

## THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

### Christ the Mediator (16)

#### 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.

He executed this office of mediator by being willing and obedient; by suffering, dying, rising, and ascending, and by sitting, interceding, and one day returning.

In executing this office of mediator, Jesus offered up His obedience and sacrifice to God for the sake of all those people He had been given by His Father, achieving for them satisfaction of God's justice and securing reconciliation.

In paragraph 6 of chapter 8 of the Confession, the question of whether there was salvation for those who died before the coming of Christ is answered.

*"Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and today and for ever."*

Were Old Testament believers saved? How were they saved?

#### B. The elect before Jesus' coming were saved by Christ

1. The blessings of salvation were available before Jesus came into the world at His incarnation.

In all ages from the beginning of the world there have been those whom God has elected for salvation.

*"Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world..."*

All the benefits that would be secured by Jesus' death were available before His coming.

2. Christ from the very beginning was the Saviour of sinners.

The salvation enjoyed by those who lived before the coming of Christ is the same salvation enjoyed by those who live after the coming of Christ.

"Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

How then were Old Testament believers saved by Christ?

### **C. The elect before Jesus' coming were saved by trusting Christ**

1. The blessings of salvation came to those who lived before Jesus came into the world, in the same way they come to us who live after Jesus' first coming – through faith.

How could they put their trust in Christ if He had not yet come into the world?

*"...in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and today and for ever."*

2. The good news of the salvation that Jesus achieved by His life, death, and resurrection, was communicated in the promises, types, and sacrifices in the Old Testament.

"For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith." (Hebrews 4:2)

While they did not know His Name, Christ was preached in all the promises, beginning with the offspring of the woman who would crush the serpent and undo what sin had done.

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (1 Peter 1:10-11)

Christ was also pictured in all the types and sacrifices, with the types symbolising aspects of His work, and every animal sacrifice pointing to His sacrifice on the cross for the sins of His people.

All who put their faith in the Christ who was coming were saved.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56)

3. So certain is the salvation of the elect, that Scripture speaks of Christ dying for them at the moment when the Father gave a people to His Son in eternity past.

"All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." (Revelation 13:8)

Jesus was their mediator, just as He is ours.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

### **D. How then shall we lead?**

1. By reminding our members that there has always been one Saviour.

Those who lived before Jesus' coming are saved by His death in the same way that we who live after His coming are saved by His death.

2. By reminding our members that there has always been one way of salvation.

Those who lived before Jesus' coming are saved by faith in Him in the same way that we who live after His coming are saved by faith in Him.