

Title: **THE THREE APPEARANCES**
 OF CHRIST

Text: Hebrews 9:24-28

Date: Sunday Morning — December 16, 2018

Subject: *Our Lord's Three Appearances for The*
 Salvation of His People

Reading: *Luke 1:26-56*

(Luke 1:26-56) “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, (27) To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name *was* Mary. (28) And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. (29) And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. (30) And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the

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Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

(34) Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? (35) And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (36) And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. (37) For with God nothing shall be impossible. (38) And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

(39) And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of

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Juda; (40) And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

(41) And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: (42) And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb. (43) And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (44) For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. (45) And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

(46) And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, (47) And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. (48) For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

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(49) For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name. (50) And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation. (51) He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. (52) He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree. (53) He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. (54) He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy; (55) As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever. (56) And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.”

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INTRODUCTION

Many, many years ago, a friend of mine, Bro. Perry Fuller, sent a Christmas card to our family. In it, he had written a note about Christmas that I thought was worth keeping. He wrote, —

“Christmas is a time for the Lord’s people to reset their compasses, to redirect our lives to the One who gives our past days and the year to come meaning. God has a purpose behind the insanity of the world and the sentimentality of religious people during this season. I suspect that one purpose is to rekindle in our hearts the joy of the Lord, by reminding us that the incarnation of Christ was requisite for his crucifixion and thus for our ultimate glorification.”

AN INDISPUTABLE FACT

I am thankful that God has, in his wise and good providence, given us this one season of the year that

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compels all men and women throughout the world to remember that there was a time when God himself visited this earth in human flesh. Though few know the meaning of our Lord's incarnation, and fewer still realize what the Son of God accomplished in the flesh, there is not a person in this country (and few in the whole world) who will not, for the next few days, be constantly reminded that two thousand years ago God the eternal Son took upon himself human flesh and was born at Bethlehem. Never before or since has such an event occurred.

MIRACULOUS ATTENDANTS

Whose birth was ever foretold by such a long history of prophecy? Whose birth was ever longed for by so many? Who, but Immanuel, can claim a forerunner to announce his birth? When before or since did angels engage in a midnight song heard by men? When else did God hang a new star in the sky? Whose birth, but that of the God-man, was the birth of hope for fallen man? Well might the earth rejoice! Well may the

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nations cease from labor and commerce for a day, to celebrate the fact that God has come to the earth in human flesh to save fallen men!

Turn with me to Hebrews 9:24-28.

While men everywhere are reminded of the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world, I want to seize this opportunity to preach Christ to you. I want once more to show you from the Scriptures why he came, what he did, where he is now, and what he is doing.

(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

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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.

The title of my message is **THE THREE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST.**

“It is my sweetest comfort, Lord,
And will forever be,
To muse upon the gracious truth
Of Thy humanity.

Oh joy! There sitteth in our flesh
Upon the throne of light,
One of human mother born,
In perfect Godhead bright!

Though earth’s foundations should be moved
Down to their lowest deep,

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Though all the trembling universe
Into destruction sweep —

Forever God, forever man,
My Jesus shall endure;
And fixed on Him my hope remains
Eternally secure!”

Proposition: In order to save his people it was necessary for the Son of God to make three appearances in human flesh.

Divisions:

1. He once appeared in humiliation to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (v. 26).
2. He now appears in heaven, in the presence of God, to make intercession for his people (v. 24).
3. He shall appear in honor to consummate the great work of salvation for his people (vv. 27-28).

THE INCARNATION

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1st — I want you to see that — **The Lord Jesus Christ once appeared in humiliation to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** — This is the great event with which men everywhere are confronted at this season of the year. When you read your calendar you are confronted with this fact of Gospel truth. The history of the world is divided by men, according to God's wise providence, into two parts: the period before Christ's incarnation and the period following it. **This is a great fact that no one can ignore. Jesus Christ once appeared upon the earth.** In verses 24-26 Paul tells us why—

(Hebrews 9:24-26) 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

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appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In order to save us Christ appeared. There was no other way for man to be saved. The Son of God could never have saved a single sinner if he had not left the courts of glory. It is not possible for God himself to put away sin, unless God the Son comes into the world in human flesh to suffer and die in the place of sinners.

(2 Corinthians 8:9) For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

MONSTROUSLY EVIL

If it is not possible for God himself to put away sin except by the sacrifice of his darling Son sin must be a monstrously evil thing! Sin is transgression against God, rebellion against the King of kings. Sin

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is a violation of God's character. It is man's denial of God's right to be God.

