

Guest Preacher - Rev. R J Campbell

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Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's help and blessing, let us turn back to the letter to the Hebrews and chapter 10 and we'll read at verse 5. Hebrews chapter 10 and at verse 5.

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired, but a body how you prepared for me.

In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 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.

We shall focus especially on verse 5. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired, but a body how you prepared for me.

The writer of Hebrews at the very beginning of this chapter pinpoints for us the deficiencies that pertained to the sacrifices that were suffered up in the Old Testament.

[1 : 18] He tells us that there were merely shadows of good things to come. They could never save and could never perfect those that were drawing near to God.

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.

And the logic of verse 2 is that if the sacrifices offered were sufficient to atone for sin, then they would have ceased to be offered.

Verse 3 and 4 reveals that these recurring sacrifices were reminders that it was impossible for the blood of animals to atone for sin.

But in these sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

[2 : 33] The fact that all the blood poured forth in the Old Testament era had done nothing to remove the guilt of the people as made perfectly clear that there was the need for a more perfect sacrifice.

A more perfect sacrifice that could atone for sin. A more perfect sacrifice that could deal with the guilt of sin.

However, although the sacrifices offered in the Old Testament era were inadequate to atone for sin, nevertheless, their subject was Christ.

They were pointing to the more perfect sacrifice, which is the sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifices was Christ in shadow form, but the subject of those sacrifice was Christ.

Jesus himself emphasized this after his resurrection as he taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. We read there that beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scripture the things concerning himself.

[3 : 58] So that everything that we have in scripture from Genesis to Revelation, it is all about the purpose of God in redemption.

It is all about the redemptive plan of God. And central to the redemptive plan of God is the Son, Jesus Christ.

We must remember that all the Old Testament saints were saved by faith in Christ, to which the animal sacrifices merely pointed.

Tonight we are going to focus on verse 5 or 5 to 9, but especially upon verse 5, upon the body that was prepared for the Son of God.

We read, Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me.

[5 : 06] Here in this verse, we are given a rare insight into a conversation that takes place between God the Son and God the Father, as the Son is about to be conceived in the womb of his virgin

mother, Mary.

What was the dialogue that took place? What was the conversation that took place as Jesus was about to be conceived in the womb of his mother?

Well, here we are told, Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired. In bond offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifice and offerings and bond offerings and sin offerings.

These are offered according to the law. But you may ask the question, Was it not God himself that established the institution of sacrifices?

So in what sense did God the Father have no desire or pleasure from the offering of sacrifices?

Well, he knew the inadequacy that pertained to animal sacrifice.

[6 : 27] They were never instituted in order to deal with sin or to atone for sin. As we have already noted, they were merely shadows of the good things to come.

He also knew that for many who made the sacrifices, it was nothing more than mere religious rituals. He knew the hypocrisy of those who simply went through the motions without any heart involvement of faith and obedience.

What he likes God is faith and obedience. So we read, Consequently, when Christ came unto the world, he said, Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me. And then he added, Behold, I have come to do your will. Now you will already have guessed that here the writer is quoting from Psalm 40 and verse 6 that we have sung.

In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear, or as we have in the metrical Psalms, my ear thou poured, or in Sing Psalm's version, you have opened up my ears.

[7 : 56] But here in Hebrews, the writer says, But a body have you prepared for me. Immediately, you can see the difference between what is written here in the letter to the Hebrews and what we have in Psalm 40.

But the writer to the Hebrews is not misquoting Psalm 40. But what the writer to the Hebrews is doing is he's bringing out for us the significance or the fullness of what was said by the psalmist. The psalmist referring to a practice that was regulated by Old Testament law, which is recorded for us in Exodus chapter 21, where we read, But if a slave plainly says, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free.

Then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.

So a servant could come to the end of his years of service, but he wanted to devote his life in continuing in the service of his master because he loved his master.

[9 : 27] And he could do so and he would have his ear pierced through and that would be a sign that he would serve his master until death.

Maybe the word slave here is an unfortunate word because there were not slaves as we think of the term slaves. I prefer the way that it is recorded for us in the King James Version where we have the word servant instead of slave.

Servant is the best word for it. It has nothing to do with the institution of slavery as practiced in the past and in some parts of the world even today.

