

The Epistle to the Hebrews

Lesson # 27 February 10, 2019 I Have Come to Do Your Will

Hebrews 10:1-10

Introduction to Chapter 10

As we move into Hebrews 10, we encounter the last major section of the author's reflection on the Old Covenant versus the New. In this first section of chapter 10 (vv. 1-10) which we are about to examine, the insufficiency of the old Levitical system as compared with the absolutely efficacious priesthood of Christ is in full view. It also presents Christ as the One speaking in Psalm 40, which is partially quoted here, and as He speaks we begin to see that the entire Bible is about Him, and that, when incarnated, He did God's will obediently, tirelessly and completely.

The second section (vv. 11-18) brings into the argument the fact of Psalm 110:1's representation of Christ and repeats a part of Jeremiah 31 to accentuate the fact that Jesus has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified by a "*single offering*". The citing of Psalm 110:1 here (a verse repeatedly cited or alluded to in Hebrews) provides a sense of chronology or time passing incrementally, but not without purpose. God is bringing changes to pass throughout history to advance His agenda (cf. Romans 11:33-36) – to bring about the planned end of all things – with Jesus Christ as the central focus of history, and not just in a religious sense, but in the sense of being both Creator and sustainer of it – cf. Col. 1:12-23. It is also within this second section (at v. 18) that the doctrinal section of Hebrews ends and the practical, application section begins at v. 19.

The third section is an encouragement to believers to draw near to God through Christ – who 'opened the veil' on our behalf to give us access as our High Priest, seated at God's right hand. Furthermore, the author tells us to continue to meet together (as a Church) so as to encourage one another, and again, time winding down as an element of God's plan is stressed, as believers are to do this, "*All the more as you see the Day drawing nearer.*"

Then, finally, in the fourth section of the chapter, we encounter another (4th of 5) warning passage, in vv. 26-39. This one includes some very horrific connotations, and is likely the most vivid warning so far. Verses 27-29 are a harsh reminder of the danger of apostasy; vv. 30-31 caution us to continue to fear God who is 'no tame lion'¹; and then vv. 34-39 tell us of the need for dogged, unflagging perseverance in our Christian walk. Chapter 10 is an important argument for the A.H. to present, and if we pay attention, with God's help, we will be graciously edified by it as individuals and as part of our Church family.

¹ Per CS Lewis – Aslan (a type of Christ) in the Chronicles of Narnia.

In these first 10 verses of chapter 10, Philip Hughes presents four particular aspects of the comparison between Christ's priesthood and the OC system;

- 1) The insubstantial character of the Mosaic system (vv. 1-4)
- 2) The repetitive nature of the old sacrifices (vv. 2-4 & 12-14)
- 3) The function of the Levitical sacrifices as repeated reminders of sin (v. 3)
- 4) The ineffectiveness of the blood of beasts (v. 4)²

The Shadow

vv. 1-4

Back in Hebrews 8:5 – *“They serve a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things”*, we saw an observation that now appears again in 10:1, with reference to the OT priesthood. In fact, we see this even as far back as 7:11a, which tells us that perfection had not been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, otherwise, why would God have set up another priesthood? Chapter 7, 8 and 9 have all pressed quite hard on this issue of the inability of the OC system to save people by the Law.

The start of v. 1, *“For since...”* refers us back to the author's argument of chapter 9 about the superiority of Christ's sacrifice and High Priesthood, reminding us that the Law *“has but a shadow”* of the good things to come. The law is not therefore evil or a mistake or misstep by God, but was designed to be a type or foreshadow of the reality of Christ and the new covenant. Paul, in Romans 7:4-6 gives us an excellent perspective on the Law and its connection to believers. Notice too, his reverence for the Law – vv. 7,12,22. Though the Law was ineffective to save, it still had a God-given purpose and design. (Gal. 3:19-24)

So the law pointed forward to the *“good things to come”* – cf. Heb. 10:15-18. The last days and the fulfillment of the intention of the law have arrived (Heb. 1:2; 9:26). The Law, as a shadow, pointed to Christ, the *“true form of these realities”*. *“True form”* in the Greek means “image”, as in Col. 1:15, *“He is the image of the invisible God...”*. *“The law is inferior because it does not participate in the reality of what it foreshadows.”*³

