

The Mediator of a Better Covenant

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Date: 17 April 2023

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[0 : 00] Today's lesson is a continuation of last week's where we talked at some length about the new covenant.

! Let me reread the heart of last week's scriptures. And we learned an amazing truth there. You'll remember it when I say it if you were here.

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary that this high priest, that's Jesus, also have something to offer.

Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all. That sounds a little confusing. Since there are those who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle, for see, he says, that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

So in these verses we looked at, we received some startling information. Jesus, as our high priest in heaven, is required to offer gifts to the Father as the high priest.

[1 : 35] As many times as I've read and even taught the book of Hebrews, I never picked up on that fact. And I said last time, what kind of gift could Jesus possibly offer the Father as He is seated at His right hand?

The Lord offers to the Father the gifts of praise, confession, thanksgiving, worship, and loving obedience of the people of God.

That's describing the church, beloved. And the question then is, are we engaged in such activities?

If we are, then Jesus is presenting our worship as a gift to the Father.

But if we are not, then Jesus has no offering from you or me to present to the Father.

Let's pick it up in Hebrews chapter 8, verses 4 to 5. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the law.

[2 : 53] Jesus was not qualified to minister on earth as the high priest under the terms of the old covenant.

That sounds strange, but it's true. The Lord did many wonderful things during His earthly ministry. He healed the sick, raised the dead, preached to the lost, and so forth.

But He never claimed the right to serve in the earthly temple as a priest or the high priest. On earth, Jesus never took one step toward the inner sanctuary.

Only the Levitical priests could do that, and Jesus was not a Levite. He was from the non-priestly line of Judah. Now all that changed at the crucifixion.

You'll remember the veil was rent from top to bottom. That means God tore it. And the veil was open to the very holy of holies as a result.

[4 : 20] The earthly tabernacle was merely a shadow of what was to come. Later the temple would be built.

And though it be very elaborate, very ornate, I mean the tabernacle was made out of animal skins. The temple was a permanent structure until it got destroyed several times.

And it was very elaborate, but it too was only a shadow of the heavenly temple where today our Lord sits at the right hand of the Father.

And we must bear in mind that the heavenly temple is not a mere improvement over the earthly. Rather the earthly was merely a shadowy reflection of the heavenly.

Secondly, everything in the earthly temple, the gifts, priests, inner sanctuaries, sacrifices, were all described as types or shadows of what was to come in heaven.

[5 : 40] When I was growing up, I would be playing with the neighborhood boys just a few blocks from here on a dirt street called Queenstown. It's not dirt anymore, is it, Oscar?

Oscar used to deliver mail out there. A cloud would come over, you know, hot Oklahoma summer, and you'd see the shadows of these clouds going over, and you'd see the shadow reflected on the ground.

And sometimes we would try to outrun that because one of the older boys claimed that if the shadow overtook us, something bad would happen if that shadow passed over us.

Of course, it always did pass over us. We couldn't outrun it, but nothing bad ever happened. Why not? Because a shadow has no substance or even independent existence.

It exists only to prove that something real and more substantial already exists. In that case, it was the cloud above.

[6 : 49] It existed, but the shadow didn't, and it soon disappeared. In our walk, we should never be satisfied with the shadow.

We should desire the real thing. The earthly is merely a shadow. The heavenly is real. That's the whole purpose of the writing of the book of Hebrews.

It is an explanation of the superior covenant. Hebrews 8, 6. But now, he has obtained a more excellent ministry by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises.

Jesus now has a much superior seat. And he is, in fact, the heavenly high priest. And his seat's a lot better than the earthly priest ever had.

And the fact is, the earthly priest never had any seats. Neither the priest nor the earthly priest. And that's descriptive of the fact that their work of atoning for the sins of the people was never finished.

[8 : 15] There was always another sin to atone for, always another sheep or goat or ram to offer as a sacrifice. Jesus, though, ministers in a superior sanctuary of which that earthly sanctuary was only the shadow.

Just like the clouds would cast that shadow on the ground. therefore, Jesus has a superior ministry and he serves as a mediator or the mediator of a better and superior promises.

