

# *Why Jesus Is Called the “One Mediator”*

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*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . . —1 Timothy 2:5*

Christ the Mediator

1 Timothy 2:5 says that Christ is not only a mediator, but that he is the “one mediator.” What is the meaning of this claim?

## The Universal Problem

God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. He created man and woman and had personal fellowship with them in the garden of Eden. The Bible makes it plain that because of Adam and Eve’s sin, all human beings are sinners. Because God is holy, he cannot be in the presence of sin. So Adam and Eve had to be cast out of God’s presence, separated from God by their sin. This is the universal problem of humanity. How can sinners be reconciled to God?

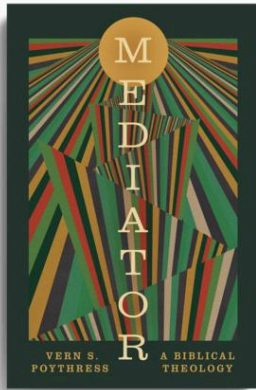
God is a God of justice. And his standards of justice are perfect. He condemns all wrongdoing. No sinful human being can hope to escape God’s condemnation (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). That is, he cannot escape if he stands on his own merits.

But the Bible has a message of salvation. No sinner needs to stand on his own merits. Christ has come into the world and died as a substitute in order to atone for sin so that by believing in him, people may escape this condemnation. He takes the punishment for our sins, and we receive the perfect righteousness of his life and death and resurrection. Our sin is exchanged for his righteousness. This is “the great exchange.” The famous verse [John 3:16](#) says it well: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have *eternal life*.”

## Mediator

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This study explores the mediatorial people, events, and objects that God used throughout the Old Testament to communicate his word



and his power, and explains how these symbols foretell the one perfect mediator, Jesus Christ.

## One Mediator

There is only one way of escape from sin—through the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In a number of declarations, the Bible underlines that there is only one way

Jesus said to him, “I am *the way*, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father *except* through me.” (John 14:6)

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless* you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have *no life* in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my

blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ([John 6:53–54](#))

I am *the door*. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ([John 10:9](#))

And there is salvation in *no one else*, for there is *no other name* under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. ([Acts 4:12](#))

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever *does not have* the Son of God does not have life. ([1 John 5:11–12](#))

The same conclusion about Jesus being the one way follows from the very nature of the human problem. All people, apart from Jesus, are sinners ([Rom. 3:23](#)).

Sin leads to condemnation. Every human being will be condemned unless he has a refuge in Jesus.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is *condemned* already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.  
(John 3:18)

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

We know that the judgment of God *rightly falls* on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?  
(Rom. 2:1–3)



For the wages of sin is *death*, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23)

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the *propitiation for our sins*, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1–2)

For you [Christ the Lamb] were slain, and by your blood you  
*ransomed people* for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation. (Rev. 5:9)

Jesus is the only one—the only way, the only name, the only advocate, the only propitiation, and the only mediator.

# *A mediator is needed because of the problem of sin.*

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## The Need for Reconciliation

A mediator is needed because of the problem of sin. Sin includes not only outward behavior that violates God's commandments (such as the Ten Commandments) but also inward desires and attitudes that *lead* to the outward behavior (Matt. 5:22, 28). Sin produces alienation between God and humanity. God made human beings to be in fellowship with him. But sin has broken that fellowship. Reconciliation is needed.

The need for reconciliation exists on both sides, not merely one side. On the human side, human beings



are turned against God. They are in rebellion against God. They are sinners. This is true even with regard to people who see themselves as very religious. Any religion detached from complete reliance on Christ is manmade religion. Such religion is constructed by human beings who are not in fact serving God but are instead serving themselves and the false gods that their imaginations have constructed:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness *suppress the truth*. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in

their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for *images* resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a *lie* and *worshiped and served the creature* rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ([Rom. 1:18–25](#))

People need to turn away from false religions and serving themselves and turn to God in repentance: “*Repent* and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” ([Acts 2:38](#)). Repentance includes two steps: (a) admit that you are in the wrong and have offended God; (b) turn away

from the wrong, and make a commitment to walk in God's way, with God's help, in the future.

The other side of the picture is that God is alienated from sinful humanity. In his holiness and his justice, he hates sin. As the just Judge of the universe, he is determined to punish all evil according to what it deserves. God's judgment "*rightly* falls on those who practice such things" (Rom. 2:2).

God's wrath hangs over evildoers. If any are to escape, God's wrath must be turned away through appeasement, which is called *propitiation* (1 John 2:2).

The role of Christ as mediator encompasses both aspects of reconciliation. He reconciles God to man by turning away the wrath of God. He reconciles man to God by changing human hearts, enabling them to repent and turn back to God. Both sides are essential if salvation of human beings is actually going to be

accomplished. Jesus Christ is the only one who accomplishes these two aspects of reconciliation.

*This article is adapted from Mediator: A Biblical Theology by Vern S. Poythress.*

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