In v. 1b, here is the problem within the structure of the Law: *“it can never by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.”* Keep in mind here the first 2 words of v. 1, *“For since...”* – the referral back to chapter 9 is now resolved in 10:1. *“For since the law was a shadow, it can never do what Christ has done!”*

The mention of *‘yearly sacrifices’* is almost certainly meant as a reminder of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), which was the one big day on the Jewish calendar on which atonement for the sins of Israel were dealt with by the high priest for the year that had just passed, but then, from that day on, notwithstanding the array of daily, weekly and monthly offerings and sacrifices, sins began to pile up again. Hence, the

² Philip Hughes, Hebrews, p. 389-393

³ Schreiner, p. 291

repetition of the Day of Atonement signifies that in each and every subsequent year, the cleansing or, better, covering of sins was only temporary. In fact, by Romans 3:20-21, Paul, a student and master of Levitical Law realizes that keeping any of the law, even this law, cannot achieve the righteousness required by God to allow entrance into His Kingdom. I remind us here of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17-20.

Only in Christ can the perfection needed to find God and heaven be found. The perfection is Christ's, and it is given to us as a gift, not as a wage earned. See Romans 3:21-26; II Cor. 5:21. It is a gift of grace, received by faith – Eph. 2:8-9.

Verse 2 – We do not often encounter Bible verses that begin with the word, 'otherwise', but here we have one, and it begins a very logical question. If perfection is achieved by these OT sacrifices, then they would not need to continue, because there would no longer be any need for them. Yet, they were even continued after a high priest died, and a successor moved into his position to begin his own ministry, repeating the same rituals – cf. Heb. 7:23-28.

Had the worshippers (any or all of them) ever been changed, the implication here is that they would be conscious of that change. Hebrews 9:14 is an almost parallel verse to verse 2 here. But in the OT, under the OC system, no one was ever truly cleansed from sin through mere participation in the liturgies or rituals.

Philip Hughes says it this way;

“Repetition conflicts with finality: an action that is constantly repeated thereby shows itself to be inconclusive. What is inconclusive is imperfect both in itself and its effect. The perfect sacrifice demands that sacrifice must cease – as they now have for believers – in the sense of blood sacrifices and offerings. We are bidden in Romans 12:1 to “Offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”⁴

Notice the progression in Heb. 10:10,12,14 – comparing Christ's single, efficient sacrifice to the continual series of sacrifices that went on and on and on until AD 70, without ever achieving the goal of saving anyone or completely forgiving their sins! Also – back in Heb. 9:24-26, we see that Christ did not need “to offer himself repeatedly, but just once for all [time].”

What these sacrifices did achieve (v. 3 – and were meant to achieve) is to remind the worshippers of their unforgiven sins year after year. Clearly, the Day of Atonement is in sight here, because of the “every year” statements in v. 1 & 3. It is likely that the converted Jews the A.H. is writing to were convinced that in Yom Kippur the promise was of sins forgiven, but the reality was, as the author counters, that the repeated event only serves as a reminder of sins, bringing them to mind, demonstrating that genuine forgiveness has not occurred under that system.

⁴ Hughes, p. 390

In v. 4, the author explains vv. 1-3, answering the ‘why?’ Why don’t the sacrifices take away sins? Weren’t they supposed to? The answer is in v. 4. Animals (of any kind) could not provide full atonement because they did not comprehend the significance of their sacrificial deaths. They had no idea why they were being killed. They were certainly not willing or even cognizant participants in order to forgive the sins of mankind.

Take note of these verses which provide God’s OT view of the OT sacrifices: Isaiah 1:10-15; 66:3; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:22; Micah 6:6-8; Malachi 1 & 2.

Paul Washer, with Hebrews 10:4 in mind, points out that Christ had to be the final sacrifice because He was Deity and human in one body;

“In the Scriptures, two aspects of Christ’s person are put forth with such clarity that to deny them is to deny the Scriptures and become antichrist. These two characteristics are more different than day and night; they are polar opposites with no link between them except in the person of Christ. In Him alone, deity and humanity dwell together and intertwine without confusing the two natures or diminishing either.

