

# Moments *for* You

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Theme: The Mediator



## JESUS: THE ONLY SAVIOR

I cannot imagine an affirmation that would meet with more resistance from contemporary Westerners than the one Paul makes in 1 Timothy 2:5: “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” This declaration is narrow and downright un-American. We have been inundated with the viewpoint that there are many roads that lead to heaven, and that God is not so narrow that He requires a strict allegiance to one way of salvation. If anything strikes at the root of the tree of pluralism and relativism, it is a claim of exclusivity to any one religion. A statement such as Paul makes in his first letter to Timothy is seen as bigoted and hateful.

Paul, of course, is not expressing bigotry or hatefulness at all. He is simply expressing the truth of God, the same truth Jesus taught when He said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Paul is affirming the uniqueness of Christ, specifically in His role as mediator. A mediator is a go-between, someone who stands between two parties that are estranged or involved in some kind of dispute. Paul declares that Christ is the only mediator between two parties at odds with one another—God and men.

We encounter mediators throughout the Bible. Moses, for example, was the mediator of the old covenant. He represented the people of Israel in his discussions with God, and he was God’s spokesman to the people. The prophets in the Old Testament had a mediatorial function, serving as the

spokesmen for God to the people. Also, the high priest of Israel functioned as a mediator; he spoke to God on behalf of the people. Even the king of Israel was a kind of mediator; he was seen as God’s representative to the people, so God held him accountable to rule in righteousness according to the law of the Old Testament.

Why, then, does Paul say there is only one mediator between God and man? I believe we have to understand the uniqueness of Christ’s mediation in terms of the uniqueness of His person. He is the God-man, that is, God incarnate. In order to bring about reconciliation between God and humanity, the second person of the Trinity united to Himself a human nature. Thus, Jesus has the qualifications to bring about reconciliation—He represents both sides perfectly.

People ask me, “Why is God so narrow that He provided only one Savior?” I do not think that is the question we ought to ask. Instead, we should ask, “Why did God give us any way at all to be saved?” In other words, why did He not just condemn us all? Why did God, in His grace, give to us a Mediator to stand in our place, to receive the judgment we deserve, and to give to us the righteousness we desperately need? The astonishing thing is not that He did not do it in multiple ways, but that He did it in even one way.

Notice that Paul, in declaring the uniqueness of Christ, also affirms the uniqueness of God: “There is one God.” This divine uniqueness was declared throughout the Old Testament; the very first commandment was a commandment of exclusivity: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”



(Exodus 20:3).

So Paul brings all these strands together. There is only one God, and God has only one Son, and the Son is the sole mediator between God and mankind. As I said above, that is very difficult for people who have been immersed in pluralism to accept, but they have to quarrel with Christ and His Apostles on this point. The Bible offers no hope that sincere worshipers of other religions will be saved without personal faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul said in Athens, “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).  
—From Ligonier Ministries and R.C. Sproul.  
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## JOB’S LAMENT

The central truth of all truth concerns the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man on earth, and He is a man now at the right hand of the Majesty on High, having been raised again from the dead by the glory of the Father. But He is also God, eternal in being and omnipotent in power. He was God before He took up manhood, and what He was, He is, and forever shall be.

### HOW CAN MAN BE RIGHT WITH GOD?

The Deity of Jesus is of utmost importance in relation to men being brought to God in righteousness. Thousands of years ago, Job cried out, “How should man be just with God?” (Job 9:2). We find Job testing one by one the suggestions that arose in regard to his earnest question, and finally, apparently hopeless of finding an answer, he breaks out in that soul-stirring lament, “**He is not a man, as I am,** that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judg-

ment. **Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both**” (Job 9:32,33).

Do you understand where Job stood, and do you relate to his feelings? He said in effect: “I know that I have sinned against God, and if He were a man as I am, I could understand His displeasure. I could estimate the extent of my offense, and I could go to Him and make restitution for the wrong that I have done, and be at peace with Him. But He is not a man as I am, and I do not know where to begin the argument. I cannot measure the demands of His justice. I have no ground upon which to stand before Him. He is almighty, holy and just, and I am weak, sinful and guilty. His very holiness is a terror to me; it makes me afraid.”

### WHO IS QUALIFIED TO MEDIATE?

Job could only have hope if a daysman, or mediator, appeared who was fully qualified to take up the case. Carefully note the qualifications that the mediator must possess: He must stand between God and the sinner, and by so doing declare His willingness to take up the case. He must also be able to put His hand upon both—I beg of you not to miss the importance of that. I might come to you and lay my hand upon your shoulder and talk with you, for we are equals, but I could not lay my hand upon God! When David was transporting the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, it is recorded that Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it. The moment his presumptuous fingers touched that throne of God, he fell to the earth a corpse (2 Samuel 6:1-7).

