

Jesus and the Body Prepared for Him

Hebrews 10:1 ESV For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. **2** Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? **3** But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. **4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. **5** Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; **6** in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. **7** Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’” **8** When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), **9** then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. **10** And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- I. What an amazing time of year this is! It’s the only time of the year that you can go into stores and restaurants and hear hymns of glorious praise to the savior; where you can turn on your TV and hear Charlie Brown and Linus quote scripture and tell the Biblical story of Christ’s birth.
 - A. In many ways the culture’s guard is down when it comes to the story of Jesus at this time of year. And yet, I am not sure that we as the church have learned how to capitalize on this opportunity yet.
 - B. Perhaps this is partly because we have been sucked into a kind of mythological view of the truths of this season ourselves, and therefore have no ability to differentiate for those around us what is concrete and what is concocted.
 1. We may still have visions of halo-adorned infants lying in a pristine trough wistfully gazing into the heavens, as “no crying he makes”. We may envision exactly three wealthy travelers gathered, camels in tow, around the stable on that very first night as a divine star hovers conveniently 10-12 feet above the entrance.
 2. The birth accounts in Matthew and Luke, while including many of these details, doesn’t tend to jumble them up into such a picturesque, hallmark card sort of way, however.
 - a) Their story is one that begins with potential shame and assumed betrayal on the part of Christ’s parents.
 - b) After that they are forced to travel to Bethlehem under orders from an oppressive, occupying government. Once there no place is found for the extremely pregnant mother-to-be to lodge.
 - c) Two years after the child’s birth, the magi from the east inadvertently tip off crazy King Herod to the child’s existence; sending him into a homicidal rage and causing his family to flee to Egypt as refugees.
 - C. All of these are details of his story that can either be mythologized, or else rendered in a cold historical manner, yet they require us to take a step further. They require us to ask a simple question, “Why?”
 1. Why was Christ born? What problems did he solve? What actually legitimizes his

story?

2. The passage we read in Hebrews 10 succinctly answers many of these questions for us.
- II. You cannot truly understand Jesus in an American context, or even a Christian context. You must understand him first in a Jewish context. **Galatians 4:4 ESV** *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law...*
- A. Galatians tells us that Christ was born under the Mosaic law as a Jewish man. This was so that he could fulfill that law, understanding as no one else did, its limitations.
 - B. In our text tonight, we read the Hebrews writer say that, “the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities” and because of this, “it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.”
 1. He says that if it could have made anyone perfect it would have, and thus it became obsolete long ago. Instead of perfection, the Law has a yearly built-in reminder of its faultiness, demanding more and more blood on every day of atonement.
 2. But this blood cannot remove sins, no matter how much is offered! It is because of this that Christ made his entrance in Bethlehem that night, the writer says, paraphrasing Psalms 40.
 - C. **Hebrews 10:5 ESV** *Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but **a body have you prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.***
 1. This passage makes a beautiful distinction. On one hand, you have offerings of bulls and goats, sacrificed year after year. This verse says two different things about such offerings...
 - a) God has not desired them.
 - b) God has taken no pleasure in them.
 - c) This is confirmed in **Psalms 51:16 ESV** *For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.*
 2. On the other hand, in contrast to generations of sacrifice, Christ says, “but **a body have you prepared for me**”
 - a) Christ’s body would be the means of a brand new sacrifice, completely different than the old sacrifices.
 - b) Unlike the Old Covenant sacrifices offered year after year, it would be final. Four times the writer of Hebrews describes this sacrifice as “once and for all”.
 - c) Unlike the blood of bulls and goats that could buy only temporary mercy, covering sin, but unable to break the power of it; His sacrifice was perfect. Christ would be the Lamb of God who would **take away** the sin of the world. But take note with me of something super cool about Christ’s sacrifice...
- III. **Hebrews 10:7 ESV** *Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’” **8** When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), **9** then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” **He does away with the first in order to establish the second.***
- A. The sacrifice of Jesus was according to the purpose and will of God. Many have said that Jews killed Jesus. Others say Romans did. Some will more accurately say both are

guilty. But what does the Bible say?

B. **Isaiah 53:10 ESV** Yet *it was the will of the Lord to crush him*; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; *the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand*.

1. Does this make God sadistic? Is he a cosmic child abuser, as he has been accused of being? A thousand times no! But why not?
 - a) Because this hard passage of scripture proclaims that God was **willing to do anything** to be reconciled to his fallen creation!
 - b) **2 Corinthians 5:18 ESV** All this is from God, who **through Christ reconciled us to himself** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** that is, **in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
2. Furthermore, look at what our passage says about Christ! **“Behold, I have come to do your will, O God”**.
 - a) Jesus was the Father’s willing partner in the ministry of reconciliation. He was not conquered, coerced, or forced. Hebrews 12 says that “for the joy that was set before him, (he) endured the cross.”
 - b) But this verse also makes clear that God’s will was never endless sacrifices, but rather a single, perfect, and final sacrifice. Jesus came to do his will, using the body that was prepared for him. His will was the removal of sin by the perfect blood of a new covenant.
 - c) The writer also points out that God had made known this plan by the prophetic voices of the Old Testament. The Son proclaims, “as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.” This was no new plan. It was born in eternity, older than time, and proclaimed by prophetic inspiration.

IV. The writer of Hebrews says that Christ “does away with the first in order to establish the second.”

A. The first was the system of works-righteousness represented by the Law. That has been done away with! If that is the way you’re trying to get to God, let me tell you that you are simply spinning your tires in the mud.

1. The second, the one that has been **established**, is the imputed, unearned, righteousness that only becomes mine as a gift from Christ.
2. **Philippians 3:8 ESV** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—**

B. This is why Christmas is so important. Because it represents so much more than warm, seasonal feelings of peace on earth. It represents so much more than Joy to the World for mere joy’s sake. Christ entered the world that night in Bethlehem, not to coo in his halo, and gaze sweetly into the eyes of shepherds. He came to do the Father’s will in the body that had been prepared for him.

1. That body may have looked small and helpless, maybe even cute and cuddly, but we must never allow our minds to remain camped out in that Bethlehem stable as an end. We must recognize it as a means!

2. **Luke 2:52 ESV** And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.
 - a) By the time he was 12, he was amazing the doctors in Jerusalem. By the time he was 30 he was defeating the devil in a 40 day wrestling match while fasting in the wilderness, This was no baby! He was a force to be reckoned with!
 - b) When he was 33 he stood up to all the power of sin, death, hell and the grave, and defeated them for all time, so that they will never recover!
3. Now he sits at the right hand of God, enthroned with all the power in the universe!
“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” (Matthew 28:8)
- C. And what benefit is there to you and I? Why does it matter that a body was prepared for him, that he came to do the will of the Father, and that he has done away with the Law and all of its harsh commands in order to establish what was always the will of God?
 1. **Hebrews 10:10 ESV** And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
 2. You are not the same if you are in Jesus. You’re not struggling to keep up with the Law’s demands. You are clean. You are sanctified. You are accepted. And all because of the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, once and for all!