

**The 1689 Confession; Chapter 8, Paragraph 5 – “Of Christ the Mediator”, Message # 19 –
“Mediator of a Better Covenant”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class,
by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 3rd, 2020.**

Paragraph 5 – The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, f) hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, g) for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.

f) Hebrews 9: 14, 10: 14; Hebrews 9: 15; Rom 3: 25-26; g) John 17: 2

Last Sunday I said to you that when Christ offered Himself up on the cross, as a sacrifice for our sins, He did so through the Eternal Spirit. As John Calvin says – Christ suffered as a Man, but that death (*His death*) becomes saving to us through the efficacious power of the Spirit; for a sacrifice, which was to be an eternal expiation (an eternal satisfaction *rendered to satisfy God’s justice; His wrath against our sins, both to remove guilt and then to cleanse us from all sin in an on-going fashion*) this was a work which was more than human. (end of quote) This was also the reason why His sacrifice was offered once for all, and not over and over again, as it was with Aaron and the high priests of Israel down through the generations until Christ came. This is what I want to speak to you about this morning. I want to speak to you about Christ’s being the Mediator of a better covenant, which was enacted on better promises. So, turn with me to –

Hebrews 8: 1-13 – “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.” “For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices.” “Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.” “For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle.” “For He said, ‘SEE THAT YOU MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.’” “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.” “Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH – NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; BECAUSE THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DISREGARDED THEM, SAYS THE LORD.’” “FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.” “In that He says, ‘A NEW COVENANT,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

1. Christ was a Minister of the Sanctuary and of the True Temple.

So, what the apostle is telling us here, is that all believers in Christ have a High Priest, who is now seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (that is, God the Father), and He (Christ) is a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. The sanctuary and the tabernacle that are mentioned here are two different things. In the tabernacle of old, the Holy of Holies was where the high priest went, once a year, not without blood, to make atonement for the sins of

the people. Both the high priest, the tabernacle, and the sacrifice were all typical of Christ and His High Priestly ministry. When Christ as our great High Priest offered Himself on the cross, His perfect sacrifice was accepted by the Father, and when Christ rose from the dead, He passed through the heavens and into the very presence of God, where He was given the very highest place of honor, at the right hand of the Father. Heaven itself is the anti-type type of the tabernacle, in these New Testament times. Our great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, has entered the heavenly sanctuary itself, and He is now positioned (seated) there at the Father's right hand in order to continue His ministrations on our behalf. As it says in Hebrews 7: 25, He continues there forever because He has an unchangeable priesthood. "You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Christ is even now making continual intercession on our behalf. He is also there, as He said in John 14: 3, even now, preparing a place for us, so that eventually we might go where He has gone. We will, because of His mediation someday be received in heaven itself, and worship God and the Lamb forevermore.

Christ is spoken of in our text as a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. This tabernacle has a two-fold meaning. First of all, it means the Universal Church which He purchased with His own blood. The Church is of God's spiritual building, and it is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Church is a tabernacle; it is a dwelling place of God in the Spirit, as it says in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 22, often called a temple as well, in this regard. Verse 21 of Ephesians 2 – "In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The New Testament Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is spoken prophetically of, in Isaiah 33: 20 as a tabernacle. It says there – "Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home, a tabernacle that will not be taken down; not one of its stakes will ever be removed, nor will any of its cords be broken." The prophet Isaiah also speaks in this way in Isaiah 54, verses 1-3 of the time of the conversion of the Jews and their being brought into the Church, as well as many other Gentile nations, at the advent of the Millennium, in this way: "Sing, O barren, you who have not borne!" "Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child!" "For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman," says the Lord." "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtain of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes." "For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited." So because Christ has most definitely suffered, died, been raised from the dead, and is now interceding for His people, an innumerable multitude shall be saved during this present Church age, and be all seen someday in heaven and in the New Heavens and New Earth.

2. Christ's was a Ministry whose intent by the Father and the Son set forth their kindness and love for sinners everywhere.