Learn from that solemn incident that no man could put his hand upon God, or upon the throne of God, and live. And yet the mediator for whom Job cried in his despair must be able

to put His hand upon God. He must be God's equal, for none less could intervene, or be of use to Job or to us. But He must also put His hand upon men; He must be one of us. **He must be God and man.**

### JESUS IS THE MEDIATOR

The New Testament is the book of the Mediator. In its first chapter we read, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.... Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:21,23). The prophetic Scriptures had foretold His coming: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). That word was fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Being God, He knew according to God's perfect knowledge to what extent God's glory was jeopardized by man's sin. He knew what the demands of the eternal throne were in regard to the violation of its just decrees. He knew how completely man's self-will had made him the slave of Satan and how great was the gulf that separated him from God. He knew the penalty that had to be paid, the conflict that had to be waged, the work that had to be done. He became man to stand in our place before God, to take the bill of our terrible indebtedness and meet it to the full, so that God Himself could write "Settled" across the account. This involved for Him the sorrows of Calvary; and there, as the holy Substitute for men, He "gave Himself a ransom for all." The sacrifice that He made has met

all the claims of the throne, and He is now the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

### IS JESUS YOUR MEDIATOR?

What a Savior is Jesus! How worthy is He of our fullest praise! He stooped to us that He might put His hand upon us, and He has done it tenderly and graciously, so that we are not afraid. He has put one hand upon us and the other is placed upon the throne of God, and He is the one mediator. With the one hand He has offered the fullest satisfaction to the righteous claims of God and with the other He has bestowed fullness of grace upon us. He brings us to God and gives us a place in His presence without fear, and in everlasting peace, a peace established upon the infallible and immovable foundation of divine righteousness, secured for us by a divine person for the eternal glory of God.

Have you, like Job, recognized the hopelessness of approaching God without a mediator? Now is the time to turn from your way to God's way; put your trust in Jesus Christ today. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

—Adapted from "The Deity of Jesus" by J. T. Mawson

***Does the salvation of a sinner rest on what a sinner can do? On what Christ will do? No! It rests on what Christ has done. —W.T.P.W.***

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

**QUESTION:** How can Jesus be God and the mediator to God?

**ANSWER:** That is an excellent question, and one that perplexes many

people. Let's start by reading the verses you are referring to in your question. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 says, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

Why is the Lord represented to us as the *man* Christ Jesus in this portion? Even though He is God, it was as the perfect man that He gave Himself a ransom for us. While it is true that there is only one God, the Lord has manifested Himself to us as a triune God. He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Although the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, its truth is certainly taught.

### JESUS IS GOD

We have a wonderful occasion in the New Testament where God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all manifested at one time. Let's read Matthew 3:13-17, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

So, here on the occasion of *Jesus'* baptism, we have the *Spirit* coming upon Him and the voice of the *Father* speaking from Heaven. This is such a good portion to show the three persons of the Godhead. In reference to the Lord Jesus, we read in Colossians 2:9, "For in Him dwelleth all the ful-

ness of the Godhead bodily."

### JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD

The Lord Jesus, God the Son, is our mediator to God the Father as we read in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In reference to our prayers, Christ is our mediator; in reference to our sins, Christ is our advocate in Heaven; in reference to our worship and praise, Christ is our High Priest as we read in Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Here again, we are brought to understand that the Lord Jesus can empathize with us in our infirmities because He walked here as a man and knows what we are going through. For Christ to be a man, He did not cease being God, so He lived a life without sin. Even now, in Heaven, Christ still exists as the God-man. He is 100 percent man and 100 percent God.

To get a sense of the wonder of the incarnation of Christ, let's read a couple of verses from John's Gospel. John 1:1 tells us that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We then read in John 1:14 that, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." It's obvious from these verses that the Word (Jesus) was God, and was made flesh and dwelt among us. This is speaking of Christ's birth and living in the world. Those who knew Him could clearly see His glory as being the only begotten Son of God.

—Charles Carter, [answersfromthebook.net](http://answersfromthebook.net)

## ONE MEDIATOR

*“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).*

Israel had the truth committed to them that there was one God, in contrast to the many deities of the heathen. Christianity bears witness to the fact that there is a mediator—but only one—between God and men. But, as in everything entrusted to the hand of men, failure has come in. Christendom has added many mediators of their own choosing. What must God think of this dishonor done to His Son!

History bears witness to the early introduction of various “mediators.” Men did what angels would not dare to do: they set up angels as mediators. It is recorded that in the 10th century, churches dedicated to Michael were thronged by multitudes seeking the intercession of Michael the archangel. Alas, what wickedness!

Men have also taken upon themselves to make “saints” of departed souls in heaven, and to them many pray. Surely it is the work of the enemy of God and men to suggest that anyone could share in the glorious work of the one Mediator. Among these man-made mediators, the first and foremost is the Virgin Mary. What would she herself say of this? She who, when told of the birth of the Savior, said, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1:47). Yes, she too needed a Savior, and she would be the last one to sanction this form of idolatry.

Again, and again, and again, let it be affirmed that there is “one [and only one] mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5,6).

