

## THE MEDIATORIAL WORK OF JESUS

What is the mediatorial work of Jesus? It is all of the work he did as a God-Man.

Now someone might ask a Pastor, “How is your pastoral work going?” And he would tell them about his preaching and his church work and his visiting and his counseling and all the things that he does as a Pastor. But he wouldn’t necessarily tell about other work that he does, like, working on his house or cutting the grass at home or washing the car or his part time job at Kroger. He was asked about his pastoral work.

And if someone were to ask Jesus, “What is your Mediatorial work?” Jesus would tell them about all the work he did in serving as a Mediator between God and man.

Now there are many works that Jesus did in his divinity, before he ever became a man, that were unrelated to reconciling man to God. See Colossians 1:16, 17

Jesus created all things.

Jesus sustains all things.

Note: Did you know that there is a law of science (2<sup>nd</sup> law of Thermodynamics) which says that in a closed system (like our universe) all things tend toward a state of entropy (disorder). Now basically that means that over a period of time things will tend to break down rather than fix themselves up.

Now we intuitively know that is true.

**Example: Try leaving your house and letting it sit for one year and then come back and see if it has gotten better or worse in repair. Let it sit for ten years and let’s see what condition it is in.**

Things tend toward a state of disorder, don’t they?

**Example: If I took my watch off and put it in a shaker and let it shake for a year, why we all know that the little intricate parts would eventually shake loose and they would be a jumbled mess.**

But here is what an evolutionist says,

**Example: Let’s put all the parts of a watch in a watch casing and let’s shake it up for a million years, and after a million years, it will put itself together into a working time piece.**

Now this universe is put together very intricately, but if Jesus took his hands off of it, according to what we know from science, this universe would tear down and would not sustain itself.

And Paul says, by him all things consist. (Col.1:17)

Now creating the universe and sustaining the universe are general works of Jesus but they are not mediatorial works. They are works that Jesus would do even if man had not fallen into sin.

But the mediatorial work of Jesus is the specific work of Jesus in reconciling sinful man to a holy and angry God. This is the work entered into by the second person of the Godhead to bring about the redemption of his people.

The redemptive work of Jesus was not the whole work of redemption, because the whole work of redemption included the work of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit. But the mediatorial work of Jesus was the centerpiece of that great redemptive work of God. His work is so central to the work of redemption that He is properly called our Redeemer. He is called the Savior. Although the Father and the Holy Spirit also participate in the redemptive work, it is Jesus who identifies himself with his people in such a marvelous way that we call him Immanuel, that is "God with us."

Just to put things in perspective, let's summarize the work of God in the redemptive process.

There was a division of labor among the parties of the covenant.

A. The work of the Father.

1. The Father chose us before the foundation of the world. (Eph.1:4)

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world . . . (Eph.1:4)*

2. The Father gave, as a gift to his Son, the chosen ones for the purpose of redemption. (John 6:39)
3. The Father determined to send Christ. (John 5:30)

*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of my Father which hath sent me.*

B. The work of the Son.

1. To assume human nature. (Gal.4:4,5; Phil 2:7)
2. To be placed under the law. (Gal.4:5) The privileges and also the penalties.
3. To fulfill the requirements of the law. (Mt.5:17)
4. To lay down his life as an atonement for sin. (John 10:17,18)
5. To intercede for the saints. (Romans 8:34)

- C. The work of the Holy Spirit (to apply salvation to the souls of the elect)
  - 1. To regenerate. (John 3)
  - 2. To guide into all truth. (John 16:13)
  - 3. To sanctify

But tonight we are focusing on the mediatorial work of Jesus.

Now the first great mediatorial work of Jesus was that,

- I. He became a man.

Now when we consider this great act of incarnation, we note that,

- A. It was the second person of the Trinity that became man.
  - 1. God the Father did not become a man.
  - 2. The Holy Spirit did not become a man.
  - 3. That Second Person, “The Word was made flesh.” (John 1:14)

It might be slightly incorrect to say that God became man, although we would know what a person meant if he said that. But it is more correct to say, “the Word became a man.” It was that Second Person. It was the Son of God that became the Son of man.

But don’t suppose that the Father and the Holy Spirit were idle in this great work.

- B. Each person of the Godhead was active in the incarnation.

- 1. The Father had an active part to play.

*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*

Gal.4:4

- 2. The Holy Spirit had an active part to play.

