

SGU PAMPHLETS



Christ the only Mediator

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“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2.5.

In this text of Holy Scripture you have a description of Jesus the only Mediator between God and men. He is described in four ways:

1. By His work: He is a ‘mediator.’
2. By the uniqueness of His mediation: He is the ‘one’ mediator.
3. By His nature: He is a ‘man.’
4. By His name: ‘Christ Jesus.’

1. The word ‘mediator’ refers to an impartial person who acts between two others who are at variance in order to reconcile them. Such an impartial person is Christ, who as both God and man is able to arbitrate between God and men.

2. When He is described as ‘one mediator’ we are to understand that He is the only one able to reconcile God and men.

3. He is described as a ‘man’ to show us that though He is God He became a true man. This should encourage us to safely trust Him with all our concerns in dealing with God.

4. He is called ‘Christ Jesus’ because as ‘Christ’ He was anointed by God to do the work of a mediator and as ‘Jesus’ He brings salvation to us as the result of His work.

The doctrine from the text is therefore that **Jesus Christ is the true and only mediator between God and men.**

I could point to a whole train of Scriptures teaching this truth, such as Hebrews 9.14 - “He is the mediator of the new testament” and Hebrews 12.24 - “You are come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant”; but to keep matters clear and profitable I will show:

1. What is the meaning of this Greek word ‘mesites’ = ‘mediator.’
2. What it implies as applied to Christ.
3. How He is the true and only mediator between God and men.
4. In what capacity He performed His work as mediator.

1. What is the meaning of the Greek word ‘mesites’ = ‘mediator.’

The true meaning of it is an intermediary between two parties at variance in order to make peace between them. This is true of Christ with respect to both His person and His work. With respect to His person, He has the same nature as God and the same nature as man. He is truly God and truly man. And with respect to His work, which is to bring about reconciliation between God and us, He is also a mediator. He stands between God and us like an umpire or an arbitrator. And in all His work, whether suffering on earth or interceding in heaven, He acts as a middle person in order to make peace between God and us.

2. What it implies for Christ to be a mediator.

1. It implies a dreadful breach between God and man. Otherwise there would be no need of a mediator.

At first there was a sweet league of friendship between them, but it was dissolved by sin. As a result the wrath of God was kindled against man - “Thou hatest all workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5.5); and man was filled with an un-natural hatred of God (Romans 1.30). This put an end to all friendly relations between them.

Do not think it was a small sin that made this breach. Man’s first act of disobedience was a heinous and aggravated evil. For Adam was free to withstand temptation, and he knew that the happiness or misery of all his natural descendants depended on him. He was placed in a situation in which he did not need to sin, so that his disobedience

showed how ungrateful he was to God for surrounding him with every possible delight. God now saw a race of rebels spring up who in each successive generation would spend their lives fighting against Him. But rather than destroy them there and then as was His right, He resolved to pursue them through the course of justice.

2. It implies the need for man to make satisfaction and reparation to the justice of God.

Indeed, the very design of the mediation of Christ was to make peace by giving full satisfaction to God, the party wronged.

Some dream of reconciliation being based not on satisfaction to justice, but on God's free willingness to forgive. But of this way of reconciliation there is nothing but deep silence throughout the Scriptures. Whatever goodness and mercy of God is mentioned in connection with reconciliation is always said to be through Christ. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." (John 6.40). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4.12). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1.3).

Mercy certainly moved in the heart of God towards poor man, but it could find no way to vent itself on our behalf except through shedding the blood of Jesus Christ: and in Him the justice of God was fully satisfied and the misery of man fully cured. And so, as Augustine says: 'God neither lost the severity of His justice in the goodness of His mercy, nor the goodness of His mercy in the exactness of His severity.'

