

Q. Who is the redeemer?

A. The only redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty of sin Himself.

Text: 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (RC)

“For *there is*¹ one God; *there is* also one mediator between God and humanity,² a human³ – Christ Jesus – who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the witness for this proper time.”⁴

For the sake of clarity, I am going to break the catechism’s answer into 4 parts:

1. The **Exclusivity** of Jesus

This glorious truth provides the theological foundation (“for”, 2:1) for Paul’s exhortation for the church in Ephesus to remember to include evangelistic prayer for the nations and their rulers in their corporate worship (2:1).

Paul’s logic is as follows:

- Because Christ, the God-man (*Theanthropos*, [v.5]) gave Himself as a ransom “for all” (*hyper panton*, *ὑπὲρ πάντων* [v.6]), therefore petitions, prayers, requests, thanksgivings ought to be made “for all [kinds of]”⁵ people” (*hyper panton anthropon*, *ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων* [v.1; cf. v.8]).

¹ There is no verb in the Greek, though it is clearly implied, which is why I have added it in italics in my own wooden and literal translation of the text.

² This is what the Greek word is clearly implying (cf. NET, CSB, NLT; NIV = “mankind”).

³ Many translations (e.g., ESV, NIV, NLT) translate this “the man.” Since there is no definite article (i.e., “the” [note the italics in LSB, KJV]), I have chosen to follow the NET, NAB, NJB, which translate the Greek, “Himself being human,” which highlights not so much that he was a male – which He most certainly was – but His humanity, and thus His qualifying as a sacrificial substitute for mankind’s sins.

⁴ The NET’s paraphrase of this absolutely nails it: “revealing God’s purpose at His appointed time.” This locates this text within the historical redemptive framework and eternal purpose of God to send His Son into the world – at just the right time – in the form of a human, in order that *every kind* [cf. **2:1**] of human – Jew or Gentile – could be saved. Cf. **2 Timothy 1:9-10; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7**. Herman Ridderbos, commenting on this verse in relation to Titus 1:2-3, writes, “where the hope of eternal life is spoken of, which the veracious God promised before times eternal, but revealed in its own time (*kairos idios*)...*idios* speaks of [what is] proper, fitting, appropriate.” In his *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 47 fn. 12.

⁵ The Greek helps to debunk the heresy of universalism, which v.6 perhaps may allude to. The “for (*hyper*) all people” of 2:1 is qualified “for (*hyper*) kings and all who are in authority.” This is why I translate 2:1 as “all kinds of people.” The believers are to pray for the very people who are persecuting them, since as humans, they are able to

- Christ’s coming into the world as the God-man is “the witness at the proper time” (2:6) that really does desire “all men” to be saved (2:4).
 - It is this wonderful message – that Jesus is the Savior not only of Jews, but also of Gentiles – that Paul was “appointed as a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles” (2:8).

Ironically, many see the exclusivity of Christ as the world’s only Savior as a hindrance to evangelism and missions; yet Paul sees Christ’s exclusivity as the great motivator of biblically inclusive evangelism, namely that all nations are invited to share in God’s salvation! However this salvation is available only in Christ, as He is offered “faithfully and truthfully” (2:7b)⁶ in the preaching and teaching of the apostolic gospel.⁷

John Owen helpfully explains why Christ – as the God-man – alone qualifies to be the only mediator between God and man:

There was none in heaven or earth, in their original nature and operations, who was meet or able to make up a *righteous peace* between [God and fallen humanity]. Yet must this be done by a mediator, or cease for ever. This Mediator could not be God Himself absolutely considered; for “a mediator is not of one, but God is one,” Gal. iii. 20. Whatever God might do herein a way of sovereign grace, yet He could not do it in the way of mediation; which yet was necessary unto His own glory.

