

## HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

## STUDY ELEVEN

## Christ, Our Mediator

*Selected Scriptures*

*I think of it as a bridge. Our Lord Jesus, in His death at Calvary and in His resurrection from the tomb, spanned the chasm between God and humanity. He bridged the chasm with a cross. And for humankind to know and fellowship with holy God, we must cross the bridge. We must come through the Mediator.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**H**ow do you resolve a conflict with someone? When siblings squabble, parents step in to help the children calm down. When athletes assault one another, referees enter the fray to break up the fight. When coworkers clash, managers work with them to reach a consensual resolution. Yes, one of the best ways to resolve a persistent conflict is through the help of a third-party *mediator*.

A mediator acts as an intercessor when two parties lock themselves into an ongoing dispute. He or she listens to both sides, considers potential solutions, and recommends how to best resolve the disagreement. Under most circumstances, both parties bear some burden of guilt. And ideally both parties will admit their wrongdoing and follow the suggestions of the mediator.

There is no wider gulf than that which exists between the holy God and sinful humanity since every person has transgressed God's law. What differentiates this divine dispute from any human struggle, however, is that God is perfect and deserves no blame. How, then, can humanity be reconciled to God?

Jesus Christ—God made flesh—is the only one who can mediate between a holy God and an unholy people and bring peace. This *Searching the Scriptures* study examines the meaning of Jesus as our mediator and how He restores sinners to a healthy and thriving relationship with God.



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INSIGHT FOR LIVING  
MINISTRIES

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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Without Jesus the mediator, sinful humans can have no communion with the holy God. In the days of the kingdom of Israel, God's presence resided in the temple, and the high priest could only enter the room that contained His presence once per year on the Day of Atonement.

Today, however, the Holy Spirit—the very presence of God—fills the hearts of those who trust in Jesus and His sacrifice for sin. The Spirit serves as a powerful conduit between God the Father and His people. The apostle Paul said, “We don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words” (*Romans 8:26*).

Take a moment to pray before you open your Bible. If you can't find the right words, ask the Holy Spirit to pray on your behalf. He delights in interceding for you!



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Despite what many believe, God is not some tyrant who reigns with the iron rod of oppression and exploitation. Instead, Scripture consistently depicts God as a *Father*. Because love is central to His character, God oversees His people with a heart of compassion, kindness, and care—the same kind of attitude a dad has when he cradles his newborn baby.

In Old Testament times, many Jews selfishly believed they alone deserved the title of “God's children” because of their ethnic heritage and national identity. Yet God always intended to reach the whole world with His love. Both Jews and Gentiles are invited to dwell eternally in the household of God as His blessed children.

For these reasons, the apostle Paul said, “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father’” (*Romans 8:15*).

*Abba* is the Aramaic word for “father,” and “father”—*pater* in Greek—represents the same idea. Paul's point is clear. *Anyone* can become a child of the living God. Yet sadly, humans rejected this invitation and ran away from God's open arms. For that reason, God sent His true Son to mediate between Himself—the good Father—and His lost children.



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#### **Observation: The Act of Mediation**

The Greek word translated as “mediator” is *mesites*—a term which paints a picture of one individual standing between two others acting as a relational bridge.

*There are three essential qualities of a mediator. First, the mediator must perfectly represent both parties that are in dispute. Second, the mediator must establish communication between the two sides. Third, the mediator must cultivate a new relationship between the two. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

Central to the argument of the book of Hebrews is Jesus’ role as a mediator. Read [Hebrews 8:1–7](#) and [9:11–15](#), and as you carefully observe the text, take note of what Jesus did in order to mediate between sinful humanity and Holy God.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Who Is the Mediator? Hebrews 8:1–7**

What title did the author use for Jesus in [Hebrews 8:1](#)? According to [8:2–3](#), what actions did someone with that title typically carry out?

In [8:1](#), the author described Jesus as carrying out His role in heaven. In what ways do earthly priests reflect Jesus’ role?



