

## SESSION NINE

### A God Who is Sufficient (*Psalms 40:6-8*)

“A musician is not recommended for playing long, but for playing well; it is obeying God willingly, that is accepted; the Lord hates that which is forced, it is rather a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly; he brought his sacrifice, not his heart.” ~ Thomas Watson

#### I. Overview

Last week we examined messianic psalms. In particular, we focused on Psalm 110--the most cited Old Testament passage in the New Testament. This week we will look at the most obscure of the messianic psalms, Psalm 40. This psalm appears only once in the New Testament—Hebrews 10:5-7. While Psalm 110 clearly contains messianic phraseology, few messianic clues can be seen in Psalm 40:6-8. Consequently, two major questions arise:

- Did the writer of Psalm 40 also anticipate the coming of the Messiah and the abolition of the Mosaic Law?
- On what basis did the writer of Hebrews extrapolate messianic overtones from Psalm 40? Is this a legitimate and valid method of exegesis?

#### II. The Content of Psalm 40:6-8

##### A. The Law and True Worship (v. 6).

Even the Law and the prophets taught the primacy of obedience and a personal response of faith and love to God as a condition for pleasing God (e.g., Exod 15:26; Deut 10:12, 20; Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:6-8).

Nestled among the two references to sacrifices is the reference to “ears you have dug for me.” The reference suggests that it is God, the creator of the ear (cf. Psalm 94:9), who is able to open the “ear” to obedience (cf. Isa 50:4-5; Matt 11:15). “If God has the ear, it means the person is listening to God’s instructions” (Ross, *Psalms*, 1:864).

##### B. Recognition of Divine Sovereignty (vv. 7-8).

David demonstrates awareness that he was spoken of in the Scriptures. Certainly, Nathan’s words in 2 Samuel 7 serve as a backdrop.

The details of God’s plan for David are written on his heart. Normally we equate the writing of God’s law on one’s heart with the New Covenant (cf. Jer 31:33). However, as reminded by Walter Kaiser, God’s law was to be written on the heart of God’s people long before the New Covenant (cf. Deut 6:6; Ps 37:31; and Prov 3:3; 7:3). Even in the Old Testament era, God longs for “a people in whose heart is my law” (Isa 51:7).

### III. Hebrews 10:5-10 and Psalm 40:6-8

#### A. The Abolishing of the Old Order.

The writer of Hebrews highlights the abolishment of the old order with the establishment of the new covenant.

Noting the treatment of Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10, Kaiser writes, "What has been a shadow and a type under David became a complete reality finally in Christ's incarnation and substitutionary atonement. David was a true model of the final reality because of the gracious calling and appointment of God. History could reflect this kind of scheme (shadow and reality) solely because of the ill-embracing divine plan and divine designation to the office and function of promise . . . ." (*The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, 139).

#### B. Sacrifice and Sin

"By stringing together four different terms for sacrifice along with the two expressions of disapproval (v. 8), Hebrews highlights the point that God did not want any of the sacrifices mentioned" (O'Brien, *Hebrews*, 351).

In fact, nowhere in the Old Testament did animal sacrifice take away sin. Sacrifices offered out of a heart of repentance and devotion to God did bring relief from the penalty, but objectively, the sin remained unaddressed or cared for. The sacrifice required a person, not an animal. The "passing over" of sins (cf. Rom3:25) ceased with God's own substitute—His sinless Son.

#### C. Sufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice

Christ's act of perfect obedience to the will of God serves as the permanent and all-surpassing sacrifice.

F. F. Bruce writes, "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" (*Hebrews*, 234).

### IV. Intersect

#### A. Works, even so-called ministry, neither atones for the past nor wins God's favor in the future.

Micah 6:6-8 (also, cf. Amos 5:21-25) -

B. False guilt and shame diminishes Christ's sacrifice. His blood is thorough and sufficient in covering our sin.

1 John 1:9 -

C. Effective ministry is contingent on a heart that has been transformed by God alone.

Titus 2:11-14 -

“The law works fear and wrath; grace works hope and mercy.”  
~ Martin Luther