And as for creatures, there was none in heaven or earth that was meet to undertake this office. For “if one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him?” 1

be saved by Christ, who in taking on humanity, could Himself become a ransom for them. I then would apply this understanding of “all” to 2:6, namely that Christ gave Himself a ransom “for all kinds of people.” For if Christ ransomed “all”, then “all” must be saved, since full payment has been made for them by Christ for all their sins, including the sin of unbelief. Of course, the lie of universalism is not taught anywhere else in Scripture, including this verse.

⁶ Literally “in faithfulness and truth.” My translation is perfectly and grammatically acceptable [and preferable].

⁷ This is why Paul is so frustrated with the false teachers (1:19-20), who are propagating and championing and teaching a false understanding of the Law (1:6-7). For the Gentiles to be saved (cf. Galatians, Romans, Colossians, Philipians), they teach that Jesus is not enough. Gentiles must take on the “Jewishness” of the law in order to be accepted by Israel’s God. Nothing could be further from the truth, says Paul (1:8-11). True godliness comes merely from Christ, as preached in the gospel, through the church (3:14-16). Just as Paul was saved by grace alone (1:12-16) to the glory of God alone (1:17), so also are Gentiles – including the wicked kings and rulers who were persecuting the church.

Sam. ii. 25. There is not “any days-man⁸ betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both,” Job ix. 33.

In this state of things the Lord Christ, as the Son of God, said, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. Sacrifice and burnt-offerings Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me; and, lo, I come to do Thy will,” Heb. x. 5, 9. By the assumption of our nature into union with Himself, in His own divine person He became every way meet for the discharge of His office, and undertakes it accordingly.⁹

Like Paul’s words to Timothy in Ephesus, Peter’s words regarding the exclusivity of Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 4 lay the groundwork for the expansion of the gospel’s advance to the ends of the earth in the rest of the book [and Bible].¹⁰

- **Acts 4:11-12** (RC) – “This *Jesus*¹¹ is the¹² stone, who was rejected by you, the builders, who has become the cornerstone. And the¹³ salvation is not in anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved.”

Not surprisingly, this exclusivity finds its origins not in Jesus’ apostles, but in Jesus Himself:

- **John 14:16** (RC) – “Jesus said¹⁴ to him, I AM¹⁵ the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me¹⁶.”

In fact, in all of Jesus’s “I AM” statements in John, he is teaching us the absolute exclusivity of Christ in salvation:

- "I AM the bread of life" (**John 6:35-48**)
- "I AM the light of the world" (**John 8:12; 9:5**)

⁸ EVV = “arbiter”; NLT (cf. NIV) = “mediator”

⁹ John Owen, *Works*, vol. 1, ‘The Glory of Christ’ (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 323.

¹⁰ See **Acts 1:6-8**.

¹¹ “Jesus” is not in the Greek text, but the context is clear that He is the referent.

¹² Jesus is the fulfilment of **Psalm 118:22**.

¹³ The definite article (i.e., “the”) highlights that there is only “one” salvation.

¹⁴ Literally “says.” The present tense helps the reader to picture and ‘live’ in the narrative.

¹⁵ John uses this Greek title seven times in his gospel to highlight that Jesus is indeed Yahweh – “I AM.” I have capitalized this, as this is one of John’s main themes in the gospel. As God in the flesh, He alone can reveal God to human flesh (cf. **John 1:9, 14, 18**), as well as lead them to the true God and the true ‘truth’ (cf. **John 18:38**).

¹⁶ ‘*emou*’ is an emphatic pronoun in the Greek language, and we could paraphrase the idea as “Me – and Me only.”

- "I AM the door" (**John 10:9**)
- "I AM the good shepherd" (**John 10:11-14**)
- "I AM the resurrection and the life" (**John 11:25**)
- "I AM the way, the truth and the life" (**John 14:6**)
- "I AM the vine, the true one" (**John 15:1-5**)

That Jesus is the only Redeemer, is seen more clearly in the Greek of the following two passages:

- **Ephesians 1:7** (RC) – “In Him we have the¹⁷ redemption through the blood of Him, the forgiveness of the trespasses, according to the riches the grace of Him.” (emphasis mine)
- **Colossians 1:13-14** (RC) – “For [God] rescued you¹⁸ from the power of darkness transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have the redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (emphasis mine)

Application:

WHY is this truth about the exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone so important, especially in our [post]post-modern day and age?