*But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

Matthew 1:20

But when it comes to the incarnation,

- 3. The Second Person had the major role to play.

- a. He was consenting to the incarnation.

- (1) He did not hang on to his former majesty, unwilling to let go. (Phil.2:6)

b. He made himself of no reputation. (Phil.2:7)

C. Now when we say that he assumed the nature of man, this implies that he previously existed when he did not have the nature of man.

It says that he made himself of no reputation. That implies that he previously existed with reputation and then he made himself of no reputation. And this is clearly the instruction of the Scriptures.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:1

And Jesus, in his preexisting condition, was not a man in any sense of the word. He was God in all his glory. He was clothed in majesty. And he was supreme above all other beings. And he was very God in essence. And this is what John says when he says, "And the Word was God.

By the way, when a Jehovah's Witness comes to my door and wants to talk to me, I always ask, "Do you believe Jesus was God?" And he will say, "no." And I say, "I believe Jesus is God and furthermore he is my God and that issue is not negotiable in my house.

So, Jesus was God.

A man, on the other hand, was a created being. And listen to what the Psalmist says about man.

*What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?  
For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.*

Psalm 8:4, 5

Now man is an honorable creation of God and man has been given a prominent place in God's creation. But, when all is said and done, man is created a little lower in rank than the angels. And if he was lower than the angels then he was infinitely lower than God himself. And Jesus was God and was not a man in any sense of the word.

But then the most astonishing thing happened. The Word became a man. And when we say that the Word became a man we mean that,

D. He became a man in every sense of the word except without sin.

Now in order for someone to be a mediator he has to be able to communicate with both sides.

**Example: Now in my business, when the parties cannot resolve their**

**differences, sometimes we go to mediation. And the parties separate into different rooms and the mediator goes back and forth to see if he can facilitate an agreement. And when the mediator comes into your room he tells you about the strength of the other person's case and when he goes into the other room he tells them about the strength of your case. And, he sort of holds onto both hands, trying to bring the parties together. And for him to be effective, he must be a person who can relate to each side.**

Now in order to be a mediator between God and man it was necessary that Jesus be able to relate to both parties. And it was necessary for him to be God on the one hand and man on the other hand so that he could reach to the Father with his divinity and reach to mankind with his humanity and reconcile the two through the sacrifice of himself.

So, it is crucial that we recognize that Jesus was both God and man. And to deny the divine nature of Jesus or to deny the human nature of Jesus is to nullify the effects of redemption.

**There were some in the apostolic age that taught that Jesus was God, but he was not really human.**

This was an early form of heresy known as Gnosticism and has continued in various forms throughout church history. But the Scriptures, in addition to teaching that Jesus was fully God, also teach that Jesus was fully a human being. The Scriptures indicate that Jesus had a true human body. He was flesh and blood. (Hebrews 2:14) He had all the essential body parts. His body was not merely a semblance of a body – not merely the appearance of a body. It was not a body fashioned of some mysterious or heavenly substance. Jesus was conceived in the womb of a woman and nourished of her substance. Theologians say that Jesus was consubstantial with Mary. That is, his body was of the same substance as Mary -- the same kind of atoms and molecules and cells and tissues. And, Jesus displayed in his human person all the characteristics of this humanity. He grew in stature. He passed through all the ordinary processes of development from infancy to adulthood. He was subject to all the afflictions of the human body. He felt pain, pleasure, hunger, thirst, fatigue, disappointment, rejection, loss, suffering and death. And in reference to his humanity, the Scriptures refer to Jesus as the Son of Man.

Now this extraordinary condescension by the Second Person of the Trinity in becoming a man is called his humiliation. And I suppose rightfully so, for in Philippians 2:7, 8 it says,

*He made himself of no reputation.*

*He took upon himself the form of a servant.*

*He was made in the likeness of man.*

*He humbled himself.*

*He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Now what the second person of the Trinity became was so far removed in rank and so far removed from his previous majesty that it can be called nothing less than his humiliation.

But we need to also remember, that

E. He remained God in every sense of the word.

**There are those who would teach that Jesus was purely human but not divine.** They would deny the deity of Jesus. Certainly, this seemed to be the case when he walked the earth. He looked like any other man. He walked and talked and ate and drank like any other man. However, the Scriptures are replete with references to the deity of this man Jesus. He was omniscient, omnipotent, equal with God and displaying all the attributes of Almighty God. He walked on water, he changed water into wine, he saw Nathanael under the tree from a great distance. He forgave sins which only God has authority to do. To put it another way, Jesus had a divine nature. Everything that makes one God, Jesus had. Whatever attributes constitute the nature of Almighty God, Jesus had. And as such he is called in the Scriptures, the Son of God.

