

AM Psalm 40, Hebrews 10:1-10 "Behold, I have come..."

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- [0 : 00] Well, let's read now from the Word of God, and we pray that the Lord would open our eyes to see wondrous things out of his law.
- You've probably gathered that I'm taking a break from the sermons I've been preaching through Deuteronomy. We're going to look this morning at verses from Psalm 40.
- So we'll read, first of all, the whole of that Psalm, Psalm 40. I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry.
- He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.
- He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.
- [1 : 06] Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie.
- You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us. None can compare with you.
- I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told. In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear.
- Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book it is written of me.
- I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart. I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation.
- [2 : 16] Behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord. I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation.
- I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. As for you, O Lord, you will not restrain your mercy from me.
- Your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me. For evils have encompassed me beyond number. My iniquities have overtaken me and I cannot see.
- They are more than the hairs of my head. My heart fails me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me.
- Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether, who seek to snatch away my life. Let those be turned back and brought to dishonour, who delight in my hurt.
- [3 : 21] Let those be appalled because of their shame, who say to me, Aha! Aha! But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you.
- May those who love your salvation say continually, Great is the Lord. As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me.

You are my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God. Now we are going to hear also some verses from the New Testament, from Hebrews chapter 10, which help us to interpret part of Psalm 40.

Hebrews 10, verses 1 to 10. 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.

Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins.

[4 : 50] 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.

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, sacrifices 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. 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.

When he said, Above, you have neither desired, nor taken pleasure in sacrifices, and offerings, and burnt offerings, and sin offerings, that these are offered according to the law.

Then he added, Behold, I have come to do your will. He does away with the first, in order to establish the second. And by that will, we have been sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.

[6 : 11] Well, let's turn now to the word of God, and to Psalm 40.

And we're going to be looking at verses 6 through to 8. In sacrifice and offering, you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear.

Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, Behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book, it is written of me.

I delight to do your will. Oh my God, your law is within my heart. With Christmas just six days away, I thought it would be good to look at two of the great prophecies of the coming of Christ.

Psalm 40 this morning, and Micah 5 this evening. No event in the history of the world was more eagerly awaited than the coming of Christ.

[7 : 44] At least, not in Israel. Throughout the Old Testament, there had been prophecies of Christ.

Some of them substantial, some of them just hints, but all of them from God, intended to prepare his people for the coming of the Messiah.

You could liken it, perhaps, to those trailers that they show on television in between programs.

If you've ever watched the BBC, you'll know that although they don't have adverts, they do have long clips showing future programs, advertising what's to come to get you interested and to persuade you to watch, or so they hope.

It can be rather irritating because they tend to show the same clip over and over again, but at least it imprints it on your mind.

[8 : 52] Well, God has imprinted the coming of Christ on people's minds by repeatedly giving them a little foretaste of what was to come.

But if I could press the illustration, God doesn't limit himself to clips in between programs. This prophecy comes right in the middle of Psalm 40.

We interrupt this psalm to give you an important announcement. Behold, I am coming. And he doesn't just repeat himself.

Each prophecy is different. And each prophecy adds to our understanding of who it is who's coming, of what he's coming to do.

And whereas those TV clips will very quickly be forgotten, these Old Testament prophecies remain fascinating and helpful to our understanding, even now that Christ has actually come.

[10 : 08] We know that this is a prophecy of Christ here in Psalm 40 because the New Testament tells us in Hebrews 10, which we read.

Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the author says there in verse 5, when Christ came into the world, he said, and he quotes Psalm 40, sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me.

In burnt offering 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.

The wording is slightly different there in Hebrews 10, probably because he is quoting from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, but it is clearly Psalm 40.

And he makes it clear that in Psalm 40, it is Christ himself who is speaking. Speaking of his own coming and the reason for it.

[11 : 32] These words, having been revealed to David prophetically, a thousand years before the event. Well, I want us to consider this morning, first, the person who was coming, and then, the purpose of his coming.

First of all, though, let's look briefly at the context. Psalm 40 is a wonderful psalm of deliverance.

It begins with that testimony, I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in God. He's speaking metaphorically, of course.

I'm not aware that David was ever literally rescued out of a bog. But many times God had delivered him out of desperate troubles, which were like sinking in a bog, or as the old version puts it, out of the miry clay.

[12 : 58] And many of us can say the same. It's our testimony that God has rescued us out of desperate troubles. It would be fascinating if we could hear each other's testimonies, the troubles that we've gone through.

So many different kinds of troubles, so many different pits that we were once in, but the Lord graciously came. And each one of us who is a believer today, the Lord has lifted us out of that miry bog and set our feet upon the rock.

Above all, he's rescued us out of the miry clay of sin and set our feet upon the rock of Christ. And our hearts now are full of praise and we want the world to know.