2. The **Eternality** of Jesus

- **John 1:1-3** (LSB) – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that had come into being.”¹⁹
- **John 8:58** (RC) – “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, before Abraham was²⁰, I AM’.”

¹⁷ As far as I can tell, not one English version translates the article, which I take to be incredibly significant, important, and even essential in light of how the primary argument of Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians is the redemptive-historical significance of Christ’s coming into the time and space as God to save the church – the elect, whether Jew or Gentile. The OT pictures of exodus and redemption are but types and shadows anticipating the [true and ultimate] redemption wrought by the Messiah.

¹⁸ The LSB uses the less likely variant “us” [i.e. both Jew and Gentile]. As most commentators note, not only is the more difficult reading (“you”) more likely, it is also more consistent with Paul’s argument regarding the Gentiles being included in the end-time salvation effected by Israel’s Messiah. Cf. **Ephesians 1:13**, NLT.

¹⁹ Cf. **Colossians 1:15-17**

²⁰ The verb can also mean “to be born, come into existence.”

- **Hebrews 7:3** – Melchizedek is likened to “the Son of God”, who Himself “has neither beginning of days nor end of life.”
- **Revelation 1:17** (RC) – “...Do not fear. I AM the first and the last.”²¹
- **Revelation 22:13** (RC) – “I *am* the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”²²

Application:

What are some practical implications that our Savior is the eternal God?

- **2 Corinthians 9:15** (ESV) – “Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!”

3. The **Incarnation** of Jesus

- **John 1:14** (RC) – “And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we gazed upon His glory, glory as of the one and only begotten, [who came] from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

-

Application:

Why is it so important for us to believe the incarnation?

- John Owen: “But take this [i.e., the incarnation] away, and all our religion is taken away with it. Farewell Christianity, as to the mystery, the glory, the truth, the efficacy of it; – let a refined heathenism be established in its room. But this is the rock on which the church is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.”²³

4. The **Propitiation** of Jesus

- **Romans 8:1-3** (RC) – “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was

²¹ Cf. **2:8**. By quoting **Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12**, John is clearly identifying Jesus as YHWH (and thus the eternal God).

²² The designation “Alpha and Omega” usually is ascribed to God the Father in the book of Revelation. Here, however, the context clearly ascribes it to Jesus, thus reinforcing His divinity as God and equality with the Father.

²³ John Owen, *Works*, vol. 1, ‘The Glory of Christ’ (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 328.

through the flesh, God, by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin,²⁴ condemned the sin in the flesh.”

- **Romans 3:23-25** (RC) – “For all have sinned, and though falling short of the glory of God, are being justified as a gift by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God publicly put forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood in order to demonstrate His righteousness.”
- **1 John 2:1-2** (LSB) – “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for *those* of the whole world.”
- **1 John 4:10** (RC) – “In this is the²⁵ love, not that we ourselves have loved God, but that He Himself loved us and sent His Son as a²⁶ propitiation for the sake of our sins.”

Application:

How does the hypostatic union better help us understand and appreciate the glory of the cross?

Conclusion:

²⁴ This phrase can also [rightly] be understood as “as an offering for sin” (LSB, cf. NIV = “to be an offering for sin.”). CSB also picks up some of the rich Pauline theology as well: “under sin’s domain.”

²⁵ That is, true/real love. It is ‘the love *par excellence*.’ The context of the letter as whole favors including the definite article in translation and understanding of this important word/theme in 1 John.

²⁶ There is no definite article in the Greek. However, most translations insert it, which is warranted by context, as Jesus is not merely ‘a’ sacrifice for our sins but ‘the’ sacrifice for our sins.