The Redeemer had to be a man, for it was man who transgressed the law and must die. If every clean animal that had ever been born were to have been sacrificed in its pristine state, the combined blood of them all could not have prevailed against our stain: “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). Had all the angels in heaven been marshaled to give their lives freely and fully for our redemption, it would have been of no greater help, for the Redeemer had to come from our stock – flesh of our flesh and bone of bone. For Christ to be our Kinsman-Redeemer, He had to be our kin.”⁵

The blood of animals functioned typologically and symbolically, pointing forward to Christ – the only blood that truly cleanses from sin. Only true worshippers who trusted that one day (from their OT perspective) God would supply that one final, perfect sacrifice on their behalf were saved by that faith. Notice Paul’s important point, in Romans 10:1-9 (esp. v. 4). God wanted the people to offer their old covenant sacrifices by faith, not by rote, not by ritual, not by the letter of the law – note: Isa. 1:8; 66:2b-3; Malachi 1:10-14. In these passages, the writers are not condemning the sacrifices as deficient, only the ones offering the sacrifices.

Philip Hughes makes this pertinent comment;

“Only man, who is a rational, volitional, articulate, and responsible being, can serve as a proper equivalent and substitute for man; hence the incarnation, whereby the Son of God assumed our humanity, so that, as man He might offer himself in the place of our fallen humanity (2:9,14). Further, only perfect man, himself entirely free of sin, could properly stand in man’s place and absorb the punishment due to man’s sin (2:14-18; 4:15FF; 5:8-10; 7:26FF; 9:26). And finally, only one who by his resurrection has been vindicated as the Lord of Life, and who lives forevermore, can be our eternal High Priest and the guarantor to us of everlasting salvation (1:2-4; 6:20; 7:16,24,25; 8:1; 9:12; 12:2; 13:8). In the light of these necessities, so frequently stressed in our

⁵ Paul Washer, Gospel Assurance and Warnings, Reformation Heritage, 2014, p. 100-101

epistle, there is no escape from the conclusion that *it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin* (bulls and goats being specifically mentioned because of the focus of our author’s attention on the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement.)”⁶

Stephen Wellum brings the NC into these 4 verses, when he comments...

“The new covenant changes the sacrifice made for God’s covenant people. The old covenant provided for the forgiveness of sins through a system of animal sacrifices. But “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). The old covenant sacrifices were designed to remind God’s covenant people of their sinfulness through repetition. The sacrifice under the new covenant, however, was offered once for all time because it was sufficient to remove the sins of every member of the covenant community (vv. 12-17). As prophesied under the old covenant, the sacrifice of the new covenant mediator himself brings the promise of God himself, that “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more” (Heb. 10:17; cf. Jer. 31:33-34). In the Old Testament, “remembering” is not simple recall (cf. Gen. 8:1; I Sam. 1:19). That God “will remember their sins no more” means that no action against sin will need to be taken under the new covenant. In short, based upon the single sacrifice of the new covenant, all of its members experience the full and complete forgiveness of all sins.

By changing the structure and nature of God’s covenant people and the sacrifice made on their behalf, the new covenant helps us understand what it means for Jesus to be its mediator. The newness of the new covenant helps explain the uniqueness of Christ.”⁷

The Body Prepared for Christ

vv. 5-7 / Psalm 40

“Consequently”, meaning “as a result of” or “therefore” – as a result of all the things mentioned in the first 4 verses of this chapter, the author says, “*When Christ came into the world...*” and then connects those verses with vv. 5-10 and Christ’s offering.

This is a rather plain (clear) allusion to the Incarnation of Christ the Son, the Second person of the Trinity. This is what the author means by “*When Christ came into the world...*”.

It is a matter of amazement to me just how often Hebrews (and really, the rest of the NT books) quotes passages or verses from the OT to bring to them a significance and direct application out of and beyond the seemingly original intent of the biblical authors. It appears to be especially appropriate when the NT subject is Christ’s redemptive work.

The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8 here in vv. 5-7, and the Holy Spirit attributes these words written down hundreds of years before Christ came into the world, as having been said by Christ, as a first-person statement! It is an appropriate citation because Jesus is, first and foremost in prophecy, types, and promise the Coming One, the promised and long-anticipated Prophet and Messiah – The Isaianic Servant of the Lord.