He goes on to recommend faith to us all. In verse 4, blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. And then his thoughts soar heavenwards.

In verse 5, you have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us. None can compare with you. I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

[14 : 27] It's at this point that we have this prophecy of Christ. It's not impossible to apply verses 6 to 8 or at least part of those verses to David who undoubtedly wanted to do God's will and who understood that to obey is better than sacrifice.

But it is undoubtedly best to take them as a prophecy of Christ. Indeed, as the very words of Christ as the book of Hebrews interprets them.

Spurgeon says about this that he would rather look at the sun though the stars be dimmed in comparison. So here he says he would rather look upon Christ than David.

And so would I. What we have here is the very greatest of those wondrous deeds of God in verse 5.

Sending his own son to deliver us from our sins. So let's look then at this prophecy.

[15 : 51] And first the person who will come. In verse 7 then I said behold I have come.

The word behold in scripture usually indicates something wonderful something worth looking at. Something that's worth more than just a casual glance.

Something that's worth contemplating at length. And this truly is something wonderful. According to Hebrews 10 this is a promise from Christ himself that he personally the son of God will come into this world.

Indeed he uses the perfect tense translated in the ESV I have come looking ahead to it prophetically as if it were already accomplished it's so certain.

the emphasis is on the word I. I personally have come.

[17 : 12] There are situations where it's enough for God to send someone else. If it's simply a matter of delivering a message well an angel will do or even a man.

God asks in Isaiah 6 whom shall I send and who will go for us and Isaiah volunteers here am I send me. But where salvation is concerned only the son of God will do.

We could liken it perhaps to some difficult task which only the top man can manage. If you have to go into hospital for major surgery then you want the top surgeon doing it.

You don't want some trainee doctor. Well Christ himself personally came to save us because only he could.

And he came willingly eagerly even. A few months ago we had a burst pipe just as we were about to go away on holiday.

[18 : 34] We rang up a friend who is a handyman and how relieved we were to hear him say I'm on my way I'm coming now and I'll fix it for you.

And he came and he fixed the problem. So here is Christ saying to a lost world don't worry I'm coming I'm on my way I'll fix the problem.

Now there are several points to notice here. First he is coming coming down from heaven to earth. Our Lord frequently describes himself as coming into this world.

Matthew 9 13 for example I came not to call the righteous but sinners. John 10 I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.

John 16 the father himself loves you because you have loved me and believed that I came from God. he wasn't merely born he came as the Christmas carol says which we will sing later he came down to earth from heaven who was God and Lord of all.

[20 : 05] Secondly his coming was prophesied not just here but throughout the scriptures as he says in verse 7 in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

Even before this psalm was written Christ's coming was prophesied so many times. In Genesis 3 15 for example that mysterious warning to Satan concerning the seed of the woman he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

Genesis 22 God himself will provide himself with a lamb. Deuteronomy 18 God will raise up for you a prophet like me.

In 2 Samuel 7 David himself had been promised your throne will be established forever. Implying that a descendant of his would live forever.

It's written here of course in this psalm and it's written in many of the psalms. Some would say you can find Christ in every psalm. Then there were also all those pictures of Christ in the Exodus as the rock as the manna.

[21 : 36] as the pillar of light. And all the types and shadows of the law in the sacrifices and in the tabernacle it was all there for anyone spiritually minded to see.

And later there would be more prophecies and much clearer prophecies in Isaiah and Micah and the other prophets. Thirdly he came in the flesh in human form.

That's implied in verse 6 where he says you have given me an open ear. Hebrews 10 following the septuagint says quite plainly a body you have prepared for me.

Christ wasn't just a heavenly visitor floating down from heaven seeing our troubles but not really feeling them. He was indeed 100% God but he was also 100% man as well.

John makes this a test of orthodoxy in 1 John that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh not just as a spirit but in the flesh.

[22 : 58] Here you have it plainly. Christ has come in the flesh. Finally he came as the servant of God and that too is implied in verse 6 you have given me an open ear and it's stated plainly in verse 8 I delight to do your will oh my God your law is within my heart.

In Hebrews it sums this up I come to do your will. Now the open ear could simply mean a willingness to hear God and to obey him as his servant.

There's a similar phrase in Isaiah 50 where Christ again says the Lord God has opened my ear and I was not rebellious I turned not backwards.

There's an interesting comparison here between verse 1 and verse 6 in verse 1 God's ear was opened to David's prayer.

Here Christ's ear is open to God's command. Many think however that there's a reference here to that strange law in Exodus 21 repeated in Deuteronomy 15 that if a slave was offered his freedom and he chose to remain with his master his ear was to be bored through with an awl to record the choice that he'd made.

[24 : 44] The Scottish Psalter setting of this psalm follows that thought when it actually says we sang earlier my ear hast thou bored.