It was different for the Israelites as a covenant people. If you were poor as an Israelite, the best way to meet your needs was to hire yourself into the service of others.

However, after seven years, if the person wanted to stay serving his master, having his ear pierced by the doorpost, it was, as it were, a public declaration that he was committed and to do his master's will and that he was attached to his master's household.

[10 : 49] What Hebrews brings to our attention is the connection between servanthood and the body prepared for Jesus.

The body was prepared for Jesus in order to serve. Let us, for a moment, focus on three questions that we have in our shorter catechism, which is, in itself, a body of divinity.

The first question we focus on is, are there more gods than one? And the answer, there is but one only, the living and true God.

And then there is another question, how many persons are there in the Godhead? The answer, there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

And then we have the third question, who is the Redeemer of God's elect? And the answer, the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man and so was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

[12:12] These questions and answers from the shorter catechism summarize what we are reflecting upon tonight. One God, three persons, same in substance, equal in power and glory.

And in our text this evening, the writer of Hebrews speaks of the second person of the Godhead, the Son, the Redeemer of God's elect.

and he tells us that it was for God the Son, the second person, that a body was prepared.

But a body have you prepared for me. In this body that was prepared for the Son, he was to become the servant of Jehovah.

to see the marvel of all this, which we call the incarnation. Let us hear what Paul the Apostle writes in his letter to the church at Philippi.

[13:26] Paul writes, have this mind among ourselves, which is Jewish in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now, when Paul speaks of Christ Jesus as being in the form of God, he is pointing us to the pre-incarnate Christ, as being in very nature God.

The form of God does not mean anything less than Godhood. Essentially, Paul is saying that the Son of God shares fully in the very essence of God.

To borrow a phrase from the Nicene Creed, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is very God of very God. And we have to hold on to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is fully divine because Islam considers Jesus to be a prophet, but not divine.

Jehovah Witnesses peddle the notion that Jesus is less than fully divine, divine. But the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is fully divine.

[15:12] In the body that was prepared for him, he became what? He became God manifest in the flesh.

The incarnation did not mean that the Son ceased to be what he eternally was, God the Son. In Hebrews chapter 1, we read regarding the Son, who had been the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person.

The form of God does not mean anything less than Godhood. In John's prologue, we read, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

And then, in John 1, 14, we read, and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

[16:25] the form of God is not something different from God or less than God. God the Son, who is about to become incarnate by taking the body that was prepared for him, yet he possessed the glory of God, the likeness of God, the image of God, and the splendor of God, and did everything that makes God, God, for he was God.

Now, all this sounds extremely complicated, and it is a mystery, but it is a mystery that is revealed for us in the Bible.

Let us take another shorter catechism question. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? And the answer, Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Although here in Hebrews the emphasis may be upon the Father and the Son, but a body have you, that is God the Father, prepared for me, God the Son.

The Bible clearly states that it was the work of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[18:14] as an authoritative designation, it was the act of the Father. Hence it is said that he sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.

As to the formation of the body or the human nature, it was the peculiar act of the Holy Spirit. The angel said to Mary, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. The eternal Son of God became the earthly Son of Mary.

He became the last Adam, whereas the first Adam had a beginning but no birth. the last Adam had a birth but no beginning.

And after the taking of the body that was prepared, it was the peculiar act of the Son. He took the body prepared and he united it, he united that body to his person so that he became the God man or he became God manifest in the flesh.

[19 : 48] And in taking this body that was prepared for him who took the form of a servant, he was in the likeness of men. Jesus became man not by subtraction but by addition.

He added to his person the body that was prepared for him. He added human nature to his person. Jesus added to his person already having a divine nature. He added a human nature. And he took the body prepared for him. And he humbled himself for us.

He took that body with all its limitation. One of the divine says he emptied himself not by laying down the divine nature but by taking human nature.

Or as Augustine wrote thus he emptied himself taking the form of a servant not losing the form of God. Who was Jesus?

[20 : 59] He was the God man. The form of a servant was added. The form of God did not pass away.

But a body have you prepared for me. Now these words immediately suggest a beginning. It marks the assumption of something new.