⁶ P. Hughes, Hebrews, p. 392-393

⁷ Stephen Wellum, God the Son Incarnate, Crossway, 2016, p. 143-144

The coming to do God's will as mentioned in v. 7 is also of primary importance as well. One of the pre-eminent NT passages to describe this desire of Christ to do His Father's will while in His incarnate state is John 5. Notice vv. 19-30, 44-47; 6:38-40; 4:34; as well as John 10:11,15,17-18; 17:4 and take note also of Isaiah 50:4-9. Even in the one place where it seems that Jesus' desire to do God's will seems to flag somewhat – in Gethsemane, in the very shadow of the Cross, we find this statement being prayed by Him: Matt. 26: 39 – and cf. MK 14:36; LK 22:42. Jesus had His own will, but He subverted that will to the Father's will time and time again for 33 years! Finally, on the very brink of His death, He goes the full distance.

And it is not only in these passages that Jesus' reasons for coming – for the Father's reason for sending Him, is laid out for us – for 2 examples, see I Tim. 1:15 and Titus 3:4-7, and many more passages could be referred to. When the author says in Heb. 10:10, *"by that will we have been sanctified..."* he uses *'sanctified'* here as a synonym for salvation. He is not referring to the progressive sanctification we live out after God justifies us, but instead he is thinking of God's setting us apart to be His people. But it is *'by that will'* – God's will – that we are saved and that is the reason Jesus was sent. He Himself said, *"I have come to seek and save the lost"* (LK 19:10). John 3:16 is also an appropriate verse to support this idea.

But all the elements of Christ *"coming into the world"* here in v. 7, the sending and the coming, the body prepared, the *"things written of me in the scroll of the book"*, converge to explain that a body, specifically a human body had to be provided in order for Him to perform God's will on earth. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ was an absolutely critical element of salvation.

Christopher Wright makes an excellent point about the goal of the Incarnation in his excellent book, *"To the Cross"*, as he points out the significance of John 19:38, and bolsters the point being made here in Hebrews 10:5-1 as well; *"Jesus was not actually dead yet, but he was triumphantly conscious that nothing could now stand in the way of his death. This was what he had come to do. This was what his Father had sent him for. The whole plan of God that stretched back to eternity before Jesus' birth in time was now coming to completion. His life's goal was to give his life as a ransom for many. That was God's will and his own will, and now he'd reached the point of no return...There was nothing that could stop that moment when he would give his life. His death was now inevitable.*

But, we might ask, what was the point of thinking that? Surely Jesus didn't have much choice! There he was, stretched out on the cross. How could he be thinking, *"That's it! I've done it! Made it at last?"* Well that actually is the point. It was only because Jesus had been so utterly determined to die that he had reached this point of no return.

If you think about it, almost everybody had tried to stop Jesus from getting to this place of giving his life. Right at the start, Herod tried to put him to death when he was a little baby. The whole story could have stopped right there. And then, when Jesus entered his ministry, the devil tried to tempt Jesus not to go the way of obedience to his Father, which would lead to suffering and death, offering him much more attractive alternatives. At Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus began to explain to his disciples what lay ahead, Peter said, *"No, no Lord, that's not going to happen to*

you!” Later on, his own mother and family tried to pull him back from his mission that was clearly offensive and dangerous. In Jesus’ own worst moment at Gethsemane, from within his own battling human consciousness, had come this deep, deep longing not to drink the cup that his Father was giving him. When they arrested him, he knew he could have called on squadrons of angels to rescue him. And earlier that very morning Pilate had tried to release him. Even in those early moments on the cross, the criminals on either side of him had urged him (with mockery of course), “Save yourself and us!” (which he could have done). So it was only because Jesus had been determined to go the whole way to death that he had reached this final point of victory. Everything was now finished. All was completed. Nothing more stood in the way of Jesus giving his life and finishing the task for which his Father had sent him.”⁸

“When he comes into the world...he says ‘sacrifice and offerings you do not desire...” How did He know that? David, in Psalm 40 identified this, and David’s purview was the OT passages like that of I Samuel 15:22-23, where he saw his royal predecessor fall from grace and kingship (Saul) because he thought that the offering of stolen animals could act as a covering or erasure of his act of rebellious sin, where he certainly did not obey God. He had exhibited a careless attitude of “Hey, I’m the King, so I can amend God’s commands if I do so for what I consider to be a reasonable reason. Samuel’s rebuke serves as a ‘smackdown’ of Saul’s thinking to tell him, *“to obey is better than sacrifice.”*

David’s own apologetic, humble and contrite words – Psalm 51:16-17 – even in a situation where he has sinned hugely, also builds up this idea that sacrifice / offering is not the key element of even the old covenant worship system. The most important element is obedience. A contrite heart, a broken heart and broken spirit is what God desires from His people.

Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God did not come into the world as a baby armed with omniscience (cf. LK 2:40,52). He learned the Scriptures by age 30, and was thus sufficiently prepared at age 30 to go out into His ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit, and His own knowledge of how He was taught and who He was by what He read in the Scriptures. Donald MacLeod makes a lot of sense on this point; “We can be sure...that Mary had introduced him to the prophets. He would have read his own destiny in their delineations of the Messiah, not least in those neglected passages which spoke so clearly of his suffering and death. He may have at first pondered, like the Ethiopian eunuch, “Who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” (Acts 8:34); or, like the angels, probed the great predictions of the suffering of Messiah and the glory that would follow, wondering to what, and to when, and to whom they referred (I Pet. 1:11). Ashe read, the Spirit of his Father would have guided him and led him to the core truths of messianic suffering: that one day he would be led like a lamb to the slaughter; that he was called to give his life a ransom for many;

⁸ Christopher JH Wright, To the Cross, IVP, 2017, pp 92-93

that the sword of Yahweh would strike him; and that, at the end even his heavenly father would forsake him.”⁹

Bruce Ware also makes an excellent point as he describes the humanity of Christ while on earth and the fact that He learned obedience to God’s will as a result of His temptations and suffering;

“Can we not now see that all the previous tests of faith, the divine demands that he followed and the sufferings that he experienced, were preparatory and strengthening for his obeying the Father in the garden? Here’s an interesting question: Could Jesus have obeyed the Father and gone to the cross to die for our sins when he was twelve years old? Could he have done it at the outset of his ministry, at age 30? Or did the Father know just when His Son’s faith would be strengthened sufficiently so that at this time he was able to engage the fight and withstand the temptation and declare in the end, “Not my will but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42)? Indeed, Jesus learned obedience from the things he suffered. That is, he learned to obey increasingly difficult demands of the Father, preparing him for this hardest of all demands – going to the cross. Could he have faced this Gethsemane challenge successfully at the ages of 12 or 30? I think the answer is no. As remarkable as his obedience was each step of the way, all of these experiences were meant to build his faith and strengthen his character so that he could, in the end, succeed in fulfilling the will of the Father in choosing to endure the agony of the cross for the remission of our sins.”¹⁰

He could not have provided our substitutionary atonement at 5, 12 or 18 years old. He was 33, after 3 years of intense ministry, in which He displayed His sinlessness and righteousness. Otherwise, He would not have been in a position to be an efficacious sacrifice and perfect Mediator and High Priest. (cf. Heb. 4:14-15; 5:8-10)

In order to perform the Father’s will, He had to have a body, because the promised salvation demanded the sacrifice of Himself in the place of sinners (cf. Isa. 53). Paul, in I Tim. 1:15 tells us that, “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...*”, and Hebrews 10:10, “*By that will we have been sanctified...once for all*”. And Philipppians 2:5-11 expands on the truth of His servanthood, obedience, death and humanity.

“*But a body you have prepared for me...*” is written in a sense of God’s sovereignty in the very selection of that ‘prepared’ body Jesus would live in as a ‘tent’ (JN 1:14) as He dwelt among us. In Psalm 139:13-16, David speaks of himself as he began life as a fetus, and note v. 16b, “*in your book were written...the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*”! Job 14:5 presents the same sentiment of his own birth and births in general.

The body prepared for Christ – God’s gracious selection of a body, according to this verse in Hebrews 10, citing Ps. 40:6b. But note how Ps. 40 reads in the ESV; “*but you have given me an open ear*”. How is this the same thing? According to Philip Hughes, and Tom Schreiner, the A.H. always follows the Septuagint (or LXX) and the

⁹ Donald MacLeod, Christ Crucified, IVP Academic, 2014, p. 18-19

¹⁰ Bruce ware, The Man Christ Jesus, Crossway, 2013, p. 66-67

Masoretic Text (MT) when quoting the OT, but here, he diverts away from both. The LXX at Psalm 40:7 corresponds in meaning to Hebrews. This difference, though, is not great. David, in Psalm 40:6, is stressing the inadequacy of the Levitical sacrifices without obedience to God. The Hebrew literally says, “*ears thou hast dug for me*”, which appears to mean, “*thou hast caused me to obey Thy will.*” Or “*to glorify God in my body*” In that case, the ears here act as a synecdoche¹¹ – the part = the whole.

