

THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

Christ the Mediator (6)

A. Introduction

1. Two things we are commanded to do as elders are to watch and to hold.

We are to watch what we believe, to make sure we are believing what God's Word says.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Timothy 4:16)

We are to hold firmly to the truths taught in God's Word.

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:9)

It is vital we do these two things, not just for our own sake, but also for the members of this church and in fact those who live in the community God has placed us in.

To help us to watch and to hold, we are spending our elders' meeting working through the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith a paragraph or so at a time.

2. The Lord Jesus was chosen and appointed to be the mediator between God and man by fulfilling the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, for those people He was given as a gift in eternity.

But who is the Lord Jesus?

That's the question the second paragraph of Chapter 8 of the Confession answers. In this wonderfully dense paragraph we learn about His full deity, His true humanity, His sinless integrity, His miraculous nativity, and His singular personality.

"The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholds and governs all things He has made, did, when the fullness of time was complete, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities of it, yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; 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."

First, we see that the Lord Jesus, the only mediator between God and man, is the eternal God and the revelation of God.

Second, we see that the Lord Jesus, as well as being fully God, is truly man. Christ added human nature in its fallen condition to His divine nature.

Next this paragraph discusses the sinless integrity of Christ, the truth that in Jesus, never was there any trace or stain of sin.

"...yet without sin..."

B. Jesus did not sin

1. Christ was truly a man, but not a sinful man.

He had a fallen human condition (unglorified) but not a fallen human nature.

He was perfectly pure and free from fault or defect.

"The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

"Such a high priest meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens." (Hebrews 7:26)

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

"But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin." (1 John 3:5)

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

"Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?" (John 8:46)

He always lived in obedience to God's law in thought, word, deed, and nature. There was not a time when He broke one of God's commands intentionally or inadvertently.

"The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." (John 8:29)

Jesus lived a sinless life.

2. Christ was truly tempted to sin but never once gave into temptation.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

Sin assaulted Him but did not conquer Him.

In His humanity Christ was and remained sinless. He had no sin of His own.

C. Jesus could not sin

1. Christ was not capable of sinning or doing what was wrong.

This is known as His 'impeccability'.

He was and always will be in a state whereby He is unable to sin.

Unlike Adam who was created holy and able to resist temptation but did not, there was no possibility that Jesus would not resist.

Because unlike Adam, Christ had two natures not one – He was the God-man.

When Jesus was tempted, it was according to His human nature, but never apart from His divine nature and His divine nature made it impossible for Him to sin.

2. Was Christ really tempted?

Jesus' temptations were just as real as ours.

Satan tempted Him to give up His dependence upon God by targeting the natural weakness of His human nature and by using lawful appetites and desires.

It was right and proper for Him to want food when He was hungry, to want expressions of His Father's love and care for Him, and to want to inherit the nations which His Father had promised Him (see Matthew 4:1-11).

The strength of these temptations lay in that they were legitimate not sinful things. The problem was that they were lawful desires by unlawful means, or at an unlawful time, or to an unlawful degree.

Jesus' temptations were more powerful than ours.

"The man who yields to a particular temptation has not felt its full power. He has given in while the temptation has yet something in reserve. Only the man who does not yield to a temptation, who, as regards that particular temptation, is sinless, knows the full extent of that temptation." (Leon Morris)

D. How then shall we lead?

1. This truth that Jesus is sinless is amazing.

It is amazing because He is what we are not.

It is amazing because He is what we will one day be.

2. This truth that Jesus is sinless is to be accepted.

Why? Because if He was not sinless, He could not be our Mediator.

He would not have perfectly kept God's law for us, so that we can be made righteous.

He would not have atoned for our sins, so that we can be forgiven.