Jesus became something that he had not previously been. The word became flesh. As we have already noted he added a body or a human nature to his divine person.

So that in accordance with the catechism that we have quoted he had two distinct natures. That is a divine nature and a human nature.

but he remained the one person forever. He was not part man and part God not a mixture of both.

[22 : 00] It was two distinct natures but one person forever. He became what he was not but he continued to be what he always was.

And in taking the body that was prepared and uniting it to his version Christ took everything that is involved in coming truly human except sin.

From the moment of his conception everything about his humanity fell with the normal natural parameters. He developed normally inside his mother's womb.

His development took about nine months and he was born when he was born his mother felt the birth pains and he was born just like any other baby.

Although eternally he was God and remained God yet he became man. He had a human body.

[23 : 07] He had a human soul. He had a human mind. He had a human will. He grew up just like any other normal boy.

Luke writes and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. He grew from being a baby to childhood to a teenager to adulthood.

He had to learn to walk and talk. He like any other human baby was dependent on his mother to be washed and to be fed.

He was hungry. He was tired. He was thirsty. He asked on one occasion a Samaritan woman will you give me a drink? He experienced a whole range of human emotions such as love, anger, sorrow, joy, compassion and many more.

There is no record in the Bible that Jesus ever smiled or laughed but I think it would be ridiculous to suggest that he never did either. John Calvin says those who imagine that the Son of God was exempt from human passions do not truly and seriously acknowledge him to be a man.

[24 : 27] but there is not simply the physical and the emotional life of Jesus but there is also the spiritual life of Jesus the spiritual life of the God man the spiritual life of the man that took the body that was prepared for him.

He was tempted in every way just as we are. We sometimes confine this to his confrontation with Satan in the desert but it is interesting what Luke writes and when the devil had ended every temptation he departed from him until an opportune time which suggests to us that Jesus was tempted throughout his life just as we are.

He was dependent on prayer. He was a man of prayer. Hugh Martin says that prayer is a confession of weakness and of insufficiency which illustrates through us the true nature of Christ's

humiliation.

He attended public worship. He always went to the synagogue and he studied the Bible. He also had all the sinless limitations that belonged to us. There were things he did not know.

For instance, he did not know about his second coming because in the gospel of Mark these words of Jesus is recorded for us. But of that day and that hour knowth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the son but the father.

[26 : 02] He asked the father of a demon possessed boy, how long has it been like this? You see, here we see the marvel of his condescension, the marvel of his humiliation.

He who was truly God became truly man and remaining truly God. He was the God man. In the person of Jesus Christ we have the God man.

One person with two distinct natures that the one person can be infinite and finite. He can be omniscient and ignorant. He can be omnipotent and powerless.

to those who looked at him, he was in fashion as a man. All they saw was the appearance of man and that was all.

A body have you prepared for me, a true body and a reasonable soul, an ordinary man. They saw nothing to distinguish him physically.

[27 : 09] There was no sign of his unique divine status. all they saw was that which was ordinary. He was a man in poverty, homeless, frail, not exceedingly popular, and rejected by the religious elite of his day.

No one was able to see the deity that was hidden beneath the veil of his humanity. No one was able to see the deity that was hidden beneath the veil of his humanity.

It required faith to see beyond the veil and appearance of humanity. That is why John writes, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.

How did they see his glory? By faith, by faith alone. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as the only begotten son from the father full of grace and truth. Full of grace and truth. Remember when Jesus asked the disciples, who do men say that I am? And they replied, well, some say that you are Jeremiah or Elijah or one of the prophets.

[28 : 32] and then he asked, who do you say that I am? And Peter replied, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. And how did Jesus reply?

Jesus said, flesh and blood have not given you that answer, but my father. You see, it was only through faith, through the spirit, that Peter knew who really Jesus was.

And it is through the spirit that I and you get to know who Jesus really is. It is only by faith. We may know about him, we may have read about him, we may have heard about him.

These people saw him, they saw his miracles, they heard his ministry, and yet we know that many of them did not know who truly Jesus was.

And it is only through the spirit of God that a person comes to know who Jesus truly was. You know, in Matthew's account of the birth of Christ, we have these words, all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

[29 : 45] Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. The birth of Jesus was a fact.

the incarnation was real and true. Jesus did not take unto himself the appearance of a body. The babe in the manger was not in the appearance of a body.

