who have died with Him, now joined to Christ in God. I am in the Father, you are in me, I am in you. That is the reality of your whereabouts. That is the person, place, and reality of your life.

If natural minded religion doesn't get you with the left hook, it will catch you with the right jab. If it doesn't convince you that you need Jesus added to **your life**, it will nail you with a futurism that leaves you waiting to go to glory.

But do you see that glory is the very reality and relationship that Christ has brought us into. Can you see that? At least conceptually this morning? I know that the revealing by the Spirit must make it a reality of life, but can you at least see with me that this is what the Bible teaches?

What is glory? Glory is dwelling in the presence of God. Glory is God being seen and known and experience and expressed. Well then **when** is glory? Well, what does Paul say about glory. One place He says Christ has brought "many sons to glory". One place Paul says we are beholding this glory in a mirror and being transformed into the same image. HE says we have come from the glory of the old to the glory of the new. He says we now know the glory in the face of Jesus Christ. One place He says that whenever Christ your life is revealed, then you are revealed together with Him in glory. One place Jesus says in **John 17:22** "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one".

And this is why Jesus makes a statement that seems very strange to natural ears when He's walking towards Jerusalem to be crucified. He says "now is the time for the Son of Man to be glorified".

Glory is what salvation was after. Glory is where salvation has brought us. Its not a geographical location or a shiny light. Glory is a relationship that one Son left, and one Son returned to. But when He returned He brought a people who live in and by Himself. When He returned, He brought a people fully clothed in Himself, and presented Himself on behalf of them saying "Father, these are mine. These, therefore, are yours". "These have died with Me, therefore these are hidden with Me in You". "Father I have finished the work you sent me to do".

Why were you called of God? For what purpose? What's the big picture?

2Th 2:14 He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is our verse: **Heb 9:24** For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself (pointing to diagram), now to appear in the presence of God for us. This is the very heavens where Paul tells us repeatedly that we dwell with Christ in Christ. "He made you alive together, raised together, seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus".

So who comes back to the Father. One Son, yes. The same Son that went out. The same Word that became flesh and tabernacled among us. And yet, even as Isaiah the prophet says:

Isa 55:10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, **11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**

One Son returned, and He presented Himself before the Father. And yet He did not return void. He returned having obtained a people joined to Him in Spirit. He returned with a people who were fully clothed in Him. Ephesians 2 talks about how both Jew and Gentile were made BY HIS DEATH into one new man. One body, with one Life, one Spirit, one Baptism into death, One God and Father of all. This verse doesn't mean that we become Jesus. This verse means that Jesus becomes the all and all of His body that returns to the Father.

We are joint heirs with Christ in this plan. But this plan, from the Fathers' point of view is not a bunch of escapees. This plan, from the Father's point of view, involves one Son leaving, one Son dying, one Son resurrected, and one Son returning to the presence of God now glorified in a people.

And we then join Him in that glory. We become the actual body of that glory. We are the body of His resurrection. We are the temple that contains his glory, the city that bears His light, the throne upon which He sits, the kingdom in whom He now reigns. Yes, we are individuals in Christ. Bt there is only one Life, one Kind, one Seed. Because the old has been left behind.

So again, one Son left the Father, one corporate son, the body of Christ, returns to the Father fully clothed in Him. This is God's view. Is it yours? Its been God's view since He first clothed Adam with the skin of another in the garden of Eden. You remember when Adam first sinned? What did God do? He provided a covering. He provided a covering for what Adam was.

Most people think of the types and shadows of covering and veil in the Old Covenant are that which keeps man from seeing the glory of God. Well, that is well and good. It did do that. But the other side of that, perhaps the bigger picture, was that it kept God from looking on anything that had fallen short of the glory of His Son. God cannot look upon sin – of any kind. And so if He was not going to destroy Adam, Adam had to be covered. If He was going to dwell in the midst of Israel, Israel must be covered. If he was going let Moses in Exodus 34 see His glory, He had to first hide Moses in the cleft of the rock and then cover Him with His hand.

Do you see the significance here. God could not look upon man, until man was fully covered in His Son. Man could not approach the presence of God unless they were fully covered, from head to toe, in the life of another. Here is what God has done for us in Christ. Christ the Word with the Father. Yes. Christ the Word become flesh. Yes. Christ the Lamb slain. Yes. Christ the Risen Life? Yes...but now unto to us that have died with Him, He is the covering in whom we can appear forever in the presence of God.

I'm not saying that God can't stand you. I'm saying that God could never look upon sin. And the love of God was made manifest in providing a Son, a covering, in which you could stand in His presence. The love of God was made manifest in providing you first a death you couldn't die, then a life you couldn't live, and then the very relationship, the very glory that the Son left and returned to. And now, in the Father, you stand dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. That's Romans 6. Or, as we've seen "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." That's Colossians 3. Or our last appearing verses – Christ NOW appears in the presence of God on behalf of us, His very body.

Amen.