

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

THE ONE MEDIATOR

Some truths declared in the Bible are dispensational. They apply only to certain periods of time. Other truths are everlasting. They have been true from the moment they were revealed and always will be true. They are not subject to dispensational changes. The present-day believer in the Lord Jesus Christ should always be seeking out God's distinctive truths for today. His goal should ever be "to be established in the present truth" (2 Pet. 1; 12).

Of all the truths in God's Word that must be classified as present truth, there is none more important than that declared by Paul when he proclaimed **"one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (1 Tim. 2:5). This is a distinct truth that is true only in the dispensation of the grace of God. It was not true before Paul's great declaration in Acts 28:28 (See Issue No. 11), it is true now, and it will not be true in the coming dispensation of God's government.

The great truth of one mediator between God and men has never been emphasized as it should be. It has not been followed out to all its conclusions. The writings of men will be searched in vain for even one interpretation which allows this great declaration to mean what it specifically says. This is probably due to the fact that the majority who seek to serve God in some capacity would like to believe that they are mediators in some respect. They strike the pose and give out the idea that they enjoy some mediatorial position. Thus with so many thinking that they are mediators and multitudes desiring them to so be, the result is indescribable confusion. God's emphatic declaration that there is now only one mediator denies the proud claims and wishes of so many that it will be believed and received by very few.

Honesty in interpretation demands that we define the word *mediator* and that we do this by means of its usage in the Word of God. There are many

who stultify the truth here by making a mediator to be a god or a savior. This is not true. A mediator is always between two parties, but a savior need not be. This truth is expressly declared in Gal. 3:20 where we are told that "**a mediator is not a mediator of one.**" A passerby rescuing a child who has fallen into deep water becomes a savior, but not a mediator. He did not act between two parties.

The Greek word for "mediator" is *mesites*. It is found six times in the New Testament and means one in the middle between two parties who acts as a transmitter. In fact transmission is the most important idea in this word. Most lexicons say that it means "one in the middle between two parties that are at variance," but this idea of "variance" is an unwarranted addition that is refuted by its usage in the New Testament.

In Gal. 3: 19 we are told that the law which was given to Israel at Mount Sinai was "**ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator.**" This mediator was Moses. He transmitted God's commandments to Israel at a time when there was no variance between God and this people. He said to them when He proposed the covenant: "**Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings and brought you unto Myself**" (Exo. 19:4). These words reveal the closeness of their relationship at that time. Furthermore, if *mediator* means one who operates between two parties at variance, then Jesus Christ is not the mediator of those who have been reconciled to God.

Beyond all question, the Word of God declares that Moses was a mediator between God and Israel. He transmitted the law from God to Israel and afterward acted as an arbiter between the two. Later when Aaron became the high priest and was the only man who could perform certain services in relationship with God, he too became a mediator. These things being true, it would have been a falsehood to have proclaimed at that time "one mediator between God and men." This was not truth at that time.

In the days of the Lord Jesus upon the earth we find the mediatorial position of the twelve Apostles emphasized when He said to them, "**He that receiveth you receiveth Me**" (Matt. 10:40). Later He said to them, "**I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth will be loosed in heaven**" (Matt. 16: 19). When this promise became a reality He breathed on them and said, "**Receive ye the Holy**

Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20: 22,23). If words mean anything, these words established them as mediators between God and men. They were in the middle as transmitters of both good and ill from God. The great truth of "one mediator" was evidently not truth for that time.

We see this mediatorial power at work in Acts 3:1-8 when Peter said to the lame man who had never walked, "**I have no silver or gold to give to you, but that which I do have I transmit to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, Walk!**" His words and his acts were those of a mediator. The blessing of healing and health flowed out of God in Christ and down through Peter to this lame man.

Another clear example of men acting as mediators is seen in Acts 8: 12-17. After Philip's successful ministry in Samaria, the Apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to these new converts. After praying for these men, we are told "**they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.**" These Apostles were not originators. They were the transmitters of this gift of God.

The chief characteristic of the thirty-three year period of which the Books of Acts is the history was the presence of many mediators between God and men. Every apostle, prophet, evangelist, herald, healer, miracle worker, and governor was a mediator. They received from God and transmitted it to men. To have proclaimed the truth of "one mediator between God and men" in that thirty three year period would have been to proclaim a lie and deny the very work that God was doing.

The greatest of all human mediators in the Acts period was the Apostle Paul, the very one who later proclaimed the great truth of "one mediator between God and men." This paradox in his life cannot be explained unless the Acts 28:28 dispensational change is recognized. After Paul's conversion God declared of him, "**He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before both the nations and their kings, also the sons of Israel**" (Acts 9:15). If ever any man was placed in the middle to transmit the inspired message from God to men, it was this man Paul. Later he insists that his mediatorial position be recognized when he says, "**Inasmuch as I am the apostle (commissioned one) to the nations, I magnify my office**" (Rom. 11: 13). Again Paul puts the Roman Christians in mind of his mediatorial position when he says: "**That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to**

the nations, ministering (acting as a priest of) **the gospel of God, that the offering up of the nations might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit"** (Rom. 15:16).

The truth of "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" provides us with a positive key to the right division of the word of truth. In the Acts period every believing Israelite became a mediator in some manner. Paul's entire ministry in that time was one of receiving the message and transmitting it to men (1 Thess. 2: 13). He spoke the inspired word as it was given by God. All of this ceased at Acts 28:28, and its cessation was confirmed when he announced the present truth of one mediator.

The truth of "one mediator" also provides a criterion, a most positive touchstone, in judging the claims of men today. Any man who in any manner assumes the mediatorial position, no matter how small, is out of the will of God. His assumption is a positive denial of this great truth, and in turn this truth is a denial of his assumption. "Let **God be true, but every man a liar,**" certainly applies here (Rom. 3:4).

The mediatorial position is assumed today by all who claim the gift of healing. "I cannot heal you, it is God that heals you through me," is the proud claim made by these self-appointed mediators. Oral Roberts says that God revealed to him that the power to heal would be in his right hand. By this claim he makes his hand to be the mediator, the transmitter of God's gift of health. His claim is false when judged in the light of the great truth of "one mediator between God and men."

Some may point out that there is no word for "between" in the original, and that it should read "one mediator of God and men." This is true, but it changes it not at all. The idea of "between" is inherent in the Greek word *mesites* and we can best say it in English by the words "mediator between."

Others will point out the fact that Paul continued to receive the inspired word after Acts 28:28. This is also true, but it was not a direct transmission from God through Paul to men as it so often was in the Acts period. It was God transmitting His words through Paul to a written oracle.

The great truth of "one mediator between God and men" tells us why there is no angelic ministry today. The services of angels in behalf of mankind were quite prominent in the Acts period (Acts 1:10; 5:19; 10:3, 12:7,27:23). Angelic ministry came to an end at Acts 28:28. At present the believer is

shut up to Jesus Christ and to Him alone. We must find Him to be all-sufficient and find our completeness in Him (Col. 2: 10).

Why turn to the spirits that peep and mutter and try to find in them the transmission of Gods light and truth? Why turn to the sun, moon, planets, and stars and place them in the mediatorial position as the astrologers are doing today? Why turn to the dead who know not anything (Ecc. 9:5) and seek to place them as transmitters of God's truth to you? All these practices are shown to be false by the truth of one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Let us do nothing which by word or deed denies this great truth.

END Issue SB017