These verses that I just read to you from Isaiah 54, by the way, were those often thought of, by William Carey, the father of modern missions, in relation to the salvation of many among the nations, the triumph and victory of the Church in fulfilling the Great Commission in time to come. In Iain Murray's book, *The Puritan Hope*, P. 139, he says – "From these words, in a sermon which has been called 'a burning bush of missionary revelation', William Carey delivered the prophet's great message, which he summarized as "Expect great things from God." "Attempt great things for God." "The next morning the proposal was passed that a plan be prepared for forming a Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the heathens." So the true tabernacle can legitimately be view as the Church in which, and to which, Christ presently ministers all through this New Testament Church age and on into eternity forever. The Church is a standing testimony to God's love in sending Christ, and Christ's love in giving Himself for sinners at the cross. The offer of salvation is made to all men everywhere, that whosoever will may believe and be saved. All of those who come to Christ will not be cast out. But they will be saved by grace through faith in Christ, and their salvation will be seen to have been not of themselves, lest any should boast. Do you give thanks for the free offer of the gospel, of God's willingness for any person who will come to Christ and partake of what He has purchased by His righteous life and sacrificial death?

Titus 2: 11-14 – “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Titus 3: 4-7 – “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

3. Christ’s was a Most Definite Atonement and Particular Redemption.

Ephesians 5: 25-27 – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also love the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

But the greater meaning of the true tabernacle, I believe, refers to the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. He ministered in His death, and His ministers presently by His intercession for us in heaven, all based upon His offerings Himself most definitely as a substitutionary atonement in their place. He suffered there on the cross, on behalf of His people in this body and this soul and spirit, His perfect human nature, before God. He ministers in the same from the right hand of the Father now. The old tabernacle of the Jews was a type of all this. The Lord Jesus is the antitype of the tabernacle of old because He came in His Incarnation and tabernacled among us, as is said in John chapter 1, verse 14 – “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...” He tabernacled in His human nature, among us. The tabernacle of old “was the way and means of God’s dwelling among His people, in the pledges of His gracious presence”, says John Owen in His commentary on Hebrews 8: 2. In John chapter 2, we find the Lord Jesus talking of His death and resurrection as He would “destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (John 2: 19)

Furthermore, Christ is the only way and means of our approach unto God in holy worship, as the tabernacle was in those Old Testament times. Owen goes on to say in his exposition of Hebrews 8: 2 – “He was in His own person, and what He did in His own person, His person and His work answered to all those types of priest, sacrifice, altar, tabernacle, and what belonged thereunto.” “He was the body and substance of them all, Colossians 2: 17. “These were a shadow of the things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” No one of these types by itself was able to represent all the fulness of grace that was in Christ; therefore, were there many of them ordained, and those of various sorts.” “And therefore His being eminently intended in one of them, in no way hinders His being so in another.” “He was all in Himself, - Priest, tabernacle, altar, and sacrifice.”

What did Christ offer to the Father to accomplish our redemption? He offered Himself, the sacrifice of His body on the cross for the punishment due our sins. He offered His soul when He interceded for us, there, in the garden of Gethsemane – “Not my will, but Yours be done”, Father. In Isaiah 53: 10 it says – “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.” “He has put Him to grief.” “When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”

4. Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry as He is also Mediator of a Better Covenant enacted on better promises.

A better covenant was needed than the Old Covenant if any person, Old Testament or New, could ever be saved. The first covenant was not faultless. Verse 7 of Chapter 8 of Hebrews says – “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.” Verse 8 says – “Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.’” So the fault with the first covenant was not with the way that God set it up through Moses on Mt. Sinai. The fault was with the people of Israel who were under this covenant not continuing in it, as it says in verse 9, and so, it says, God disregarded them. They had promised at the reading of it, that all that the Lord had said, they would do; but their hearts were not right with God and they were not steadfast in His covenant, and therefore, many of them died in the wilderness. The subsequent history of Israel proved all too frequently to see the same problem, not with the covenant as God had given it to them, but to their own sinful unbelief and disobedience; their not living by faith in their coming Messiah, but living according to their own thoughts and ways rather than the things which God said to them through Moses and the prophets.

The Promises of the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, are all related to our Lord Jesus Christ and what His Mediatorial Sacrifice and Intercession would bring about, both for elect Jews and Gentiles all through the rest of the Old Testament times and all through the present Church age. God would put His law in their mind and write them on their hearts; and He would be their God, they would be His people, and not one of those who would believe would have to teach his neighbor saying – ‘Know the Lord, for all who are called and chosen and called and sanctified and justified, would most certainly and definitely know God, from the least of them to the greatest of them. Look at the sovereignty of God in salvation and His unconditional love for all of His elect people in and through the New Covenant. Verse 12 – He would be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds He will remember no more. What a mighty work Christ did in offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. And in doing it, He made the old covenant obsolete because He fulfilled it all out of love to God and to all sinners everywhere so that they might come to Him for salvation. May each of us see the certainty of God’s work in salvation.