

"A Body Didst Thou Prepare For Me ..."

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith; sacrifices and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me, in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: then said I, Lo I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offering and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:5-10).

Our writer has shown the necessity of animal sacrifices under the first covenant since they typified the Grand Sacrifice which was to come. but, while the sacrifices were necessary to picture the Coming Sacrifice, they were ineffectual so far as cleansing was concerned. The writer earlier observed that although the law was a shadow of the good things to come, it could *"never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh"* (10:1). This truth is shown in that if they could make the worshipper perfect they would have ceased to be have been offered because if the worshipper had been truly cleansed, he would have had no more consciousness of sins (10:2). To the contrary of this he remarks, *"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance of sins year by year"* (10:3). The reason is apparent: *"For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins"* (10:4).

The writer's citation of Psalms 40:6-8, *"Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me,"* (10:5) is one of those passage which show the preexistent nature of Jesus. The passage presents the Son as saying to the Father, *"a body didst thou prepare for me."* Other passages do show more emphatically the eternal coexistence of the Son with the Father (John 1:1-3 and Philippians 2:5-11 for instance), but this passage does show that He existed before His earthly sojourn. The Psalmist declared that God had no pleasure in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin -- because of their ineffectualness, of course. The purpose of God in preparing a body for the Son was so that men might be sanctified through the offering of that body for our sins. Jesus came to do the will of God. Immediately, he adds, *"He taketh away the first that he may establish the second."* His *"taketh away the first that he may establish the second"* must therefore have been the will of God.

In order to comprehend what the writer had in mind when he speaks of "*first and second*," we must realize that "*first*" and "*second*" have been mentioned already numerous times in chapters eight through ten. To what did they refer in earlier citations.

In 8:7 he wrote, "*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second.*" Again, "*In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old*" (Heb. 8:13). In chapter nine he said that the first covenant had ordinances of a divine sanctuary (10:1). In 9:15 he wrote that Christ had died so that those under the first covenant could have redemption of their transgression. Now again in 10:9 we are told, "*He taketh away the first that he might establish the second.*" The appearance of the words "*first*" or "*old*" in the first four citations all directly or indirectly describe the covenant God gave Israel through Moses. It refers to the same thing in its fifth appearance, as well.

By God's will the removal of the first covenant and the establishing of the second were both done so that we might be sanctified. And, while many and often sacrifices were made under that first covenant, they could "*never take away sins.*" Yet Christ, by one offering, one sacrifice, was able to do what the multitude of sacrifices of the first covenant were unable to do! This wondrous grace was possible because God prepared a body for Christ "*whereby he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw nigh to God through him*" (Heb. 7:25). "*For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified*" (10:14).

Jim McDonald