

Christ: Equipped for His Work Ps. 40:6-8

The Atonement is central to Christianity. This makes it the central issue in human experience and world history. That may puzzle some because it has largely been displaced today by psychological and sociological categories. Having begun to consider the necessity and nature of the Atonement the question emerges as to the specific unique qualification of the Mediator.

We take for granted the conviction that sin opened a gulf between God and man so wide that no human being can fill the canyon or span the chasm. It is equally important is that we remember the two things the gulf consists of.

- It is an alienation born of mutual hostility.
- God's law, being trampled by man's sin required full reparation. This is something man is incompetent to render.

His position is desperate. His only possible hope lies in the possibility of a Mediator taking up his cause. His only hope lies in a Mediator who is acceptable to the God whom man so grossly and egregiously offended and competent to intercede for him. He would need to be:

- Fit to be entrusted with the interests of the Godhead.
- Capable of representing those, who were obviously, by the very nature of the case, so far, far below Him.

It is evident that none but God Himself could meet the criteria. But this doesn't really solve the problem, it rather

increases the difficulty. Atonement can only be accomplished by a full satisfaction to the law being rendered, this involves two things:

- A perfect obedience to all its precepts.
- A full endurance of its unrelenting punishment.

How could a divine being assume the place of a servant and become subject to His own Holy law? How could a divine being suffer and die? This seems an insolvable problem; yet, in the wisdom of God, He devised a way: One of the eternal Three, without ceasing to be God, took upon Him the form of a servant and became man. The incarnation was undertaken to accomplish sin's expiation.

1. **What is a Mediator?** A Mediator is one who intervenes between two parties at variance and makes peace. This is the idea at work behind [Vv. 6-8](#).
 - a. He must of necessity be a different person from the two parties: he can neither be the offended nor the offender.
 - b. The offended party may forgive but then a Mediator is not needed.
 - c. The offending party may be sorry and desiring of peace; but he might have no access to the party he offended or may be rejected because the offended feels his offer is inadequate. A third party can intervene to adjust the difference, by proposing terms both will accept.

2. **What specific qualities must this Mediator possess?** What is required in who would make atonement for sinners to God?

a. **He must be a man.** He can neither be solely God nor solely man. A Mediator supposes two parties between whom he intervenes. *“An intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.”* Ga. 3:20. 1Sa. 2:25, *“If someone sins against a man God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?”* The Mediator must be related to and equal of both. Cf. Lev. 25:25-27.

i. If He were not man His work could have no relevance to the law of God; neither in the obedience nor penal suffering. Exa. The law required love for God. Etc.

ii. This is why Paul so emphasizes the humanity of Christ. Cf. 1Tim. 2:5; Ga. 4:4. Thus. V. 6.

b. **He must be perfect.** In order to make atonement for another one must be free of (1) the defects that make atonement necessary. This agreed with all the types. (2) Positively holy. Both Satan and Adam were originally without defect yet he fell. Jesus was not merely separate from sinners he was positively holy. Cf. Lk. 1:35.

c. **He must be independent.** The one who would reconcile others must be under obligation to neither. He could not be

obligated, by nature to keep the law or it could not be kept on behalf of another. Exa. Angels are by nature obligated and have no right to exterminate themselves.

d. **He must act voluntarily.** The essence of vicarious suffering is that it be voluntary. Substitution by compulsion would be heinous. God would not accept any sacrifice offered reluctantly. Thus. V. 8.

e. **He must be federally united to His people.** Turretin, in his defense of satisfaction says there are three kinds of unions that justify imputation of sin: (1) natural, as in the case of a father and child, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects and (3) voluntary, as between friends. Christ's union subsumes and transcends all of these. His was also covenantal.

f. **He must be divine.** It was a work that was too great for any creature. He was to:

- i. Present to God a satisfaction bearing infinite merits.
- ii. Endure the full weight of all the sins of His people.
- iii. Vanquish the Devil and deliver his captives.
- iv. Overcome sin so that it's sting was plucked.
- v. Swallow up death and bestow eternal life.