

THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

Christ the Mediator (12)

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 how did He execute this office of mediator?

In the fourth paragraph of chapter 8 of the Confession, we get a description of how Jesus fulfils this role.

"This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that He might discharge He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have born and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us; enduring most grievous sorrows in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day He arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered, with which He also ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world."

We see that Jesus executes this office of mediator by being willing and obedient; by suffering, dying, rising, and ascending, and by sitting, interceding, and one day returning.

B. Jesus is a willing mediator

1. Jesus did not appoint Himself to the office of mediator.

He was called to this office by the Father, who chose that through Him the blessings of salvation would be mediated to His people.

Yet Jesus accepted this task, not out of compulsion, not begrudgingly, not under coercion, but freely and willingly.

"This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake..."

"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." (John 10:17-18)

2. Jesus willingly accepted the office of mediator because He delighted to do His Father's will.

"Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.

Then I said, 'Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will, O God.'" First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:5-10)

He loved His Father and He also loved His sheep and was eager to reconcile the two, so willingly carried out this mediatory work in the power of the Spirit.

C. Jesus is an obedient mediator

1. To perform the role of mediator, Jesus had to not only obey the commands of the law but also the curses of the law.

This is known as His active and passive obedience.

2. Christ's active obedience is His complete devotion to all the commands of God's holy law.

"...which that He might discharge He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it..."

His every thought, word, deed, motive, and aim were pure and holy.

He not only avoided sin and transgression, but also lived up to the standard God had given.

By doing so, He earned for His people the righteousness they need to merit eternal life and salvation and has done for them what Adam failed to do.

To achieve this, He needed to take on human nature and be born under law, as being God, He was above the law as the lawgiver.

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law." (Galatians 4:4-5)

Jesus in His human nature subjected Himself to the law (though not to the man-made traditions of Jews), meeting all its requirements and never once breaking it.

"Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15)

If He had neglected any aspect of the law, He would not have secured the righteousness before God which His people need.

However, it wasn't enough for Christ to live the life people in Adam have failed to live by keeping all the commands of the law.

Something also needed to be done about the curses of the law people deserve because of their transgressions and sins.

3. Christ's passive obedience is His enduring of the curses of God's law.

"...and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have born and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us..."

When Jesus died on the cross, He took upon Himself the punishment of God's wrath that His people deserved for their sins.

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

On the cross, He became deserving of God's wrath, not because of any sin He committed, but because the sins of His people were placed on Him.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

God the Father then punished His spotless though now carrying the sins of His people Son instead of them.

This clears their debt to God and results in them being forgiven and their sin no longer being counted against them.

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." (1 Peter 3:18)

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ because Christ has been condemned in their place.

D. How then shall we lead?

1. We need to make sure that the members understand that they need Jesus to both live for them and die for them.

They need Christ's active obedience as well as His passive obedience.

For Him to perfectly obey the commands and curses of the law for them.

If they are only trusting in Christ's passive obedience, their sins are forgiven, the slate is wiped clean, but they don't have the righteousness they need to be accepted by God and enjoy eternal life in the new creation.

We want them to be able to truly sing: *"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."*

2. We need to make sure that the members understand the role of the law in their lives.

Christ's active obedience means we are freed from the law as the way to life. Our obedience does not contribute to our salvation.

Christ's active obedience does not mean we are freed from the law as the way of life. Our obedience does contribute evidence of our salvation.