

Reading: Luke 1v26-38

Theme: ‘a body You prepared for Me’ (Hebrews 10v5)

Sadly, many in society and even in churches, do not know the wonder and truth of what the Christmas celebration is about. It is not party, presents, peace or joy. It’s not as some say “*Happy birthday Jesus*” as scholars recognise that Jesus was not born in December as no shepherd worth their salt would have been out in the fields at night in ME; also, there would have been no room in the stable either - as all the animals would have been in shelter - scholars tell us that the summer months would have been nearer the date! Our season we call Christmas is often said to be the Christianisation of pagan feasts and it seems to be heading back that way also! I’m not a killjoy, I do celebrate Christmas at this time of the year, but for the true reason!

At Christmas we can remember and celebrate, in a focused way, the coming of God the Son into this world in a remarkable manner - He took real humanity and a real body to Himself forever. It is an amazing to consider this. We are not told exactly how - as this miracle is not explained. The Bible speaks of it as occurring and we have to piece together Scriptures to get something more of the awesomeness and wonder of this event.

The inspired, unnamed author of Hebrews says in 10:5 “*but a body you prepared for me*” - this is the part of God’s word I want to hang our thoughts on and direct our attention to this morning. Incredibly the author takes us back before time and we are given a glimpse, a peak, insight into the mystery of the Godhead and scholars argue we are even in the Council of Redemption before time began, when our salvation was planned by the triune God.

In Hebrews 10:4 we are told it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, then the writer tells us in v5

of God the Son speaking in this Council of Redemption, which leads us to realise that something far greater was needed than the insufficient blood of bulls and goats - which could do nothing in and of themselves to save mankind, but pointed us onto **the** sacrifice for sins (*as Hebrews 10 opens up in more detail*). Something far greater was needed and the Son would be that One and part of that great plan and work required, necessitated a body prepared for Him.

We are to remember and realise the pre-existence of God the Son, before He was united with human nature within Mary, before His birth event in Bethlehem. We noted something of this last Sunday at the end of Micah 5:2 - origins = issuing out: going forth, one from of old, from ancient times = from days of eternity. We are to understand the Son of God had an eternal pre-existence and did not come into existence at His birth or even at His conception. We have the eternal Son of God speaking here and He spoke of a body God had, in the plan of salvation prepared for Him. Let's briefly consider this amazing truth using 3 headings:

1. The Divine preparation.

In this amazing plan, a body was prepared to which the Word, the eternal generated only begotten Son of God would be united with. When the author writes here "*a body you prepared for me*" it means the whole of human nature. The Divine did not drop, plop into a body and fill it like water in a bottle and inhabited it for a while - as some wrongly teach. It means God prepared a real body and all that makes us human for the Son to be forever united with.

It was a prepared body - the entire human nature of Jesus was prepared and prepared by a direct and special act of Creation by

God. The word “prepared” is the same word as in Hebrews 11:3 translated as framed or formed (*depending on your translation*). Just as Creation was an act of God’s sovereign creative power, so was the preparation of the human body to which the Son of God would be united. Both are creative miracles.

Yes, the body, the humanity of the Lord Jesus is truly human. The body, the humanity of Jesus had a beginning. At one moment there was no humanity for the Son of God, but it was created, generated. The moment of creation, preparation is brought about by the power of God the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary and creating such in her womb and of her substance. At that moment there was a union of the eternal Son of God with humanity - *“the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* It is an everlasting and irreversible union, a union which is still in place now and forever in heaven!

Jesus’ body was created from the substance of Mary, from her human nature. No celestial body was beamed down and implanted and she certainly was not a mere vessel. DNA, cellular material in a cell, an ovum within Mary was powerfully and creatively worked upon by God the Holy Spirit and the prepared body of Jesus had begun. He truly **is** bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He is a real man, with real humanity. He was miraculously created of her substance and He was born of her. The miracle of Christmas is the creation of the body of Jesus and its uniting to the divine at that moment of creation. The gestation, the birth of Jesus’ body was as normal as ours.

It is a marvellous, divine preparation and provision made in God’s eternal plan, so the One born was truly a real man and yet also fully divine. It means He can act for us and God. He is very man of very man and yet truly God of God; truly human, yet

totally divine. He is, as the angel said to Mary in Luke 1:35 “*So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*” In 1 person there are 2 natures - not 2 persons, but 2 natures - the divine and the human.

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith summarises it like this “*so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.*”

In that union it is the divine which governs and controls and so He is the God-man, not the man-God. His human nature was real and could be tempted - He was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin - because the Divine governed Him and He is without sin and the person of Christ could not sin. Moving on we see:

2. The Divine perfection.

By this I do not mean a perfect specimen of a man, for the word “prepared” is used 13 times in NT and its basic meaning is “making perfect”. [It is used of James and John **mending, preparing** nets (Matthew 4:21, Mark 1:19); **perfecting, ordaining praise** (Matthew 21:16); **perfect, fully trained** (Luke 6:40); **ones filled or prepared for destruction** (Romans 9:22); **perfectly joined together, perfectly united** (1 Corinthians 1:10); **be perfect, aim for perfection** (2 Corinthians 13:11); **restore** (Galatians 6:1); **formed, framed** (Hebrews 10:5, 11:3).]