As **John Bunyan** put it, "Sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the slight of his power and the contempt of his love."

The whole of man is defiled by sin. Because we are sinners, it is not possible for us to be saved, reconciled to God and accepted, until sin is put away. Therefore Christ appeared in this world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Sin is that which makes man obnoxious to God. God is holy and pure. He cannot look upon sin without hating it. It is contrary to his nature. He hates it wherever it is found.

Sin has brought us under the just curse of God's holy law. It is written, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*" (Ezekiel 18:20). Where there is a crime there must be a punishment. Otherwise the law would be

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useless. If God did not punish sin in exact accordance with his strict justice, he would cease to be just. The Word of God is perfectly clear. — “*The wages of sin is death.*”

You may not admit it, but your own conscience bears witness to this fact. You know that there is a place of everlasting torment and punishment where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. Hell is even more real and more horrible than you ever imagined. The character of God demands its existence. Unless the Almighty vacates his throne, sin must be punished and forever banished from his presence.

Sin shuts the door of hope upon our race. So long as one spot of sin remains upon us, so long as there is one transgression registered against us in the book of God, we cannot hope to enter into heaven.

(Revelation 21:27) There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever

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worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Until you and I are perfectly free from sin, we cannot enter into the presence of a holy God. Before any man can enter into heaven, sin must be put away. Sin lies across the road to heaven. It must be removed or we cannot cross the road. Sin bars the gates of glory. Until the bar is removed, we cannot enter in. Unless sin is put away entirely, we have no hope.

But it is a very hard thing to put away sin. All the sacrifices of the Old Testament could never put away sin.

(Hebrews 10:1-4) For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (2) For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should

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have had no more conscience of sins. (3) But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. (4) For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.”

- **Repentance can never put away sin.**
- **Praying cannot remove sin.**
- **Good works cannot put away sin.**

“Not all the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law’s demands;
Could my zeal no languor know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone!”

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- **Not even faith can put away sin.**

THE REASON

Nothing but the blood of Christ can put away sin!
Therefore Paul says, “*Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*” **This is the reason for our Lord’s incarnation and virgin birth.**

(Matthew 1:21) Thou shalt call his name JESUS:
for he shall save his people from their sins.

In order to put away sin God, the eternal Son, took upon himself human our flesh and appeared among men.

(Isaiah 9:6) For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called

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Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

(Galatians 4:4-5) But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

That One who came to put away sin is himself God. — “*God was manifest in the flesh*” (1 Timothy 3:16). He is the One ordained, commissioned, sent, and anointed of the Father for the glorious work of redemption. That One who appeared to put away sin is the One who pledged himself in the covenant of grace to do it.

(Hebrews 10:5-7) Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (6) In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. (7) Then said I, Lo, I

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come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

In the fullness of time Christ appeared to finish the transgression and make an end of sin.

- He appeared as a baby at Bethlehem.
- He appeared to be publicly anointed for his work in baptism at the river Jordan.
- He appeared in Gethsemane, surrendering himself to the Father's will. — In the Garden man's first sin was committed. In the Garden our Substitute was arrested.
- At the time appointed by the Father, Christ appeared on Calvary's hill to make atonement for our sin. — "*In due time, Christ died for the ungodly*" (Romans 5:6). The sinner was called for, and the sinner's Substitute appeared to answer for the sinner's transgressions.

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. In order to put away sin, the Lamb of God had to be slain. Nothing but blood,

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violently extracted, yet willingly shed, could put away sin.

- Christ offered himself.
- Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for sin.
- Christ offered himself alone.
- Christ willingly poured out his life's blood unto death upon the cursed tree to put away our sins. — We are redeemed by blood, the precious blood of Christ!
- Christ offered himself to God for us. — He had to do something for God before he could do anything for us. He had to make atonement to God before he could give forgiveness to us.

NOTE: That which Christ did on the cross he did for us, God's elect, his sheep, his church, sinners, all who believe.

(2 Corinthians 5:21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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(Galatians 3:13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

(Hebrews 9:12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Now, be sure you understand this. — **When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he actually did put away the sins of his people.** The sins of all believers, past, present, and future, the sins of all who have been saved and all who shall be saved, the sins of all God's elect were put away when Christ died at Calvary.

(Colossians 1:13-14) *God* hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: *14* In whom

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we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

What Christ meant to do when he died upon the cross he has done! He did not die in vain! He left no part of the glorious work undone. The Lord Jesus Christ did actually accomplish the eternal redemption of his people by coming into this world, living as our Representative, and dying as our Substitute. He put away sin. He did not merely try to do it. He did not merely make it possible. He did it! He put away our sins!