Had it been possible, God would have devised a way to reconcile us without satisfaction; but this is the only way. For anyone to imagine that they can be reconciled to God by anything but faith in the blood of this mediator is not only futile in itself and destructive to the soul, but is insolently derogatory to the wisdom and grace of God. All the reconciliation we may hope for is nothing but a phantom without

this: peace of conscience can rest on no other ground. God having made a law by which to rule man, and man having violated that law, either the penalty must be levied on the delinquent, or satisfaction must be made by his surety. It would have been as good to have no law as no penalty for disobedience, and as good to have no penalty as no execution of it. Whoever therefore is a mediator to reconcile God and man must bring God a price in his hand, and a price adequate to the wrong done; otherwise God will not make a peace treaty. But Christ as our mediator did this, and so made peace.

3. It implies the infinite value of the blood of Christ as wholly sufficient to satisfy God, even for those who were His enemies. This much is said of it in Colossians 1.21-22: “And ye, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in His sight.” Surely that which brings the holy God, angry with sinners, to lay aside His anger, and receive them to Himself, and establish such a friendship with them as can never be broken, must be of infinite value in His sight.

4. It implies ardent love and great pity in the heart of Christ towards poor sinners. For He does not merely arbitrate between God and men; He actually became a Surety for them, obliging Himself to pay all their debts. O how compassionate must Christ be, when, seeing the sword of justice lifted up and ready to destroy us, He interposed and received the stroke Himself, even when He knew it would strike Him dead! If a man’s laying down his life in the service of others is viewed as an act of great self-denial, how much more should the death of Christ, who threw Himself into the fire of God’s wrath to quench that wrath, be celebrated by us?

5. It implies that He was authorized in eternity and called by God in time to be the only Mediator. God the Father Himself, being the wronged person, called Him to arbitrate between us and Him, and entrusted His honour to Christ’s hands. Christ was invested with this office *virtually* in eternity, a fact confirmed in the promise of Genesis 3.15 immediately after the breach between God and

man made by Adam's fall. Indeed, for this reason He is called "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world." (Revelation 13.8) He began His *actual* work as Mediator at His incarnation, when He became man.

3. How Christ is the only Mediator between God and man.

1. This is clear from the fact that He, and no other, is revealed to us by God. And if God reveals Him, and no other, we should receive Him, and no other. "The heathen," says Paul, "have many gods and many lords" (1 Corinthians 8.5); that is, many supreme gods as ultimate objects of worship, and many demi-gods or intermediaries, to convey their worship to the gods lest they be defiled by human contact. "But to us," says he, "there is but one God, the Father, . . . and one Lord"; that is, one God, the supreme object of worship, and one Mediator, by whom all things from the Father come to us, and by whom all our worship and service goes to Him. Peter says the same thing: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4.12) That is, no other person is authorized throughout the whole world to be our Mediator besides Christ. Just as one sun is sufficient for the whole world, so one Mediator is sufficient for everyone in the world. The Scriptures affirm this of Christ, and of no other.

2. It is also clear that He, and no other, is fit for this work of Mediator. Who but one with a divine and a human nature in His single person can deal with both God and man? Anyone else would have melted in the fire of wrath that came on Him.

3. Besides, He alone can reconcile the world to God, because the virtue of His blood reaches back as far as Adam and forward to the end of the world. It is as effectual anytime to cleanse from sin as when it was shed. Just as the sun, both before and after it is seen, illuminates the world, so Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and for ever, cleanses the sins of those before and after His appearance on earth.

4. In what capacity Christ performed His work as Mediator.

The Scriptures affirm that He acts as Mediator in the capacity of God-Man. Neither His divine nature without the human, nor His human nature without the divine, are mediatorial; but He is Mediator in both natures. To confine Christ's mediatorial work to His human nature is to rob it of its divine value and effectiveness. As Mediator, Christ had power to lay down and take up again His life, (John 10.17-18). And as Mediator, He has all power in heaven and earth to rule His Church, keep those whom the Father committed to Him and raise them up at the last day, (Matthew 28.18; John 17.12; John 6.54). Are these effects of His human nature only, or are they not rather performed by Him as God-Man? Besides, how could He be the object of our faith and adoration if He were not God and Man together?

