

(The Names of Jesus) 5. Christ Our Surety

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Transcript

“He is the mediator (or surety) of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” (Heb. 8: 6.) “For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Cor. 1: 20.) “He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” (2 Sam. 23: 5.) Covenants are more common and more sacred in Oriental countries than in our modern life. The Arab chief will guard with his life the person with whom he has made the covenant of bread and salt. God has accommodated Himself to human speech and customs by revealing the glorious plan of mercy to us under the figure of a covenant, and has bound Himself to us by bonds so secure and sacred that they are an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, if we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel.

The Covenant of Redemption

This takes us away back to the ages before the fall and the revelation of God’s mercy. In the counsels of eternity the covenant was made between the Father and the Son. Then it was that, foreseeing the ruin that was to come upon the human race through the awful power of sin, God the Father entered into a covenant with His beloved Son, guaranteeing to Him, on condition that He should assume the liabilities and the nature of the fallen race, to give to Him for them a complete salvation.

On the part of Christ it was necessary that He should take the sinner’s place, that He should stoop from His high and exalted position and become, not only a man, but a despised and rejected man, a man of sorrows, that He should die upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin, that He should bear the taunts and cruelties of man, the pains of death, the assaults and insults of the devil and all his legions, that He should go down into the gloomy regions of the dead, and then that He should come forth, and for ages sit upon the throne of intercession as a merciful High Priest, bearing the burdens of His people, making continual intercession for them, enduring their provocations, infirmities and failures, and guarding them with unceasing love, until His work might be completed in all their lives.

On the Father’s part, He promised on account of the fulfillment of these conditions that He should give eternal life to all that received His Son, and freely forgive and justify them from all their transgressions, and create within them a new heart. He also promised that His Holy Spirit should sanctify and perfect them in holiness, should supply to them all needed grace, power, love, and blessing, should accept them as the sons of God, make them the heirs of His glory and partakers of the divine nature, and should at last raise them from the dead and glorify them with Jesus in the ages to come, with a place of honor and blessing higher than Adam ever knew, higher than angels shall ever possess, and more than compensating for all

the evils and miseries of the fall. This covenant Jesus Christ accepted. "See, I come!" was His glad answer, "I delight to do your will, O my God: yes, your law is within my heart." And so He came, lived, loved, and died, and at last could say, in His closing prayer, as He committed His work to the Father, "I have finished the work that you gave me to do," and on the cross could shout, "It is finished."

Then the Father put His seal upon the finished work by raising Him from the dead, and so declaring forever that the covenant had been fulfilled, the conditions met, and the great redemption completed. Christ's ascension from the tomb was the seal of this; the coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was a second seal; the conversion of every believer since has been a further seal that the covenant is ratified and forever holds fast. Every answer to prayer in the name of Jesus, every blessing that comes to our spiritual life, is an echo from the cross repeating, "It is finished"; and we know that the covenant is fulfilled, and "ordered in all things, and sure." This is the ground of our salvation. It is not because we have a covenant with God, but Jesus has; and we simply accept Him. We come into His covenant, for He could say to the Father, "You have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him"; and then He could add, "Keep through your own name those whom you have given me, that they may be one, as we are."

Our salvation, therefore, is wholly dependent upon our accepting Jesus, and this brings to us all the promises of the covenant that He has ratified and fulfilled. Therefore, "All the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen." Therefore, to the last moment of our life, we have no personal claim upon God for anything. Everything we receive is the infinite mercy of God in Christ and for His sake; and to the last breath of life, we shall never receive anything that is not the pure undeserved mercy of God for His sake. How very simple this makes salvation! How very strong our consummation in Christ! How very sacred our hope! How mighty the anchor that holds us in the storm of temptation, and doubt, and fear!

The Revelation of God's Covenant

The law of Moses was not the covenant of God which He designed to be His permanent bond of union with His people. It was simply a temporary revelation, similar to the covenant of works made at the creation of man, which God knew they would not keep, and which was designed, not to save men, nor to sanctify them, but to reveal to them their sin and to show them the need of a higher covenant of grace and mercy in Christ, even the covenant of grace which Christ has brought in.

The first full revelation of God's covenant of grace was made to Abraham, and the covenant of Abraham still holds good for all believers. This was not intended for the Jewish people exclusively, but it was designed to include all the children of faith, of whom Abraham was the spiritual father. This the apostle clearly teaches us in the epistle to the Galatians, where he tells us that "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you all nations shall be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

The essence of the covenant with Abraham was the promise of the seed, and this was Christ, so that Abraham's covenant was just that Jesus was to come and do all things in accordance with the eternal covenant of redemption, of which we have previously spoken. This covenant Abraham received in the simplest way by naked faith, but he did not do anything to deserve it. He just believed God. God came to him with a revelation of His promise and mercy, and Abraham accepted it like a child and began to act

accordingly, and his life was simply one of trust and trustful obedience, and for this, God blessed him with His friendship and made him father of all who have since been received into that covenant friendship.