Better and superior promises. Now, we hear this word mediator from time to time. And it's an important Bible word and I wonder if we really understand who a mediator is and what a mediator does.

By its very definition, a mediator is someone who stands between two people and he brings them together to resolve a dispute.

In that sense, a mediator is a go-between. In fairness, a mediator represents both parties. I just went through that about a week and a half ago in Tulsa. One of our cases when I was police chief where we killed someone and their family is suing us.

[9 : 47] All that person did was shoot two of my officers but that didn't seem to matter. And they wanted several million dollars. But we had a mediator in there, a judge.

And he was representing both parties because he was trying to work out a settlement. That's his job to try to, you're required by the rules of the northern district which we live in to try to settle your dispute.

So I went through that and it was a joy. It was about half, the room was about half this size and I was in there with seven lawyers. That was quite an experience. many of the world's religions have priests.

The Dalai Lama is a priest. Have you heard, he's been in the news lately. I don't know if you've heard that or not. Many of the world's religions though have priests who claim, of course the Catholic Church is full of them, and they claim to stand between the people and God.

Now I've never really sought to confirm this but I was told by people that were there years, 30 years ago in a Baptist church in Bartlesville.

[11 : 09] This guy was the minister, the pastor maybe 40 years now and he was up there preaching and I think he kind of got tongue tied or something because he's up on this platform kind of like ours and he said do you notice that I'm elevated above you all in the pews and he said that's because I'm your mediator between you and God.

And the chairman of deacons of that church had the wherewithal that he went up and he whispered to the guy and he walked toward the back of the, and went out a door and the chairman deacon said we're going to have a, we're going to have to break today and I'd encourage you all to come back tonight and, but we're going to stop our service right now.

And when they came back tonight the pastor had resigned. They explained to him you're not the mediator. Christ is the mediator. And I was told that as fact but I've never sought to independently verify it.

But a priest today claims to stand between the people and God. Of course any man who claims such ability is deceived himself.

He's a false priest. Under the old covenant there were priests who served as mediators but they were mere shadows for when the true mediator came on the scene.

[12 : 46] Moses was referred to as the mediator of the old covenant. The Old Testament prophets mediated the word of God to those living under the old covenant.

While the Hebrews in the old covenant had legitimate mediators they were only such when they were performing in their proper role. If they stepped out of that role or engaged in other duties they were not to be regarded as mediators.

Probably the most graphic example that was the sons of Herod, Nadab and Abihu. They stepped out and went in and offered in the holy of holies and offered strange fire we think in a state of intoxication they were going to offer strange fire to God kind of try to add to God's already blazing glory in there and it says the glory of God the fire of God came out and consumed them and Moses was silent.

What do you say? They were not mediators but not even the Old Testament mediators had the ability to bring men to God in that regard they were mere shadows or reflections of the true mediator who would come to minister to the people but we're told the new covenant has a better mediator and that's capital M and better promises now we have to understand something about a covenant covenants are based upon promises in that regard a covenant is a promise typically between two parties you could almost say two people when God makes a promise or a covenant it is always better men break promises and covenants but

God never does he always keeps his promises and his covenants but men don't if you don't believe that do what I've done in the past and study the American government's promises to the Native Americans there was never one that they kept not one including moving the five civilized tribes here and then the settlers wanted this land too and moved them out I threw that in for free Micah and men break promises God does not he always keeps his covenant and that's why the new covenant is referred to as better Hebrews chapter 8 verse 7 and 8 for if that covenant had been faultless there would have been no occasion sought for a second if the old covenant was faultless we'd still be under it for finding fault with them he says behold days are coming says the

[16 : 20] Lord when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah now the old covenant I've said this many times it was not wrong it was incomplete it it also had some faults and perhaps better described as limitations Jeremiah the prophet pointed those out by reading the book of Jeremiah the Old Testament people should have known a new covenant coming that was a promise from God there's a new covenant coming a better covenant they also should have known that the new covenant would be superior to the old yet millions of Jews never saw it they couldn't comprehend that the old covenant would not be forever they should also have known that the new would be much superior yet millions didn't see it and even today millions and millions of