“Love’s redeeming work is done;
Fought the fight; the battle won!”

- He appeared once.
- He offered himself to God once.
- He died once.
- He will never offer another sacrifice for sin, because his one sacrifice was both sufficient and effectual for the salvation of all his people.

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- Justice cannot demand more from me than Christ has given!

“Complete atonement Thou hast made
And to the utmost farthing paid,
Whate'er Thy people owed:
Nor can God's wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness
And sprinkled with Thy blood.”

“Christ bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the Surety and the sinner are free!”

When God the Holy Ghost declares that Christ put away our sins, he means for us to understand these FOUR THINGS.

1. **Jesus Christ, our Substitute, has satisfied all the law's just penalty for our sin.**

“Payment God cannot twice demand,

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First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

2. **Christ has forever freed us from the curse and condemnation of God's holy law.**

(Romans 8:1) There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

(Galatians 3:13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

3. **The Son of God completely annihilated the sins of his people, insofar as God is concerned!**

(Micah 7:19) He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our

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iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

(Psalm 103:12) As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

(Isaiah 43:25) I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

(Isaiah 44:22) “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

(Jeremiah 50:20) In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

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Insofar as the law and justice of God is concerned, my sins are no longer in existence! They shall never be brought to my charge! They shall never be imputed to me! — *“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin”* (Romans 4:8).

- This is what the gospel declares.
- This is what faith receives.
- This is what gives the guilty conscience peace.

4. This is the way God forgives sin.

- He removes it by the blood of Christ.
- Because it is removed, he forgets it.
- Because he has forgotten it, he will never bring it up again.

(Psalm 32:1-2) Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Christ's one offering of himself has perfected forever

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them that are sanctified. And it is this, Christ's one offering of himself, which every regenerated child of God is to plead before the throne continually.

- It answers every demand of the law.
- It silences all the accusations of Satan.
- It is a satisfying reply to the alarms of conscience.
- And our blessed Savior's one sacrifice of himself for sin, accepted in heaven, is the full receipt for all the claims of justice.

INTERCESSION

2nd — **The Lord Jesus Christ now appears in heaven, in the presence of God, to make intercession for his people.**

(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.

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That very same Christ, who once appeared on earth to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, now appears in heaven, in the presence of God, to make intercession for us. He makes intercession in heaven for the very same people for whom he made atonement.

Our Savior entered into heaven as our Forerunner.

(Hebrews 6:20) Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

- He has gone ahead of us.
- He has gone to prepare a place for us.
- He will bring us there too!

Christ appears in heaven as the Head and Representative of an elect multitude. We are risen with him, exalted with him, and seated with him in glory.

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(Ephesians 2:1-7) And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (4) **But God**, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (6) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: (7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

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(Colossians 3:3-4) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (4) When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ appears in heaven as our Advocate and Great High Priest.

(Hebrews 7:24-25) But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. (25) Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

(1 John 2:1-2) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

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He constantly intercedes for his people, pleading the merits of his blood as the basis of his intercession. —

What does he seek from the Father?

- The Salvation of His People!
- The Forgiveness of Our Sins!
- Our Constant Acceptance with God!
- The Preservation of His Redeemed Ones!

SECOND ADVENT

3rd — **The Son of God shall yet appear in this world in honor to consummate the great work of salvation for his people.**

(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.

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Just as surely as he appeared in humiliation to put away our sin, our Savior shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation. Celebrate the day of his birth! Celebrate the accomplishments of his death! Celebrate also the certain promise of his coming again in glory, at the hour appointed by the Father!

- Christ shall appear.
- He shall appear without sin.
- He shall appear to them that look for him.
- He shall appear to consummate the salvation of his redeemed ones.

(Job 19:25-27) For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: (26) And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: (27) Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

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When our Lord Jesus Comes again three glorious events will consummate the work of salvation and bring it to perfection and completion.

1. The Resurrection of Our Bodies!
2. The Glorification of All His Saints!
3. The Presentation of His Elect Church in the Purity of Perfect Holiness!

APPLICATION

- Christ once appeared to put away sin.
- He now appears in heaven to save sinners
- He shall soon appear in glory to gather his redeemed ones and judge the world.
- In that great day, Where will you appear?

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

- Death comes soon!
- Judgment is sure!
- Eternity is long!

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- Where will you be in eternity?

(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.

Amen.