—Paul Wilson

## A BETTER COVENANT

*“He [Jesus] is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).*


Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant than the one received through Moses. It is a better covenant because it is founded on better promises. The covenant of law (the Ten Commandments, etc.) promised blessing for obedience but threatened death for disobedience. It required righteousness, but did not give the ability to produce it.

The new covenant is an unconditional covenant of grace. It imputes righteousness where there is none. It teaches men to live righteously, empowers them to do so, and rewards them when they do.

—William MacDonald, from *Hebrews: From Ritual to Reality*.

## DO I NEED A MEDIATOR?

Statistics show that self-representation is on the rise in America. This is especially true for domestic and civil cases, where most proceedings now have at least one party who is *pro se*—that is, not represented by an attorney. While representing one’s self may have few risks in a simple legal matter, the odds of a positive outcome diminish sharply in more serious cases.

To those who have read the Bible and understand the seriousness of sin, it comes as a great surprise that anyone would consider standing before God with a *pro se* defense—especially when He has provided a mediator who can guarantee our exoneration! Call upon Jesus Christ today: “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). 

## A GOOD MEDIATOR

- Is needed when there is a difference between two parties.

*Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. (Galatians 3:20)*

- Is a middle-man, a reconciler.

*God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law. (Galatians 4:4,5)*

- Is often appointed when an agreement or contract is broken.

*They have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. (Isaiah 24:5)*

- Must be willing to undertake the task.

*I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. (John 6:38)*

- Must be approved for the job.

*Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you. (Acts 2:22)*

- Is made the sole judge in the matters set before him.

*The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ... And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. (John 5:22-27)*

- Must be someone who loves peace and longs after it.

*Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ... His name shall be called ... The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)*

*In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace. (Ephesians 2:13,14)*

- Must put personal ambition aside and seek the best for others.

*Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God ... made Himself of no reputa-*

*tion, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and ... humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)*

- Must be very wise.

*Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)*

- Must be righteous.

*If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)*

- Must be faithful.

*Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him. (Hebrews 3:1,2)*

- Must endure hardship and rejection in bringing the parties together.

*He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)*

- Usually has a set amount of time in which to complete the mediation.

*He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:31)*

- If ultimately rejected (after long patience), will leave the offender subject to the severity of the law.

*He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36)*

—Adapted from “Christ A Mediator” by Learn The Bible.



## PHILEMON

Philemon, to whom this book of the Bible is addressed, was a friend of the apostle Paul. He evidently lived at Colosse with Apphia, his wife, and Archippus, his son. Philemon's house was a meeting place for God's people, so that Paul could write of "the church in thy house" (v. 2).

### PHILEMON'S PROBLEM

Onesimus, with whom the Epistle is mainly concerned, had formerly been a servant of Philemon (v. 16). He had wronged his Christian master and then had run away (vv. 15, 18). In God's great mercy, however, Onesimus had been thrown into contact with Paul at Rome and converted so soundly that Paul could speak of him not long after as "a faithful and beloved brother" (Colossians 4:9).

Tychicus was at that time leaving Rome for Colosse, bearing Paul's letter to that assembly. Paul used this occasion to send Onesimus back to his own people, so that he might be reunited with the master whom he once had wronged. It was no light matter for Onesimus to once more stand in the presence of Philemon, so Paul thoughtfully wrote an explanatory and intercessory letter to Philemon, making Onesimus the bearer of it. That short letter—the Epistle before us—God has seen fit to enshrine in Scripture.

### SOUND ADVICE

In the first place, it shows us how the converted sinner has his feet turned into paths of practical righteousness. When Onesimus wronged his master, Philemon, he was an unconverted man. Now he has become a beloved brother, but this does not relieve him of obligations incurred by his former sin. In God's view, that sin was forgiven amongst all his other

sins, for he stood "justified from all things" (Acts 13:39). But when it comes to Philemon, Onesimus must make confession and some kind of restitution. If we have done wrong to another, no more effectual proof of our repentance can be given than that of confession and restitution, as far as that may be within our power.

Knowing what damage has been done to the name of Christ among God's people in similar episodes, this letter has many valuable lessons:

- for the *offending* party: a return in all humility to the one offended with confession and an acknowledgement of his rights as to restitution.
- for the *offended* party: the reception of the repentant offender in grace with the fullest possible acknowledgement of all that God has done in him.
- for the *mediating* party: an absence of anything approaching a dictatorial spirit, coupled with ardent love for both the offended and the offender, expressing itself in counsel marked by courtesy and tact.

### OUR BLESSED MEDIATOR

We can see ourselves depicted in Onesimus and his sad history. We too were "unprofitable." We "wronged" God and consequently were His debtors, owing what we could not pay. We too "departed" from Him, since we feared Him and desired to be removed as far as possible from His presence. Our alienation was the fruit of sin.

Paul's mediation between Philemon and Onesimus illustrates, though only faintly, what Christ has done for us. He charged Himself with our iniquities and took upon Himself the judgment we rightly deserved. It will be our privilege to bless His name for ever because, in His marvelous grace, He looked at the debt which our sins had incurred, and said to God, "Put that on My account." — F. B. Hole