

THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

Christ the Mediator (13)

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 fulfills 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. In order to be our mediator, Jesus had to suffer

1. Jesus suffered in both His body and His soul.

"...enduring most grievous sorrows in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body."

His sufferings were necessary.

His sufferings were real.

His sufferings were part of His saving work.

These sufferings that He endured were not because of His own personal sins, but due to the sins of His people which were placed on Him and counted as if they were His own.

"The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

"The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

"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)

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." (Galatians 3:13)

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree." (1 Peter 2:24)

2. He suffered in His body.

Crucifixion was one of the most horrible forms of execution to ever be devised by humans.

He suffered an agonising death at the hands of wicked men.

But there was a more painful suffering than what He experienced in His body.

3. He suffered in His soul.

He was betrayed, abandoned, and denied.

Yet the pain of this was nothing compared to pain of being left alone to endure the wrath of God as He was punished for the sin of those who would trust in Him.

"About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" – which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Such was the anguish of this, in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus sweat drops of blood and prayed for this cup to be taken from Him.

"He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." (Matthew 26:37-38)

"And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:44)

4. This suffering in His body and soul is what Jesus willingly went through for us.

This is what being obedient looked like for Him.

C. In order to be our mediator, Jesus had to die

1. Jesus died.

The Roman soldiers saw Him die.

His body was prepared for burial.

Christ really was dead.

"...was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption."

At His death, His spirit separated from His body.

He did not descend into hell, but rather entered the presence of His Father, as He assures one of the thieves who died next to Him.

"Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

2. Jesus was buried.

Why?

He said He would be.

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40)

As the final part of the punishment for sin.

"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19)

To give proof that He was dead.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve." (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

3. Jesus remained dead for three days.

His living body became a lifeless corpse.

But His body did not decay like other dead bodies do.

"...because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay." (Psalm 16:10)

"But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay." (Acts 13:37)

D. How then shall we lead?

1. When we suffer, there is Saviour who knows what it is like to suffer.

There is One who understands.

Know that you are not on our own.

2. When we suffer, there is Saviour who has suffered far more than we ever will.

There is One who cares.

Know that His suffering was for you and for your salvation.