In Isaiah 50:5, a clearly Messianic reference exists in this “Servant Song” – “*The Lord has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward.*” This is said in the sense of full obedience and the following verses in this passage fully support that. But it is also seen as a clear reference to making a willing slave a lifelong slave by their own will. It means taking a sharp awl to open a hole where an earring can be placed as a symbol of lifelong devotion to one’s master. Passages like this one in Hebrews 10 and a number of verses in John 5 clearly exhibit the pure devotion and obedience of Christ to His Father’s will.

Either way, Hebrews cites the verse as “*...a body you have prepared for me...I have come to do your will O Lord.*” But notice just before we move on the poetic nature or structure here (the author is, after all, citing a Psalm).

*“Sacrifice and offerings you have not desired,
But a body you have prepared for me;
In burnt offerings and sin offerings
You have taken no pleasure.”*

So David’s point, and the A.H.’s point in citing this passage is to say; offerings and sacrifices without obedience and commitment to the Lord are meaningless. They become simply a religious ritual, and such hollow rituals, according to the verses we’ve been looking at, make God weary. It is like the description by Jesus of the lukewarm attitude of the Church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22 – such luke-warmness makes God want to vomit.

What made Jesus obey God’s will? Richard Phillips points out:

“People complain about the doctrine of predestination that it makes us mere puppets, without willing obedience. But this is not true. There was a never a man whose life was not only predestined but also prerecorded in minute details. Yet his obedience to that script was anything but mechanical. Here was the Divine Son of God in the flesh, the freest of all men ever born. And yet that freedom bore fruit in the most careful conformity to God’s will for him, as set forth in the Scriptures, predestined and prerecorded. “Behold”, he says to God’s great joy, “I have come to do your will.” God was pleased with this in a way that no millions of sheep or goats could ever approach. FF Bruce puts it well: “Wholehearted obedience is the sacrifice which God really desires, the sacrifice which he received in perfection from his Servant-Son when he came into the

¹¹ Synecdoche – definition – “a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice-versa.” Source: The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1993

world...The Psalmist's words, 'I have come to do your will, O God', sum up the whole tenor of our Lord's life and ministry, and express the essence of that true sacrifice that God desires."¹²

FF Bruce adds this:

"Our author's contrast is not between sacrifice and obedience, but between the involuntary sacrifice of dumb animals and "sacrifice into which obedience enters", the sacrifice of a rational and spiritual being, which is not passive in death, but in dying, makes the will of God its own."¹³

So, Jesus, the Messiah recognized this, along with the ultimate reason He'd been sent, and now in v. 7, He says, "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."* (citing Psalm 40:7) We are going to look at v. 7 in its two points;

1.) *"I have come to do your will O God."* V. 7a

This verse continues to be a reference to Jesus' incarnation, which parallels v. 5, *"When Christ came into the world..."*. We have already looked at a number of verses in John's gospel where the doing of God's will for Jesus was a delight and His sole focus as he ministered on earth. That He was successful is verified in JN 17:4.

This heart of pure obedience (*'even to death on a cross'*) to God's will was exactly the missing component in the Mosaic Covenant, because it could not provide this level of commitment. Hence, Heb. 8:10 cites Jeremiah and says, as a key element of the new covenant, *"I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

But we know, by virtue of this, the incarnate Christ tasted death for everyone (Heb. 2:9f), and by that, purified the sinner's conscience from dead works to serve the living God (9:14), and sanctifies (saves) the "we" of 10:10, which is the elect. I love the way Isaiah 50:4-10 describes Jesus' obedience as 'the Servant' in prophetic language.

Philip Hughes points out:

"The body of his incarnation, whereby he identified himself with our humanity, and was capacitated to stand in our stead, was essential if the Son was obediently to hear and do the will of the Father for our everlasting redemption."¹⁴

2.) *"as it is written of me in the scroll of the book."* V. 7b

My initial reaction to this phrase transports my thinking back to first: LK 24:13-27, 30-32 and second: Matt. 26:49-54. I mention these 2 passages here because in them, we find Jesus' view of His own role being described in Scripture, not just a prophetic fulfillment. A third place would be John 5:36-37.

