

Just Before He Came Or The Night Before Christmas

Hebrews 10:5-7 *Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.*

6In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’”



We have here a conversation of the Son—the second person of the Trinity with the Father—the first person of the Trinity. God is conversing with Himself. God is self-existent and self-sufficient. He did not create man because He was lonely or needed someone to talk to. God dwells as the infinite and unending God of relationship. He holds communion within Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **He stands alone as one who has never been alone.** He has from all eternity enjoyed the unending fellowship of His triunity. God made this world. A world into which sin and darkness and death has entered. Here God the Son is discussing His coming into this sinful, fallen, dark world in human flesh. He and Father are speaking of the **beautiful** intent to redeem us from our sins and rescue the world from the darkness our sins had brought upon it.

What we discover from the outset of this passage is what it is that prompted our Lord’s coming. It was to bring animal sacrifices in the Temple to their end. By “*to their end*” I mean that God was determined to bring these animal sacrifices of lambs and rams and goats and bulls and doves... to their purposed conclusion and by so doing to bring them to a stop.

Our passage says a rather odd thing. It says *Sacrifice and offering You did not desire*. This seems odd since it was God who commanded the sacrifices in the first place. He gave the exact instruction on the *what, when, where* and the *how* of the sacrifices.

QUESTION: How could God both institute these sacrifices and have no desire for them as well? Let me answer that by saying that: God’s first desire for his people was simple obedience to His will. Their failure to obey was sin and these sins required a punishment. God instituted the sacrifices to remind the people that they had sinned; that they faced a payment for their sins that they could not make; and to remind the people that He desired, above all else, their obedience to His will.

You see the sacrifices were little more than object lessons and reminders, day in and day out, from morning to evening, that God required a payment for the sins – before the sacrifices they were to find the heart cry of: “*O God we deserve this death! But God have mercy and give us your covering for we cannot cover the costs of our sins ourselves.*”

Sadly, as time went on and the animal sacrificial system began to be perceived by the people of Israel as all the payment God required. These offerings began to be understood as all the obedience God required as well. By keeping the ritual of sacrifice the people began to think that they had covered themselves from the punishment and judgment of their sins. **Ex.** Like a man who takes communion once a week may begin to think that by doing so he can do what he likes on all the days in between. In the same way they had come to rest in ritual and not understand that their sins punishment was outstanding, and payment was still required of them. Above all else they had not changed their hearts to submit in obedience to the will of God.

They should have remembered the words of Samuel to King Saul. **1 Samuel 15:22** says to King Saul the first King of Israel, *“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.”* Or the words of **David** who said in **Psalms 51:16-17** *For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.*

Here is the answer to the question how could God institute the sacrifices and then wish to end them and take no pleasure in them? **God had given the sacrifices for one end and the people had used them to the wrong end or as a false end. Ex.** This Christmas season I opened up a gift from one of my sisters. The gift was a black and white photocopy of a fleece jacket she said was going to be delivered to my home. It hasn't come yet. But suppose it did and I left the package unwrapped and instead continually kept the xerox copy in my pocket and claimed that was the extent of my gift from her. I think this might not be what my sister would desire of me or take pleasure in from me even though she did in fact give me that photocopy.

God in fact gave the sacrificial system as a shadowed copy of the real payment he was preparing for our sins. He did not desire that the Jews rest in their ritual system as a completed transaction for their forgiveness. It was to only point them to seek forgiveness out of the mercy of God and to look in longing for a once for all sacrifice for their sins provided by God Himself. The end of the temple sacrificial purpose and usefulness had come with the coming and the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ upon the cross. God now desires that as we look in repentance and faith on the offering of His Son for our sins that we come in surrendered obedience to His will. God wants in us – A broken heart and yielded heart set down in faith upon His mercy and surrendered to obey Him.

The words of our text reflect the statements of God the Son speaking to God the Father out of their triune relationship **just before He came** into this world in human form. We might say, though we don't really know, that this **was the night before Christmas**. In our passage we have the reflective statements of the Son to the Father

on a **beautiful** body prepared for Him, on a **beautiful** resolve made by Him and a **beautiful** resolution that is a beautiful ending to be accomplished by Him.

