

Text: Heb. 9:15-28

Title: Wonderful insights on the mediation of our Mediator

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Introduction: When I was in high school, I had the privilege of meeting a number of my Swiss relatives, many of whom were very well-off due to the sale of some valuable farm land. As I thought of how well-off these relatives of mine were, I could not help but imagine what it would be like to be named in one of their wills as an heir. The rich Swiss uncle I am still waiting for has evidently not yet died.

Our author has some unusual insights into God's plan of salvation that are captured by the word translated *testament* in our text (*diatheke*). This word means *last will and testament*. It was used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the word *covenant* (*berith*), because the translators understood that God's covenants are a one-way agreement (see 8:9-10). Only one person signs the agreement at the bottom. God binds himself with a promise of salvation for the benefit of another.

So our author picks up on this word found in his Greek translation of the Old Testament and unpacks what else we might learn about God's covenantal plan for the salvation of sinners from this word meaning *last will and testament*. In so doing, he provides some wonderful insights into the mediation of our Mediator, Jesus Christ. That is the title of the message this evening, and I want us to see three of these wonderful insights from this important word.

I. The mediation of our Mediator required the death of the Testator (vv. 15a, 16-17).

Illustration: The *testator* is the person who writes a last will and testament. One of the things that is true about a last will and testament is that it requires no one to do anything until the testator dies. Nothing the will says forces him to do anything while he still lives. The will can even be changed. So long as he is not yet dead, the testator can write someone out of his will or make any changes he wants to.

Application: This is our author's insight into what Christ did for us as our Mediator. God's plan for our salvation is a one-way sovereign covenant that He wrote the terms to. But it is also a last will and testament in an important sense.

This particular covenant could not become binding without the death of the Testator, God Himself. God's covenants are written by God, and they are binding upon Him for the benefit of the sinner. But the terms of that agreement do not have to be followed unless the One who authorized them, the Testator dies.

Of course, when it comes to God's plan of salvation, Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Our author's point is not that the plan was ever in doubt or incomplete, but rather that death was required as part of the unchangeable plan. God not only wrote a last will and testament, He not only bound Himself by that will, He not only made us the beneficiaries of that will, but also He died so that it could become effective.

God died with me as the beneficiary on His will! God died for me! Is that not amazing? This is amazing love! Charles Wesley ["And Can It Be?"]: "Amazing love! How can it be? That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"

II. The mediation of our Mediator required atonement for sin (vv. 18-27).

Illustration: Have you ever asked a Jewish person, “How shall a sinner be righteous before God?” I did so last Saturday, and his answer was through repentance and making restitution. As we discussed this idea, however, it became pretty apparent to us that no sinner can really repent of and make proper restitution for each of his sins. We do such a poor job of that, that it cannot make us righteous if God is truly just, and He is. It turns out, man needs a mighty work of atonement accomplished by someone else. The Jewish Scriptures give us a picture of this need (vv. 23-24).

Illustration: There are both similarities and differences between a pattern and the real thing. A model airplane, for instance, has wings and perhaps even an engine like a real plane, but you cannot sit in it and fly it to Florida for the winter.

Application: What the OT law established through Moses was a model or a pattern. It taught the children of Israel, as it does us today, that the mediation of our Mediator required atonement for the sinner’s sin. This atonement would have some characteristics that were similar to and different from the pattern God gave Moses at Sinai.

1. The similarities teach that blood-shedding is necessary to the forgiveness of sins (vv. 18-22, 27). The brutality of blood-shedding for the forgiveness of sins was necessary because the nature of our sins is that they are brutally bloody.

Note these passages that speak of the bloodiness of man’s sin:

Gen. 4:10, “And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;”

Gen. 9:6, “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man”;

Ezek. 7:23, "Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence";

Ezek. 9:9, "Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not."

Ezek. 6:16, "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood";

Matt. 23:35, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar";

Rom. 3:15, "Their feet are swift to shed blood";

Rev. 6:10, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

Rev. 16:6, "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy";

Rev., 17:6, "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration";

Rev. 18:24, "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth";

Matt. 27:25, "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

Our sins are brutally bloody. It is for this reason that it is appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgment (v. 27). But God had all this accounted for in His plan of salvation. Our Mediator was to achieve atonement for the sin that was the bloody brutality of our sin, and that brings us to the difference between the pattern given in the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament and the real thing of atonement in the sacrifice of Christ.