Jews try and cling to the old covenant though their own prophets told them for thousands of years a new and better covenant is coming now Jeremiah gave at least eight ways the new covenant was superior to the old covenant these eight ways are that the new covenant was written by God it was different from the old it was made with Israel it was not legalistic it was internal and not external it was personal it brought total forgiveness and it is for now so I want to talk about that in the few minutes we have left and this is a short lesson first of all it's written by God the new covenant was fulfilled in

Christ as such it was based solely upon the sovereignty of God in fact God told Jeremiah and Jews have read this for millennia I God will affect a new covenant they were clearly told that and it just went right over their heads also it's different from the old the new covenant is different from the old covenant!

The fact that the new covenant is in Christ automatically makes it better right? It's a better covenant and it also makes it radically different from the old in the new covenant the Lord says it is not like the covenant which I made with their fathers talking about the new one that was coming now this is an important point and one that I think is often missed today the new covenant was made with

Israel it's made with Israel this may come as a shock but the new covenant like the old was made with Israel the writer says I will affect a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah now most would think that the new covenant was made with the Gentiles or with the church that's not the case

God doesn't make covenants with the Gentiles there are no scriptures that indicate God ever made a covenant with Gentiles Gentiles do however benefit greatly from the new covenant just as they benefit from the old covenant as well but the actual covenant was made with Israel it is true that Israel rejected their Messiah but the greater truth is God never rejected them there's still a future for Israel and there's a lot of people in the church that don't believe that but a reading of several passages in Romans will verify that and God has not ever transferred the covenant to anyone else other than Israel by faith Gentiles share in the covenantal blessings of

[21 : 20] Israel and I think that's principally the reason Jesus said salvation is from the Jews God made a covenant with Abraham and he attached no conditions to it it was to be a blessing to the Jews and to all the peoples of the earth today when Gentiles are saved they become the spiritual descendants of Abraham we are considered the children of Abraham because the Abrahamic covenant is still going on it's a covenant of grace the three main religions in the world are Judaism Islam and Christianity how interesting that all three trace their roots back to Abraham the Islamic people refer to him as

Abraham but that's the way they spell it the difference between Muslims and the Gentiles and Jews Muslims claim that he is they descended from Abraham through Ishmael you remember Ishmael remember the handmaiden Hagar and Sarah couldn't have children so she offered her handmaid and I used to teach on that I'd say you know Abraham didn't object he didn't say I don't want to do this and he took Hagar and she gave birth to Ishmael and even to this day the Arab world falsely claims that Ishmael is the child of promise they call him that well we know that Isaac was the child of promise Jews and

Christians descend from Abraham through Isaac the true son of promise I love what Paul says in Galatians chapter 3 verse 7 and 8 therefore be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying all the nations will be blessed in you and boy the Jews had a rough time with that they have a rough time with it now all the nations will be blessed through you the Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled in each of us when we meet the single requirement of the new covenant the sole requirement is faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ Galatians 3 29 and if you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's offspring heirs according to the promise we are heirs and joint heirs and we are Abraham's offspring for right now the great recipients of the new covenant are Gentiles one day that will change as the Jews will one day turn to Christ as the true Messiah that day's coming this new covenant is not legalistic it's not like the Hebrews 8 9 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt for they did not continue in my covenant and I did not care for them says the Lord the blessings under the old covenant were conditional see the old covenant required

Israel's obedience to the law it was an if then covenant if you do certain things I will do certain things if you fail to do certain things then I will do some other things you're not going to like!

[25 : 49] to the law and how long did they keep the law even before Moses came down from the mountain they were down there making a golden calf and having an orgy their obedience did not negate the covenant but it did forfeit the blessings they would have received the old was a covenant of law thank God that's not true of the new but the old was a covenant of law and how frightening and the people said if you'll give us a list of laws to live by we'll live up to all of it so Moses went over the mountain to tell God what they said and they were down there making the golden calf or as Aaron put it I threw some gold rings in there and this calf came out he didn't own up also the new covenant is internal not external