1. Jesus spoke of the beautiful body which was prepared for Him.

Acts 7:10 speaks of God's view of the baby Moses. It says that the baby was beautiful in His sight. Possibly all babies are beautiful to God. I think it reflected God's delight in the design he had for that baby and what that baby was in body designed for. Moses was designed for something beautiful. Just as with Moses, God the Father fashioned a body for His Son, Jesus too. And God has done the same thing for you. He did it for Adam too. In that case out of clay of the ground he fashioned his frame and breathed into that clay a living soul. For you he formed you out of the deep substance of your parent's DNA and into your physical substance He breathed your living, unending soul. You are more than your body. You have a Spirit and a soul that God has breathed into this body he fashioned for you. He comprised you, spirit, soul and body as a unit through which you are to know Him, love Him and obey Him. You were wonderfully made with a beautiful design for the purpose of obeying and honoring God by your spirit and soul, through your body. **Romans 12:1** says to us that we are to *present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, with is our reasonable service or designed worship*. The idea is that God designed your bodies for this reasonable outcome of worship. When the Lord Jesus said that the greatest command was *to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind* and ended in **Mark 12:30** *and with all your strength*. He was directing us to use our bodies to carry out acts of love for God and then when he said *and love your neighbor as yourself* he is commanding we use our bodies to carry out acts of love for others. Now this is what we were beautifully designed for.

1 Corinthian 6:13 puts it this way, "*The body was meant... for the Lord and the Lord for the body.*" Your body was created to house the worship and service and presence of the living God. It is to be temple wholly used for His honor. We were made so that with our bodies we could reflect the wisdom and goodness of God. Every ability God gave us can be used to please Him. Every physical ability and impulse you have when directed according to God's plan is so constructed that it can bring God honor. So you were designed beautifully for a beautiful design.

God prepared a body for His Son in same manner. It was made perfectly, beautifully for one purpose – to be used to obey God. Jesus' body was just as ours in this way. It was created to obey God perfectly and beautifully. **Ex.** You are not quite wrong when you see your little one for the first time, count all the fingers and toes and think to yourself that they are perfect. That little body is God's creation. That little one is wonderfully and beautifully made and equipped to give to God the obedience for which He seeks from his creatures. Each thing God has made was made for a

purpose and crafted to perfectly fulfill that purpose. So too your bodies are perfectly made for God's purpose; so too was Christ's physical human body.

But that this is not what the lost and unsaved person has used their bodies for. They have not used them as vessels of honor and of service and worship and obedience to God's will. They have used them as delivery systems for their own self pleasure and worship. We know this because this is the way we once used our bodies and the way we often fall into in the use of our bodies still. We once gave our bodies to serve idols of our own making, and we still foolishly find our ways back to these idols all too often. But listen, it is not how God planned it, nor how He fashioned it. This is a distortion of our bodies' very purpose. They were not given to us to be the means by which we sought to please ourselves and to serve our own vanity. They were given so that through them we might serve the Lord and by them serve others. I believe in heaven we will understand the true beauty of body in those who have given their bodies to the point of exhaustion to labor lovingly over others in need and who gave those bodies willingly for God's good pleasure in so doing.

Ex. The Bible indicates that our Lord Jesus was not a particularly attractive physical specimen to the human eye. **Isaiah 53:2** says of the Messiah that *He grew up before Him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He didn't have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at Him, no appearance that we should desire Him.* You'll recall that when Judas was to betray, he was called to lead a band of soldiers to where Jesus was and there to point him out in the crowd so that they didn't arrest the wrong person. Apparently, the Lord Jesus had no great distinguishing physical features. He was someone with an average human appearance that people might not take note of and would not distinguish in the crowd. But His body was Beautifully designed by the father to accomplish our Salvation. He came not to be served but to serve. **What makes the body beautiful is how you use it; it is what purpose it serves.** Jesus had his eye on the beautiful body provided for God's good purpose

2. Notice as well in this text a beautiful resolve is made by the Lord Jesus.

'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.' ”