He literally had a human body and a human soul. He was Emmanuel. He was God with us.

Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me. What I want us to take away this evening is this, that he who is over all, God blessed forever, in the person of the son, he became God manifest in the flesh.

The eternal God is truly and correctly and accurately called by Paul in his letter to Timothy, the man Christ Jesus.

[30 : 58] Is it not one of the great wonders of this world that God should dwell in a body of flesh? Is it not one of the great wonders of this world that God walked this earth, that he walked this earth in the person of his son, Jesus Christ.

God walked earth. There are many wonders in the world, but this is the greatest wonder of all, that God walked this earth. It may be a wonder for us that man walked on the moon, it may be a wonder for us all, the progress they're making in space, but it is nothing in comparison to this, that God walked this earth, that the babe and the manger was the eternal God born in time, and this is far

above all human understanding, and yet it was necessary, if sinners were going to be saved from what their sins deserved, the redemptive plan is not of human origin, it all began with God, and this is part of the redemptive plan, that God in the person of the son, would take the body that was prepared, and unite it to his person, so that he would become the God man, necessary for my salvation, necessary for your salvation, necessary for sinners to be saved, by taking to himself the body prepared, he came into the world and shared our environment, and the world became flesh and dwelt among us, he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, that is, he bore the miserable marks and effects of sin, although he was sinless, nevertheless in his body he bore the effects of sin, we all live with conflict, disappointment, pain, tragedy, severe trials, but there is one to whom we can come, when we go through these experiences, there is one to whom we can come and pour out our heart and know that he understands, whatever anxiety, whatever perplexity, whatever struggle, we have, he understands, because in the body prepared for him, he entered our environment.

The writer of this letter encourages us to come to the very throne room of God in prayer, because he is there before us, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we will receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. We have focused very much upon the body that was prepared, a true body, a body that was sinless, but a body that was capable of dying.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Golgotha is the point out which everything has been moving since he was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of his virgin mother, Mary.

[34 : 31] The significance of his taking a body was that it was capable of dying. That is brought before us by Peter when he says he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness by his wounds you have been healed.

The cross is the centerpiece of history, the determining factor of our eternity because the cross is something that demands a response, demands a response.

God is the God's love. How can we look at what Christ became by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul in his sufferings and particularly in his death on the cross of Golgotha?

How can we look at all that and not be lost in love? love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

And if you are a believer, remember where your sins brought the Son of God. Remember that the penalty for sin has been paid for all those who will put their trust in Jesus.

[35 : 55] us. The Roman method of hastening the end of a crucifixion was to smash the shin bones with a mallet or an iron bar.

As a result, the victim would experience shock and would no longer be able to push up and relieve the pressure on his body and within a short time, death would become his experience because he would be choking.

According to John, this was carried out upon the two thieves that was crucified with Jesus. Having carried out the deed upon the two thieves, the soldiers approached the cross of Jesus.

And this is what John, being an eyewitness, records for us. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Those soldiers were so convinced that Jesus was dead, that they simply ignored the order that was given to them.

And concluded there was no point in breaking the legs of a dead man. When Joseph went to ask for the body of Jesus from Pilate, the centurion was called, and we read when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

[37 : 11] However, to make sure that he was dead, we are told, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. Now, regarding the unbroken bones and the pierced side, John obviously saw a great significance in that fact.

And so he writes, for these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken, and another scripture which says they will look on him whom they have pierced.

what we find in Golgotha now is that Jesus is dead upon the cross. His body is bruised and blood stained as a result from the Roman lashings he received as he was scourged, and his face battered and bruised from the cruel treatment he had received from the soldiers, and upon his brow the marks of where the crown of thorns had penetrated.

Truly, his visage was more marred than any man. What happens then may surprise us, for the body is taken down from the cross and prepared for burial, and buried by a man that we have never heard of before.

The body that was prepared, the body that was crucified, is now the body laid in the dust of the earth. But that is not the end.

[38 : 34] None of the gospel ends with the cross or with the burial of Jesus. But we have the great message proclaimed by the angel to the woman who came to the grave. He is not here, but has risen.