The idea behind the word is that something is perfectly equipped for its designed function and purpose. The body of Jesus was perfectly prepared with the purpose of making Him the Saviour

of sinners. It was a miracle of creation as God made a clean and perfect humanity out of unclean and sinful humanity -for Mary was a sinner, was not perfect and sinless as some teach. Mary's substance used for Jesus' body was sanctified at the creation of the perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit, so the holy Son of God was united with a holy and sanctified humanity from the beginning of that humanity's existence in creation.

We are reminded in Romans 8:3 that Jesus looked to have the same nature as us - "*the likeness of sinful man/flesh*" - a real humanity, yet not with its sinful nature, but in every other way, He was physiologically, hormonally, developmentally like us. His body prepared was fit for the purpose, was framed, formed, prepared and was a fit dwelling for the Son of God to inhabit and to tabernacle, dwell among us in and to keep God's law unbroken.

The previous vessel to have kept God's law unbroken was the Ark of the covenant - the replacement tablets of stone with the Law written on them and placed in it, the mercy seat covering it. In Jesus the Law would be kept perfectly and never broken and yet there was no gold covering for Him, but He wore a robe of flesh He wears forever and in Him we have the fullness of grace and truth revealed to us. This is especially so in the divine perfection of preparing the body in which He would purchase our salvation which brings us to:

3. The Divine purpose.

A few verses on - in Hebrews 10:10 - we learn what happened to this One in this perfect body "*we have been **made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.***" It is incredible, that we are made holy - He became our

substitute sacrifice to secure a great work of God allowing us to become as holy and pure as Jesus.

He did this for mankind's sin - that includes mine and your sin! For that to be dealt with, the wrath of God had to be poured out on a man - not an idea, or a cause, but on a man. Sin was first committed by man in a body, we sin in our bodies using them, our minds, desires, words and imaginations. It was necessary that a human body should take the wrath of the offended God - His holy wrath, judgement and punishment be poured out on a body, a real human body so that it could be completely satisfied, the punishment fulfilled and this could only be done in One that was infinite, totally holy and yet truly man.

Where was there such a body? It was not that of bulls or goats or lambs! It was not found when angels assumed human form. Man sinned and fell - in human nature; God could not just dump Mankind's sin on the eternal Son - for as God, He is impassible - not be hurt or harmed by the hand of man, or be deceived by man. Yet atonement requires suffering and that is why God prepared a body for the Saviour - so He could suffer for our sin, the just for the unjust to bring us to God. He bore our sins in His body on the tree and He accomplished what the animal sacrifices could not and He put an end to all the types and rituals of OT - now there is no sacrifice for sin apart from that which the Lord Jesus has once and for all accomplished. Man sinned and by man, a real man, atonement was made and salvation secured for those He died to save. His body bled, died and suffered to make atonement for your and my sin. What an amazing God and Saviour we have in the Lord Jesus.

The purpose in this was to reconcile, make peace between God and man - He is the Prince of peace in the person of the Christ,

who united the divine and the human to reconcile both forever - Colossians 1:22 says *“he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation”*. He has made peace between God and us; us and God. A friend of ours in Pontefract wrote a song called *“The cross behind the Christmas tree”* we are to realise Jesus came to be our Saviour - He came to die and secure our salvation, to save us from our sin.

Sin and death came in by Adam, a man sinned, so Christ took real humanity and swapped with you and me, stood in our place and yet as fully God, He could satisfy divine justice – *“For God, the Just, is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me.”* In His body, the God-man brought us together in an eternal reconciliation – isn’t our Saviour absolutely wonderful!

It doesn’t stop there in the divine purpose. Christ’s body prepared was part of what we term *“His humiliation”* (Philippians 2:6ff), BUT He is not **now** humiliated - He has ascended on high, sits enthroned in heaven and has been given a name above every other name - exalted, hyper exalted and enthroned as the God-man, the Christ, the Mediator. That which was part of His humiliation is now retained in unity with Him as the Mediator and Saviour in His exaltation. He now has exalted humanity upon Him.

The apostle John saw of this on the island of Patmos - the God-man on the throne! John also wrote of us seeing Him as He is and we being made like Him (1 John 3:2)! Our hope is not just eternal life in a disembodied spirit, but one day our mortality will put on immortality. Part of God’s purpose in preparing Jesus a real human body is to reveal to His people the future

hope we have - take time out to read 1 Corinthians 15:42ff - especially v49 “*just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*” What a hope and expectation we as Christians have - God the Son took our nature to make it possible for us to be like Him!

This amazing God did this to save us and make us like our Saviour. When we trust the Lord Jesus, we become children of God and one day we will have resurrection bodies that will never age, sin, hurt or die again. We are heirs, joint heirs with the Jesus. It’s amazing that our Saviour came with a prepared body to raise us from the dunghill (AV), ash heap (NIV) of our sin, condemnation and shame and set us among princes (*see Hannah’s song in 1 Samuel 2:8*).

God prepared a body for God the Son to be united with to enable Him to be the Saviour of people like us, to reconcile us to God and God to us, so that we can know and have the life of God and ultimately be with Him in heaven, see Him as He is and be like Him. Our focus, not only at Christmas, but every day, is to be on what God has miraculously done! Our joy and praise should be that we glorify God at all times and we repeat the main theme of Christmas every day “*Glory to God in the highest*”.