2. The differences teach that Christ's own blood is necessary to the forgiveness of sins (vv. 23-26). Christ, our High Priest, sacrificed Himself (v. 26). Only He is a sufficient Savior.

Illustration: McCheyne's answers to the question – "Is this a sufficient Savior?" [*Memoirs*, pp. 170-172].

In eternity past: "Now, brethren, could I lift you away to that time when God was alone from all eternity; could I have shown you the glory of Jesus then – how He dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and was daily His delight; and could I have told you, 'that is the glorious Being who is to undertake the cause of poor lost sinners; that is He who is going to put Himself in their room and stead, to suffer all they should suffer, and obey all they should obey; consider Jesus, look long and earnestly, weigh every consideration in the balance of the soundest judgment; consider His rank, His nearness, His dearness to God the Father; consider His power, His glory, His equality to God the Father in everything; consider, and say do you think you would entrust your case to Him? Do you think He would be a sufficient Savior?"

In creation: "Oh, brethren, could I lift you away back to that wonderful day, and show you Jesus calling all the angels into being, hanging the earth upon nothing; could you have heard the voice of Jesus saying, 'Let there be light, and there was light'; and could I have told you, 'That is He who is yet to undertake for sinners; consider Him, and see if you think He will be a sufficient Savior."

In His session at the right hand of the Father: "Oh, brethren, could you and I pass this day through these heavens, and see what is now going on in the sanctuary above; could you see what the child of God now sees who died last night; could you see the Lamb with the scars of His five deep wounds in the very midst of the throne, surrounded by all the re-

deemed, everyone having harps and golden vials full of odors, could you see the many angels round about the throne, whose number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, all singing, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!' . . . Do you think it would be safe to trust Him? Do you think His sufferings and obedience will have been enough?"

Application: Jesus is a sufficient Savior. The atoning work of Christ is sufficient, for (1) it was a heavenly work (v. 24), and (2) it was an effective work – the removal of sin was complete (vv. 25-26).

Illustration: My wife put a couple of my shirts after washing them in the sun to see if she could get the stains out that the washing failed to remove.

Applicaiton: The washing of Christ's atoning blood does not fail to remove the darkest stain. It cleanses the vilest sinner. "Guilty, vile, and helpless we/Spotless Lamb of God was He!/Full atonement, can it be?/Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

The mediation of our Mediator required the death of the Testator; God Himself died for me! The mediation of our Mediator required atonement for sin. My bloody sin was atoned for by Jesus's bloody death. And now the final insight of our author into this mediation of our Mediator is this:

III. The mediation of our Mediator secured our inheritance (vv. 15b, 28).

Illustration: How will I know someday that my rich Swiss uncle had died and included me in his will? Very simply, I will be rich. The check will arrive in the mail.

Application: Those who have been called in v. 15 are those named in the last will and testament of God's covenantal plan of salvation. Another name we find in the Bible for this agreement is *the Lamb's book of life*. Is your name written there? Have you been named as a beneficiary in the last will and testament of God's plan of salvation? If so, the check is in the mail.

Christ is going to come a second time to give you the promised inheritance. That is going to be better than money from a rich Swiss uncle ever could be. Rev. 22:12, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." I am looking forward to that coming, and I hope you are too.

Conclusion: But what if you are not sure that you have been named a beneficiary in God's plan of salvation? What if you have no assurance that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life? What if you are not looking forward to that second coming of Christ, when all will be decided once and for all?

The answer is very simple, and very different than inclusion in my Swiss uncle's will: Rev. 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Jesus died for your sins. Believe on the Lord as your Savior and your Mediator, and you will know all the benefits of His work of mediation. You will find that God died for you. You will find that Jesus's blood washes away your sin completely. And you will find that redemption's promise of an eternal inheritance is assured to you and can never be taken away. Come.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*