The Lord Jesus came to follow the Father's will. As we have and shall consider, the ultimate will the Father was that the Lord Jesus should present himself as the sacrifice for our sins and so make the payment of our punishment in our place. But He could only fulfill this will or purpose of the Father after obeying all the will of God the Father up to that moment of sacrificial offering. Christ came with a resolve— **To use the body he was given... to in heart, soul, mind and body to obey the will of God.** What a glorious and beautiful resolve. He came to live out in human form the obedience all of us were made for but that all of us fall far short of. And what a beautiful life he lived as a result!!! Read the gospels and follow the life of Jesus and

see for yourself how beautiful it was. Beautiful in holy passions, beautiful in patience and restraint, beautiful in tenderness and gentleness, beautiful in his communication with others, beautiful in his compassions, beautiful in his conceptions of justice and mercy. Beautiful among the poor, among the rejected, beautifully authoritative before the religiously proud. He is beautiful in his way and manner before the weak and the strong, before young and old; with women and men. His life radiates a goodness that is powerful and potent and sways our souls still today with its stark and stunning beauty. Do you know why this is? Because he lived out perfectly the will of God in determined obedience. And listen— **God's will is beautiful and all good and glorious. What God asks of us in obedience is for that which makes for beauty and blessing to pour over us and out from us onto the world around us.**

Christ has come lived that life, that beautiful life and would come live that life through your body if you would surrender it to him for that purpose... to do what is good and what is right. The life, that good and completely beautiful life we were made for but have not lived... Christ lived for us to see... and for us to possess through him. **He came to not only to live this beautiful life but to give this beautiful life to us and by our faith in Him to live this beautiful life through us.** ...That baby we celebrate in this season will do all His father's asks of him and so live a most lovely life.

One last thing to note: Remember the context. God is doing away with animal sacrifice... it comes to its end... it comes to an end for it reaches what it was always pointing to.

3. Here we have A beautiful resolution to be accomplished by Jesus.

A resolution is the action of solving a problem and Christ came to act in solving the greatest problem of all. Christ lived that beautiful life out of the beautiful body God the Father made for him. He lived out a perfect righteousness and then... innocent and holy... he laid that life down on the cross as a payment for your sins and for mine. He took what he did not deserve (our sins) so that He may give us what we do not deserve but cannot see God without (his righteousness and goodness).

In one day of unimaginable suffering, according to the agreed upon plan of God, Jesus fulfilled the purpose of His coming. He ended the animal sacrifices that said, you have sinned, your sin is costly, a payment must be made... he ended them by becoming sin for us who knew no sin... he made the payment in our place... the punishment that would bring us peace was set on him. And we who repent and put our faith in Him are set free. **How beautiful is that?!!! What a resolution to your problem!!!**

Conclusion: I am amazed that there are those persons, persons who profess faith in this One who came. There are persons can come before this oh most beautiful One,

and then turn Him into a means to idea to help them get along in life more meaningfully. Or they turn him into a mere example or guide into their the pursuit of their own spiritual or moral attainments. He is this One God/Man who has lived this most beautiful life in perfect obedience to the beautiful will of God and brought to us this action of resolution where the greatest problem of humankind has been solved; this beautiful resolution... Can we come before Him with our paramount question being; “*tell us how you did it so well so we can do it to?*” Is it proper that we should make Jesus into a poster for our own spiritual self-promotion, or turn His life into a living manual or formula for an ethical life. We come before His beauty and the take away is that we in following Him can feel superior to others in our performance or our prejudices. We can feel better about ourselves imagining that we hold the political view Christ would held or that we live the kind of lifestyle he would lived or we copy His patterns so that we can hopefully carry out the kind of impactful life He carried out; maybe if we study his life hard enough we can heal our own sick and raise our own dead, is that what His beautiful life means to you? What a mistaken point of emphasis. You come to this beautiful One and you should instead... follow the shepherd’s response and say *Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.*” We should leave the presence of Christ as they did, “glorifying and praising God and making known what we have seen and heard in Him. We should follow the response of the wise men who entering in the presence of Jesus fell down and worshipped Him gave to Him what treasures they had. Worship you see is the right response. With your bodies... obediently WORSHIP him. Serve Him, live for Him, live by Him, live in Him and always submit to Him living in you. He has made all this possible. Worship and then go tell others of His beauty.

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’” If these were the beautiful thoughts on His mind just before He came for you, what should your thoughts toward Him be now? “*love so amazing, so divine, demands our hearts, our souls, our all!*”