The body prepared, the body that was crucified, the body that was buried, and the body risen. But that is not the end.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he did so in bodily form. when he came into the world, he took the body that was prepared, and he lived in that body for 33 years.

In that body he bore what our sins deserved. In that body he died on the cross of Golgotha. In that body he was buried. In that body he rose on the third day, and now he goes back to heaven, taking that body with him.

He did not discard his humanity, but he took that humanity with him, that body, into the very presence of God.

[39 : 45] He has never discarded the human nature that he assumed. The body that he took, he never discarded, but he ascended into heaven in bodily form.

And we have faith in the ascension of the body as much as we have faith in the resurrection of the body. The same Christ who was born and suffered in the body also ascended in the body.

In his ascension we have this staggering thought, because of the bodily ascension of Jesus Christ, the dust of earth now sits on the throne of heaven. Clement of Alexandria once said, he was carried up into heaven so that he might share the father's throne, even with the flesh that was united to him. But that is not the end. The angel's message to the disciples on the ascension of Jesus was this.

This Jesus who was taken up from you to heaven will come in the same way as you saw him going to heaven.

Here we are going to encounter not the humiliated Christ, but the exalted and glorified Jesus Christ. we are confronted with the expectation of the glorious day when Jesus will return and triumph and bring history to a close.

[41 : 06] This is a subject that perhaps we do not spend much time upon, and yet it is a great climax and closing moment of our history. For the believer tonight, we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

The Scottish theologian Thomas Boston said that when the people of God reach heaven, they will see Jesus Christ, God and man, with their bodily eyes, as he will never lay aside the human nature. They will behold that glorious, blessed body, which is personally united to the divine person, and exalted above principalities and powers, and every name that is named.

There we will see with her eyes that very body which was born of Mary at Bethlehem, crucified at Jerusalem between the two thieves, the blessed head that was crowned with thorns, the face that was spat upon, the hands and feet that were nailed to the cross, we shall see them all shining with inconceivable glory.

The body prepared, the body crucified, the body buried, the body risen, the body that ascended to the right hand of the Father, the body returning a glorious body.

[42 : 34] The wonders of wonders though is this, that every believer's body will be made light unto it. What great comfort it is for believers this evening to know that God is not at a distance from us, but that in Jesus we have Emmanuel, we have God with us.

And those who perish under the gospel are without excuse for God in the person of his son stooped down to save sinners like me and you.

Read verse 29. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot, the son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has outraged the spirit of grace.

For the believer, surely we should be lost in awe and wonder and give honour and praise to the God, the author of our salvation, who through his incarnation and taking the body prepared for him, that he has worked out our salvation through which sinners can be redeemed.

Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me, but a body have you prepared for me, the God man, the God man, the son of God, the son of God.

[44 : 05] Sometimes, and quite rightly so, we sometimes look at the acts of Jesus and say, well, that belongs to his human nature and that belongs to his divine nature and there's nothing wrong with doing that, but it is far more wonderful for us to contemplate all his actions as the actions of the son of God.

Who was on the cross? Or shall I start? Who was in the manger? The son of God. Who walked the shores of Galilee? The son of God.

Who was on the cross of Golgotha? The son of God. Who laid in the grave? The son of God. Who rose out of the grave? The son of God.

Who ascended to the right hand of the father? The son of God. Who is coming back? The son of God. The son of God.

One person with two distinct natures. May we leave this evening with our hearts filled with admiration at the condescension of the son of God Jesus Christ so that sinners like me and you could put our faith in him and be saved.

[45 : 30] May the Lord bless our reflection upon his word. We shall conclude by singing from sing psalms and psalms 16 and at verse 8.

Before me constantly I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown therefore my heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will rest secure in hope and wavering.

We shall sing to the end of the psalm. That is sing psalms on page 17 sing psalms psalm 16 verse 8 to the end of the psalm. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone.

Amen. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown therefore my heart is glad my town with joy will sing my body too will execute and hope Not allow my soul in justice to stay Nor will you leave your holy one To see the tomb's decay You have made hope to me The path of life divine Let shine on your light and Joy from your face will shine

[48 : 35] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you all now and forevermore Amen