'The scroll of the book' – at the very least, the Torah, but surely encompassing the types, shadows, and prophecies of the entire OT Canon is in sight here. But, also

¹² Richard Phillips, Hebrews, p. 340

¹³ FF Bruce, Hebrews, Eerdmans, 1990, p. 241

¹⁴ P. Hughes, p. 397

keep in mind that in the OC, the law was written in stone and on scrolls, but now, in the NC, it is written on the hearts of God's people, His new creatures – cf. II Corinthians 3:3 & 4:5-6.

The Establishment of the New Covenant vv. 8-10

The next 3 verses are written as a commentary by the author on why he has cited these verses in 5-7 from Psalm 40. He rewords vv. 5-6, then, in parenthesis says (*“these are offered according to the law”*), which means that these sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings were authorized by God in the OC era. The fact that God did not delight in them or take pleasure in them is not an indicator that they were somehow against His will, but rather that the hearts of the ‘worshippers’ were not engaged with the actions for the right motives. “The point is that such sacrifices are provisional instead of permanent. They did not truly and finally atone for sin (cf. Heb. 10:4), thus demonstrating the inadequacy of the old covenant. A greater sacrifice must be coming since God did not delight in what was offered according to the law.”¹⁵

Then, in reference to v.7, v. 9 comments, *“He does away with the first in order to establish the second.”* God’s will for Jesus consisted in the offering up of the body given to Him (for that express purpose), and the giving up of His life. Consider Jesus’ famous words expressed in Gethsemane, at LK 22:42; *“Father if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.”*

So the incarnate Son abolishes the first (i.e., the system of sacrifices associated with the Mosaic law), in order to establish the second, namely, the will of God which involved the offering of Himself as the singular sacrifice for sins forever. And this was perfectly successful / efficacious, because v. 10 tells us, *“And it is by that will [and that will alone] that we have been sanctified”*. See also JN 1:9-13; I Tim. 1:15-16; II Tim. 1:8-10; Titus 1:1-3; 2:11-14; 3:4-7. God’s will is purposeful and intentional. It never fails (cf. Isa. 46:3-10) and see also Isa. 42:1-9 (esp. v. 6, *“I will give you as a covenant for the people”* & this is said prophetically of Christ, the Servant); Isa. 43; 44:24-28; 45:17, 21-25, and so much more! His will cannot be thwarted! With God, to will and to do go hand in hand so that His divine will can never fail.

We have been sanctified (saved) *“through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* “once for all” in this passage does not mean ‘for all people.’ It means once for all time. His sacrifice was definitive and effective because He was sinless, without spot or blemish (I Pet. 1:18-23a). It was a willing and voluntary sacrifice, and it was God’s intention from before time began for Jesus’ sacrifice to be that final necessary sacrifice to put away sin, and enmity for good, and for Christ’s death to reconcile all things to Himself.

FF Bruce, citing J. Denny, says,

¹⁵ Schreiner, p. 299-300

“It is the Atonement which explains the Incarnation: the Incarnation takes place in order that the sin of the world may be put away by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.”¹⁶

Tom Schreiner comments:

“The sacrifice of Jesus is dramatically different from animal sacrifices, and in contrast to them his sacrifice truly and finally cleanses from sin. Upon coming into the world, Jesus recognized his vocation in the words of Ps. 40:6-8. God did not ultimately find delight in burnt offerings and sin offerings (10:5-6,8), for such offerings could not finally remove sin. What God wanted from Jesus, his will for Jesus, was that Jesus would give of himself (10:5,7,9). Jesus was called to do the will of God, and this meant he would offer himself as a sacrifice for sins (10:10). We see clearly here why Jesus’ sacrifice was better. Instead of the sacrifice of unwilling animals, he willingly and gladly gave himself to God and surrendered his life for human beings. The significance of Jesus’ sacrifice could hardly be greater. Here we have the sacrifice of one who is fully divine and fully human, and hence his own sacrifice atones for sins forever. Jesus’ sacrifice is better, then, because of who he is.”¹⁷

Philip Hughes adds to this with this point,

“This offering is once for all because, being absolutely adequate, it is absolutely final and determinative forever. The Incarnation, then, in which the Son took to Himself the body prepared for Him, can be understood only in relation to the redemption which he, in accordance with the gracious will of God, achieved for us at Calvary.”¹⁸

Amen!

¹⁶ FF Bruce, Hebrews, p. 243

¹⁷ Schreiner, p. 462-463

¹⁸ Hughes, p. 399