So, Jesus has a divine nature and Jesus has a human nature. The complication is, and perhaps the inscrutable aspect of Jesus, is that these two natures are bound up in one person.

Now here is what we have seen about his incarnation. He was truly a man. And, He was truly God. And now we make sure that we understand that,

F. He remained sinless.

It is unthinkable to us that a man could remain sinless in this life. But Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Now the first man Adam did not remain sinless. Though he was created in innocence and with no propensity to sin, nevertheless, he sinned. And, condemnation came upon all those who were in Adam. You see, Adam was a representative of his people. And Adam sinned and his people fell into condemnation.

Ah, but Adam was a type of Christ. Look at Romans 5:14.

*Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, **who is the figure of him that was to come.***

Now, he wasn't a type because of his sin, but he was a type because he was the representative head of his people. And just as Adam's people died because of Adam's disobedience, Christ's people live because of Christ's obedience.

*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

Romans 5:19

Adam sinned and his people were lost. But, not so with Jesus. Jesus was obedient and his people are made righteous.

It is critical that Jesus is yet without sin because without his perfection we spend eternity

in hell. Our destiny hinges on the obedience and the sinlessness of Jesus because our hope is not in Adam and much less in ourselves, but in Jesus alone. And thank God, he is yet without sin.

Now the first aspect of the mediatorial work of Jesus was his incarnation and one humiliating aspect of his incarnation was that he placed himself under the strict requirements of his own holy Law. Now Jesus is greater than the Law. He is the author of the law. And one of the purposes of the law was to lead men to Christ. But as a part of his incarnation, he placed himself squarely under the law.

And, the second mediatorial work of Jesus was that,

II. He honored the divine law by his perfect obedience.

One of the great works of Jesus was to fulfill the law.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*

Matthew 5:17

You see, Jesus is our substitute. He came to do what we could not do. He came to satisfy the just requirements of the law on our behalf. And just as we were in Adam when Adam failed, if we are true believers, then we were in Jesus when he so gloriously succeeded. And the wretched effects of Adam's sin are undone by the perfect obedience of Jesus. And our condemnation in Adam is turned into acceptance in Jesus.

But the mediatorial work of Jesus did not end with his perfect obedience and his fulfillment of the requirements of the law. Had he stopped there, he would have been accepted, but his people would have been lost. There was yet a penalty to be paid for Adam's sin and for the sins of his people.

And so, Jesus continued his mediatorial work when,

III. He made a full atonement for the sins of his people.

Jesus laid himself down on the altar shaped like a cross and he paid the price that was demanded by the holy justice of God. And this was the great centerpiece of his mediatorial work. He was slain as an atonement for sin. And the fact of the matter is that he paid the price for you and for me and for all of his people.

Now I want you to notice the essential nature of the atonement. When Jesus satisfied the debt for sin, did it have a primary effect on God or on the sinner? And the fact is, the atonement makes its primary impression on God; For God is angry, but through the blood of the atonement, his anger toward the sinner is turned to mercy. A frown is turned to a smile, not because of any subjective change in the sinner, but because of the satisfaction of his justice by the atoning death of His Son.

It shall be the primary work of the Holy Spirit to change the sinner by and by. But the

work of Jesus was to propitiate or to change the disposition of a Holy God so that God and man could be reconciled.

There was a great legal impediment that prevented God from forgiving the sinner. And that impediment was His own justness.

**Example: A human judge could never let a murderer go free if the evidence was overwhelming against him.**

And the Great Judge could never simply let sinners go free. His just nature would not allow it. But God sent his own Son as an atonement – a substitutionary atonement. And now, having poured his wrath out on His Son, he is pleased to have mercy on sinners.

And I tell you, it is not just any sinners who are set free, but it is vile sinners like you and me. It is liars and cheats and adulterers and murderers who are the objects of mercy through the atoning blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus doesn't propitiate God toward good people. Rather, it changes the countenance of God toward miserable sinners, sinners otherwise doomed to a hellish eternity. And if the atoning blood can cause an angry God to look at sinners such as us with mercy, then what an atonement we have through the blood of Jesus.

Now, next time we will consider the intercessory work of Christ while he is in heaven.