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According to *Hebrews 8:6*, why is Jesus' divine priestly ministry in heaven "far superior" to the ministry of human priests on earth?

### How Does He Mediate? *Hebrews 9:11–15*

According to *Hebrews 9:11–12*, what did Jesus, the great High Priest, secure when He entered the heavenly tabernacle? How did He secure it?

According to *9:13–14*, why is the sacrificial blood of goats and bulls inferior to the blood Jesus willingly sacrificed?



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According to *Hebrews 9:15*, what is the ultimate result of Jesus' act of mediation?

In *Hebrews 12:22–24*, the author concludes his discussion on Jesus' role as mediator by sharing a series of life-altering results. You have come to the city of the living God. You have come to join the assembly of God's children. You have come to God Himself. You have come to belong to the righteous ones who have been perfected. You have come to Jesus, the mediator.



### **Interpretation: The Significance of Mediation**

By calling Jesus a “mediator,” the author of Hebrews used a familiar image to convey the complex idea of Jesus ushering in a new covenant. Theologians often describe the effects of this new covenant by using unfamiliar terms like *redemption*, *reconciliation*, and *propitiation*.

When the blueprints of your Bible study direct you to determine the meaning of a certain term, the best tool for the job is a Bible dictionary. A great free online resource is *Easton's Bible Dictionary* available at BibleGateway.com. Using your *Bible study tools*, look up the following terms, and then discuss how Jesus the mediator accomplishes these things.

*Redemption* (*Ephesians 1:7–14*)



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*Reconciliation* (Colossians 1:19–22)

*Propitiation* (Romans 3:21–26)

*God doesn't need to be reconciled to humanity. Humanity needs to be reconciled to God. We are the ones who have moved away into rebellion. God has not moved.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### **Correlation: Prayer for Those in Need of Mediation**

The apostle Paul had a firsthand encounter with Jesus the mediator. Even though Paul hated Jesus and His followers before his conversion, Jesus came directly to Paul, brought him to God, and then used him to proclaim the message of salvation. And in *1 Timothy 2:1–5*, Paul discussed the practical effects of Jesus' role as the mediator.

In this passage, Paul moves from discussing what Christians should do to why they should do it: “For, there is one God and one mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus” (*1 Timothy 2:5*).



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According to *1 Timothy 2:1–2*, what should believers do in response to this truth?

What is the connection between this action and this truth? See *2:4*.

Someone who experiences peace with God through Christ's act of mediation becomes a minister of peace, bringing a "message of reconciliation" to the world (*2 Corinthians 5:19*). Paul encouraged Timothy to pray for unbelievers and to bring them the message that peace with God is available through Jesus' blood.

How can someone who's received the gift of reconciliation respond today? By praising God with gratitude for Jesus the mediator.



### **Application: The Response to Mediation**

Here are three reasons to be thankful.



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First, *we are grateful we have a mediator because He has brought reconciliation where there was once alienation.* What did your life look like when you experienced this alienation from God? How does your life look different now that you have been reconciled to God through Jesus the mediator?

Second, *we are grateful we have a mediator because He has bridged the distance that once separated us from God.* How does seeing Christ as your mediator affect your day-to-day walk with God?

Third, *we are grateful we have a mediator because He has become our peace.* Jesus did not create peace between God and humankind only but also between individual humans and even between entire people groups (*Ephesians 2:14–22*).

Is there a fellow believer (or group of believers) with whom you've experienced conflict lately? How can seeing Christ as your mediator help you restore your relationship with this person?



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Is there someone in your life who needs to experience peace with God? Write down a prayer for him or her in the space below.

At one point in time, you stood impossibly far from God because of your sin. But when you placed your trust in Jesus the mediator, He stood beside you, took you by the hand, and led you into the arms of the Father. Remember this truth today, and thank God for His abundant mercy.



### A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, write your own prayer of gratitude to God, thanking Him for Jesus Christ, your mediator.

*Father,*

#### ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "*How to Study the Bible for Yourself.*"