Much more fully in the later Scriptures do we find this covenant unfolding. Particularly in the writings of Jeremiah does God reveal to His people, in the darkest hour of their sin and suffering, His future plans of grace and mercy. "Behold the days come," we read in Jeremiah 31:31, "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was an husband to them, says the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, says the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

That this is the covenant of the gospel is perfectly certain from the fact that in the epistle to the Hebrews it is twice quoted by the Holy Ghost as the rule of God's dealings with His people today, and as the bond into which He brings them in Jesus Christ, who is the surety of this better covenant established upon better promises.

The promises of this covenant are very wonderful. The first of them is our sanctification. It is very glorious that the thing that God first undertakes to do is to make and keep us right. Instead of giving us an outward law and compelling us to keep it without power, He promises to put it in our hearts, to make us live it, to make us incorporate it into our being, to enshrine it in our affections, to make it our very nature, until we shall live it and keep it, spontaneously, joyfully, lovingly, and with our whole heart. This is what the Holy Spirit does, and therefore, on the day of Pentecost, the anniversary of the giving of the law, He came to be the inner law of holiness and power in every believer's heart.

Next, He promises to be our God. He next comes to us to be our all-sufficiency for every need. He lets us own Him and possess Him as our God, and use Him in His infinite resources for every need. Further, He promises that we shall know the Lord for ourselves and have His light and guidance, not being dependent upon others to teach, but receiving directly from His will and mind for us. And finally, it includes complete forgiveness and eternal obliteration of all sin and transgression, the blotting out of the past, entire justification, and the treating of His children as if they had not sinned. Beloved, will you take this mighty covenant? It is yours by purchase of the Redeemer's blood; and if you simply accept Jesus, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things? What can you need besides this mighty provision?

The Security of This Covenant

He says, "It is an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." Again He says, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the LORD that has mercy on you."

The reason it is so secure is that it is not dependent upon us at all, but on its great surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we were dependent upon our works in the slightest particular, we should fail and wreck all our prospects; but He has confirmed it and therefore it must stand, and if we simply, stand in Him, trusting and following Him, He will accomplish all its provisions in us and for us. Therefore the apostle says, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the

seed.â€ If it had been of works it could not have been sure; but it is by faith, and faith is nothing but receiving a gift, thanking Him for it, and continuing to trust Him for it.

Again, it is sure because God not only promised it, but He has covenanted it and sworn to it. The very strongest language has been employed to emphasize the absolute security of this great promise of mercy, â€œThat by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.â€ If we simply have fled for refuge and are holding fast to our hope in Christ and to Christ our hope, the anchor must hold amid all the storms of doubt and temptation.

Again, it is secure because it is based on Godâ€™s pure mercy and not upon our deserving. He takes us from the beginning and He holds us to the end as the children of His mercy. It is not merely that He takes us at first in mercy and afterwards treats us according to our deserving, but all the way along we must recognize ourselves as worthless and undeserving, living upon His mercy, and saved and sanctified through His free grace. Therefore our very sanctification, instead of being a merit, is simply a richer mercy, and the apostle says, â€œThey which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.â€

It is so sweet to feel that we are ever lying in the bosom of His mercy, and that we claim His great salvation with the consciousness of our nothingness and worthlessness and yet of our infinite and everlasting life in Christ! Therefore the apostle has said that â€œall the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen.â€ Everything we ever claim in answer to believing prayer must come through His mercy and covenant; but we claim them all for this great reason, â€œfor Jesusâ€™ sake.â€ They all are yes at the beginning, and shall be Amen at the end; for we simply claim them and hold to them for His sake and in His name. He is the surety of our covenant.

Or, shall we say that the yes is Godâ€™s assurance, His repeated word, His second immutable thing, and the Amen is the echo of our faith as it takes Him at His word, and declares it shall be done. Thank God for His secure and everlasting covenant. Thank God that in Christ it covers us. Beloved, let us take it, and let our names be written to it afresh, and cover with it all our future way. Let us cover with it our sins behind, our hearts within, our way before, our hours of temptation and conflict, our hours of suffering and trial, our hours of prayer, our hours of service, our ignorance and helplessness, our perils, and our paths of difficulty all the way down to the tomb, all the way up to His coming. It covers all right up to the throne; and the anchor will hold, until, within the veil all the storms are past and the surges swell no more, and we shall say around the throne, with a great shout, â€œSalvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.â€

Beloved, have you been thinking mostly of your faith and your works and your fidelity to God? Have you not, perhaps, been somewhat under the covenant of Sinai, and therefore weakened and crushed? Oh! hasten to Calvary, and take refuge in the hope set before you in the gospel with a heart humbly and simply yielded to Jesus. Take His great covenant rather than yours, and rest in His faithful and everlasting pledge to carry you through all, and say, â€œWho shall separate us from the love of Christ?â€ It is not the babeâ€™s arms that hold the mother; but the motherâ€™s arms that hold the babe.

Itâ€™s not my love to You, That I delight to tell, But on Your love, O Christ to me, How I delight to dwell!

Ere the creation rose, Or angels sang above, The records of the past disclose, Your everlasting love.

Lord, help me to believe Your wondrous love to me, So shall my heart more fully give, Your own love back to You

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