Practical Lessons

Several practical lessons may be learned from the consideration of Christ as Mediator:

1. It is a dangerous thing to reject Jesus Christ as the one and only Mediator between God and man.

Consider: there is no-one else to screen us from the devouring fire of the wrath of God. Who can endure everlasting burning? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And into His hands you must fall without being covered by Christ. If there was any other way to be reconciled to God except by Christ as Mediator, there might be some excuse for this folly. But there is none. You are shut up to faith in Christ as your only remedy. (Galatians 3.23) You are like starving beggars at the last door. O beware of despising or neglecting Christ! If you do either, you have no-one to intercede for you; the breach between God and you can never be healed. Remember the words of Eli to his profane sons: "If a man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" (1 Samuel 2.25) That is, if we fall out with each other, a judge can decide the controversy; but if we sin against God, who can arbitrate between us? Martin Luther once said, "I will

have nothing to do with an absolute God”; that is, a God outside Christ. This is how devils have to do with God. Will you, whose nature Christ took, put yourselves in the same place as devils? God forbid!

2. It is a great evil to join other mediators to Christ, whether to reconcile us to God, or intercede for us to God.

This is a horrid sin, for it pours the greatest contempt on Christ and brings sure destruction on the sinner. I am ashamed to print what I have read in the writings of Papists, who ascribe more to the mediation of Mary than to that of Christ. One of them, commenting on the text, “I have trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was no man with me,” says: “True, Lord, there was no man with thee, but there was a woman with thee, who received in her heart all the wounds you received in your body.” What blasphemy has come, not only from single writers, but also from whole councils, to the reproach of Jesus Christ and His precious blood! O that all who go to any other mediator would consider and fear, lest by seeking entrance to heaven at the wrong door they shut themselves out from the right one!

3. Those who are reconciled to God should thankfully ascribe all their peace with Him to Jesus Christ.

Whenever you have had free admission into God’s presence, and have had your hearts warmed with His blessings and comforts, you may thank your good Lord Jesus for them all. Had He not interposed as Mediator and reconciled you to God, you could never have had access to nor communion with God to all eternity. No sooner had Adam sinned than the door of communion with God was closed and locked against us. It was Jesus the Mediator who opened that door again, and it is in Him that we have boldness to enter God’s presence “by a new and living way, consecrated for us through . . . His flesh.” (Ephesians 3.12; Hebrews 10.20) O thank your dear Lord Jesus for your present and future heaven!

4. Those who have Christ as their true and only Mediator are safe and secure for all eternity.

As His mediation through suffering has fully reconciled them, so His mediation by intercession will keep them. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5.1) This is a firm and lasting peace. The Mediator who made it is now in heaven to maintain it. Just as ambassadors appear in the courts of kings on earth, He appears in the presence of God for us in heaven. (Hebrews 9.24) Let us then admire the profound and incomprehensible wisdom of God, who turned Adam’s great sin to such great advantage to us. Now believers are so fixed in Christ by the favour of God that no more fatal breaches between God and them can ever take place. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

5. As Christ stood between God and us, so out of thankfulness we should stand between all His enemies and God.

O that there were such a heart in us. I remember Jerome, when he heard so many blasphemies against Christ and God’s truth, saying: “O that they would turn their weapons from Christ to me, and be satisfied with my blood!” Much to the same purpose is the saying of Bernard: “Happy would I be, if God would use me as a shield!” So also King David says: “The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” (Psalm 69.9) Ten thousand thousand of our names are nothing to Christ’s name. His name is a worthy name. No-one who gives up his name as a shield to Christ and His truth shall lose the true honour that God will give it. And though at present evil men will spatter it with mud, Jesus Christ will take it, and wipe it clean, and give it us back again. This is the least we can do, to place ourselves between Christ and the wrath of men, when He placed Himself between us and the eternal wrath of God.

(Modernised and Adapted)

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