

CHRIST'S APPEARANCES

John Edwards

The Scriptures often speak of Christ's appearances. Let's take a look.

APPEARED AT THE END OF THE AGE. Writing about Christ, the Hebrew author said, *“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”* (Heb. 9:26). The Revised Version says, *“at the end of the age”*. It would not be possible for sin to be put away without Christ's appearance! *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”* (Heb. 10:4). How thankful we should be *“...that he was manifested to take away our sins...”* (1 Jn. 3:5)! The death of Christ marks the end of the Mosaic age (Heb. 9:15-17).

APPEARED AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. The gospel which Paul preached included the fact that *“he [Christ] was seen”* (1 Cor. 15:5-8). There are many appearances of Christ after His resurrection. Mark 16 records: *“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he **appeared** first to Mary Magdalene....After that he **appeared** in another form unto*

*two of them, as they walked, and went into the country... Afterward he **appeared** unto the eleven as they sat at meat...”* (vv. 9, 12, 14). The post-resurrection appearances are unshakable evidence of the fact that Christ *“...rose again the third day...”* (1 Cor. 15:4). Ananias said to Saul, *“...the Lord, even Jesus, that **appeared** unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me...”* (Acts 9:17). The Lord informed Saul, *“...I have **appeared** unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will **appear** unto thee”* (Acts 26:16). The appearance of Christ to a man named Saul makes many things stand out. It emphasizes the fact that the grace of our Lord is exceeding abundant, and that even the chiefest of sinners can be saved (1 Tim. 1:12-15)!

APPEARED IN HEAVEN. Emphasizing how law-sacrifices were inferior to that of Christ, the ambassador to the Hebrews made known: *“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”* (Heb. 9:24). Under the law of Moses, the high priest went into the most holy place on the annual day of atonement (Lev. 16). This foreshadowed Christ's

appearance into heaven for us which took place *“...when he [God] raised him [Christ] from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places”* (Eph. 1:20). Because of this heavenly appearance-entrance, redemption is available! *“...by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”* (Heb. 9:12). The fact that under the law there were many holy place appearance-entrances and Christ appeared once shows the superiority of Christ!

SHALL APPEAR THE SECOND TIME. One of the promises of the New Testament is that Christ shall *“...**appear** the second time...”* (Heb. 9:28). Writing the Colossians Paul said, *“When Christ, who is our life, shall **appear**, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”* (Col. 3:4). Peter talked about *“...when the chief Shepherd shall **appear**...”* (1 Pet. 5:4). John also stated, *“...when he shall **appear**...”* (1 Jn. 2:28; 3:2). Notice it's always *“when he shall **appear**”* and never *“if he shall appear”* as *“the day of the Lord will come”* (2 Pet. 3:10). Since *“of that day and that hour knoweth no man...”* (Mk. 13:32), every man must be ready for the appearance of Christ every day, every hour! Have you readied yourself by hearing, believing and obeying the gospel?

EXHORT ONE ANOTHER

John Edwards

One of the great privileges and responsibilities we have as children of God is that of exhorting one another. Hebrews 3:13 teaches, "**But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**" This text brings several thoughts to mind:

WHAT. "But exhort..." is what. This comes in the form of a command. The action verb "*exhort*" suggests to urge strongly, seek earnestly to persuade. We need to be exhorted to walk so as to please God (1 Th. 4:1), warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak and be patient toward all (1 Th. 5:14), pray (1 Tim. 2:1-2), earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3), cleave unto the Lord (Acts 11:23) and continue in the faith (Acts 14:22).

WHO. "...one another..." encompasses who is to exhort and be exhorted. There are many such commands in the New Testament: "*love one*

another" (Jn. 13:34), "*preferring one another*" (Rom. 12:10), "*admonish one another*" (Rom. 15:14), "*greet one another*" (2 Cor. 13:12), "*serve one another*" (Gal. 5:13) and the list goes on. Exhorting is a mutual responsibility of Christians.

WHEN. When should this one another exhorting be done? How often? "**...daily...**", the text says. Have you thought about the need for daily exhortation? This tells me that just monthly or weekly won't get the job done. It takes daily exhortation. In fact, the Scriptures point out the need for a daily religion: daily cross-taking (Lk. 9:23), daily prayer (Lk. 11:3), daily ministration (Acts 6:1), daily Scripture-searching (Acts 17:11) and the like. "*To day*" is the only day we really have (Heb. 3:7, 15; 4:7). "*Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*" (Prov. 27:1).

WHY. Why is this daily exhortation of one another so important? "**...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**" The conjunction "**lest**", which

expresses "for fear that; so that one should not", has been a word of great significance ever since the beginning when God said of the garden-midst tree, "*Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*" (Gen. 3:3). "**Any of you**" shows the potent potential of sin. None is immune. All must take heed. Any can develop an evil heart and depart from God (Heb. 3:13). Any can come short of promised rest (Heb. 4:1). "**Be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin**" reveals the nature of sin. It has a heart-hardening effect! As hardening of heart arteries can result in physical fatality, so can the hardening of one's spiritual heart result in eternal death. "*For the wages of sin is death...*" (Rom. 6:23). Sin is deceitful. It is misleading. It will take us farther than we want to go, cost us more than we want to pay, and keep us longer than we want to stay! It's been that way from the beginning when "*...the woman being deceived was in the transgression*" (1 Tim. 2:14).

Thus, "**...exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching**" (Heb. 10:25).

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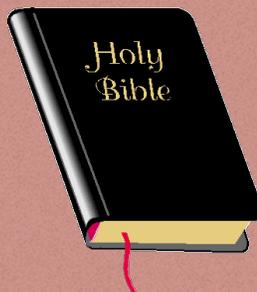
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