Hebrews 8 10 for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days says the Lord I will put my laws into their minds and I will write them on their hearts I will be their God and they shall be my people the new covenant has a law but it's internalized some call it the law of Christ but it's inside us under the old covenant obedience was primarily achieved through fear under the new covenant obedience is achieved out of a sense of adoring love and thanksgiving and thankful worship to what Christ has done for us the old covenant was written on stone tablets and

then placed on door posts I've seen those in Jewish areas of the Arab world there are still Jews in the

Arab world not a lot when I was in Tunisia there was like in this one town there were like eight Jewish families and their houses had the Star David on there and it had this law on their doorpost but they achieved this through fear the old law was written on stone and the spirit now writes God's laws in the minds and hearts of those who belong to him true worship is not external in rituals and ceremonies true worship worship in spirit and truth is internal true worship the new covenant is also personal Hebrews 8 11 and they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen and everyone his brother saying know the

Lord we all shall know you all shall know me from the least to the greatest life for the saved under the new covenant is very personal God's word is inside us the spirit of God lives in us these indicate a very personal relationship hope John 14 26 but the helper the holy spirit whom the father will send in my name he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you the new covenant brings total forgiveness Hebrews 8 12 for I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more that's that's a staggering truth that God remembers our sins I wish I could forget mine they're always there in front of me this is the corner stone of the new covenant this is what men and women need more than anything else in the

Old Testament! sins were covered but not! under the new covenant with Christ God says I remember your sins no more how can he do that?

[30 : 18] he put them on Christ they've been atoned for Christ died for our sins past present and future I told you the story our dear friend Lloyd he used to say but what about my future sins I said all your sins were future when Christ died he died 2,000 years ago Christ and the father remembers our sins no more that's total forgiveness also the new covenant is for now Hebrews 8 13 when he said a new covenant he has made the first obsolete but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear most Jews cannot accept the fact and won't accept it until a later time that the old covenant has passed away wasn't wrong it was incomplete and has been replaced this is their great stumbling block

God no longer honors the old covenant instead he has made an infinitely greater one he made the new covenant through his son and our Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ it is based upon his atoning work on the cross that makes it of infinite and eternal value to God a trillion millennia from now as we measure time will be in glory and will be there because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ that doesn't go away the old covenant became obsolete and there was a specific time when that happened when the veil in the temple was rent torn from top to bottom at the precise moment of Christ's death on the cross now to be sure it continued on for a generation and we'll talk about that in my last paragraph here that's coming up but no longer do we come to God through a law that could not be kept no longer are we temporarily forgiven because we go out and sacrifice some animal now if you're into that

I've got two I'll give you but they're not mine they're my granddaughters but it's a dog and a cat and I don't read that in the scriptures either the veil split an entrance to the holy of holies wherein God dwelt was open and was complete what does that mean for the believer we now have direct and unfettered access to the father as a result of being in Christ the son it's often said that the father now treats us just as if we'd never sinned that's true but there's a greater truth the father treats us as if we are his son Jesus because we're in Christ we're in Christ after Jesus death the sacrificial system hung around for a few decades but God dealt with that because it died on Calvary

I mean how can any ram or goat or sheep or turtle dove how can they measure up to the sacrificial death of Christ they can't so God dealt with it in 70 AD in the destruction of the temple and if you've been to the holy lands you can see many of the rocks that the Roman soldiers cast out into the Kidron Valley and the word is they were trying to get the gold that had melted from the intense heat when they burned the temple and they were pulling up because those guys made about three cents a month I mean it was horrible so Titus Vespasian the general later emperor ordered the destruction of the temple in 70 AD and it's not been rebuilt and now there's a dome of the rock Arab mosque on there it's real interesting how that plays out in the holy lands but the age of the mosaic law and levitical priests was over and you know one of the byproducts of the destruction of that temple is the

Jews were huge on genealogical records they were huge we see genealogies in old and new testament very accurate genealogies when the temple was destroyed by fire the genealogical

records were destroyed no one even today can go into Israel and say I'm from the tribe of Levi so I should be a priest or the high priest they don't know what tribe they're from because the records were obliterated but when that temple was destroyed hearkening back to the cross the age of the son of God had come and that is eternal that will last forever and ever Thank you.