That sounds horrible to me but it was clearly a mark of real commitment. Christ has indeed committed himself to the Father.

He has chosen at great personal cost to serve God. As he said in the Garden of Gethsemane not my will but yours be done.

But what exactly did he come to do? What was this will of God that he came to perform? Let's look now at the purpose of his coming.

And here we have to combine verses six and eight. In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted but you have given me an open ear. burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

[25 : 52] I delight to do your will oh my God. These verses tell us that Christ came to do something that was better than sacrifice.

Now in a general sense we know that to obey is better than sacrifice. David especially knew that his predecessor Saul had been rejected from being king precisely because he thought sacrifice was enough without obedience.

Remember the story how he offered up all those animals whilst refusing to obey God's command to destroy the Amalekites. that was actually the occasion 1 Samuel 15 when Samuel said has the Lord as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of lambs.

David knew that. He's virtually quoting it here. And Christ knew that. no one has ever obeyed God more than Christ.

He could say without any fear of contradiction in John 8 29 I always do those things that are pleasing to him. He could truly say your law is within my heart.

[27 : 32] He fulfilled completely that command in Deuteronomy 6 that we looked at a few weeks ago. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your might and these words that I command you shall be on your heart.

Christ rendered perfect obedience to God in all that he did. But there was one particular act of obedience which stands out above all others.

Christ offered up the perfect sacrifice to God on the cross. That's what Hebrews 10 is all about.

That's how Hebrews 10 interprets this passage in Psalm 40. He reminds us there of the inadequacy of the Old Testament sacrifices.

it is impossible he says for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. Something better than that was required. Something better than the blood of bulls and lambs was needed to cleanse us from sin.

[28 : 49] And that something was nothing less than the blood of Christ. He's not saying that the Old Testament sacrifices were never of any value.

After all God himself had commanded them. But they were only ever a picture of that perfect sacrifice which Christ alone could offer.

As the hymn puts it that there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

sin. The writer to the Hebrews reasons that the imperfect sacrifices of the law have been done away with now that the perfect sacrifice of Christ has come.

And Christ came for that very purpose. I have come to do your will he says in the Septuagint translation quoted in Hebrews and by that will the author explains we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.

[30 : 10] That's why we must never separate Christmas and Easter the one led to the other. He came to die.

and that's also why he personally had to come. He alone could offer that sacrifice.

Make no mistake the cross was God's will. It wasn't a mistake. It says in Isaiah 53 verse 10 it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

He has put him to grief. It was all planned before the foundation of the world. It was all agreed between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Exactly what would happen. And Christ came to fulfill that plan. To carry out God's will. To obey God's command by dying on the cross for us.

[31 : 20] It's not easy is it to accept suffering as God's will. We struggle with it ourselves. But it was certainly God's will for Christ.

And he embraced that will. He came to fulfill it. He came to do what none of us could do or would have done to die for our sin.

And he did so of course at enormous personal cost. Those words in the garden of Gethsemane, not my will but yours be done, were not spoken easily.

We're told he prayed in an agony with great drops of blood as he contemplated the wrath of God falling upon him. But nonetheless he obeyed.

He obeyed willingly. And we owe our salvation to that obedience. How then should we respond to all this?

[32 : 29] What does the Lord require of us? Well first of course faith. Christ came into this world to save us but we must trust in him.

There is no other way. You can't be saved by your own obedience. Our obedience is imperfect. You know that.

You can't be saved by your own sacrifices or by any kind of religious ritual. You can only be saved through faith in Christ.

If the expert comes to sort out some problem that you have and you close the door on him, what good will it do?

If you close the door on Christ, you will remain lost forever. Secondly, worship, and by that I include gratitude and love and praise.

[33 : 34] What amazing love God has shown in sending his son. What an amazing sacrifice Christ has offered, laying down his own life.

How thankful we should be. We should be lost in wonder, love, and praise, loving him who first loved us.

Thirdly, imitation. proclamation. We're supposed to be followers of Christ. If Christ could say, I delight to do your will, O God, your law is within my heart, shouldn't we say the same?

We will never be asked to do what he was asked to do. But all that God does ask of us, we should do willingly. And fourthly, proclamation.

David goes on to say in verse nine, I have told the glad news of your deliverance in the great congregation. Can you say the same?

[34 : 47] One final thought. This same Jesus who came at Bethlehem will come again. he says so in words very similar to these.

Here in Psalm 40, Christ says, Behold, I have come. In Revelation 22, 7, he says, Behold, I am coming soon.

He came the first time in humility to die. He will come the second time in glory to reign. And that second promise, is as sure as the first.

He says in Revelation 22 and verse 20, Surely, I come quickly. And our hearts should respond.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Let's close our service now by singing again. cá!