

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## One God, One Mediator

1 Timothy 2:5-6

**Keywords:** Oneness of God, Redemption, Mediator, ransom.

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### I. Introduction.

- A. Today we will consider two key truths within the Christian faith.
- B. So key that these cannot be rejected and have a person still be a true Christian. Non-negotiable.
- C. But while we speak of these truths, there is a greater issue that Paul is dealing with, the need for evangelism, the need for the constant pushing outward with the gospel, the need to be establishing true churches where no church exists.
- D. Background:
  - 1. The view of Gentiles in the Jewish mind 1 century.
  - 2. From the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*:

The Gentiles were far less sharply differentiated from the Israelites in Old Testament than in New Testament times. Under Old Testament regulations they were simply non-Israelites, not from the stock of Abraham, but they were not hated or despised for that reason, and were to be treated almost on a plane of equality, except certain tribes in Canaan with regard to whom there were special regulations of non-intercourse. The Gentile stranger enjoyed the hospitality of the Israelite who was commanded to love him (Dt 10:19), to sympathize with him, "For ye know the heart of the stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex 23:9 the King James Version). . . . Uriah the Hittite was a trusted warrior of David (2 Sam 11); Ittai the Gittite was captain of David's guard (2 Sam 18:2) . . . They might even possess Israelite slaves (Lev 25:47), and a Gentileservant must not be defrauded of his wage (Dt 24:15). They could inherit in Israel even as late as the exile (Ezek 47:22,23). They were allowed to offer sacrifices in the temple at Jerusalem, as is distinctly affirmed by Josephus (BJ, II, xvii, 2-4; Ant, XI, viii, 5; XIII, viii, 2; XVI, ii, 1; XVIII, v, 3; CAp, II, 5), and it is implied in the Levitical law (Lev 22:25). Prayers and sacrifices were to be offered for Gentile rulers (Jer 29:7; Baruch 1:10,11; Ezr 6:10; 1 Macc 7:33;

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Josephus, BJ, II, x, 4). Gifts might be received from them (2 Macc 5:16; Josephus, Ant, XIII, iii, 4; XVI, vi, 4; BJ, V, xiii, 6; CAp, II, 5).

But as we approach the Christian era the attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles changes, until we find, in New Testament times, the most extreme aversion, scorn and hatred. They were regarded as unclean, with whom it was unlawful to have any friendly intercourse. They were the enemies of God and His people, to whom the knowledge of God was denied unless they became proselytes, and even then they could not, as in ancient times, be admitted to full fellowship. Jews were forbidden to counsel them, and if they asked about Divine things they were to be cursed. All children born of mixed marriages were [illegitimate]. That is what caused the Jews to be so hated by Greeks and Romans, as we have abundant evidence in the writings of Cicero, Seneca and Tacitus. Something of this is reflected in the New Testament (Jn 18:28; Acts 10:28; 11:3).

If we inquire what the reason of this change was we shall find it in the conditions of the exiled Jews, who suffered the bitterest treatment at the hands of their Gentile captors and who, after their return and establishment in Judea, were in constant conflict with neighboring tribes and especially with the Greek rulers of Syria. The fierce persecution of Antiochus IV, who attempted to blot out their religion and Hellenize the Jews, and the desperate struggle for independence, created in them a burning patriotism and zeal for their faith which culminated in the rigid exclusiveness we see in later times.

Pasted from <http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/G/GENTILES/>

3. This mind set by the Jews was still very much present in the early church.
  - a. We have spoken much of this over the past so I won't take much time here.
  - b. But just as an example is in Acts 10, where Gentiles had believed in Jesus, but the Jewish believers would not believe it nor let them be baptized until Peter intervened.
  - c. Almost every New Testament letter deals in one way or another with this controversy.
  - d. Including 1 Timothy.
- E. The desire of God to save all people.
  1. A godly church is a praying church.
  2. Not mindless prayers that reflect a love of leisure, safety and health, but a prayer that is driven by the reality that God desires the salvation of sinners.

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3. We pray because God tells us to pray.
  4. We acknowledge His sovereignty and then we pray that God might bring people to salvation.
  5. Then, after we pray, we consider who God is directing us to bring the gospel of salvation to.
- F. And all of this is developed out of vss 5-6.
- II. Paul's argument for the broadness of God salvation plan—there is only one God.**
- A. The solitariness of God is a key doctrine in the bible.
  - B. The constant cry of Jews was the Shema. And central to that was that there was but one God.
    1. Bringing Israel out of Egypt which was a land filled with gods, YHWH establishes this key declaration that was recited at least twice a day in each household.
    2. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
    3. It created a massive distinction between the Jew and all those who lived around them.
  - C. A key way that the bible speaks of God's solitariness is in the idea of creation.
    1. Jonah 1:4-14 (note that even in Jonah's disobedience, the truth of God goes forth to these pagan, Gentiles).
    2. Isaiah 45 (note the multiple times he speaks of his solitariness, also that he is speaking of a foreign king who was not yet in existence for another 200 years—our God has always loved the Gentiles and has been a missionary God).
    3. Acts 14:15 (context too).
    4. Acts 17:22ff (context too).
  - D. So when Paul reminds the church at Ephesus that there is but one God, there is a lot going on for him.
    1. It is not an exercise in theology.

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2. It is Paul looking out over the land, knowing that there are countless who do not know God, and know that there is no other option available to mankind, but God—the only God, the true God.
- E. This then leads us to how we can know God, who desires our salvation.

Some will describe God as being at the top of the mountain. There are many paths that will ultimately reach the top of that mountain. Some are better and easier than others, but they all ultimately achieve the same purpose.

However, this is not what the bible describes. The good news is not that we need to climb up to God, but that He came down to us. And this is where we come to the person of Jesus.

### **III. Paul's explanation on how God saves—through one mediator, Jesus Christ.**

- A. His mediatorship.
1. Job speaks of this great need to have access to God in chapter 9.
    - a. He is speaking out of his misery, while under the judgment of his friends. He does not know why God has turned His face away from him, but it is a great burden upon his soul.
    - b. He says then, Job 9:32-33 For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together. 33 "There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both.
    - c. In other words, God is not a man, so we cannot simply talk to one another, nor is there someone who can be the arbitrator, the mediator. And so he is at a loss.
  2. When we come to the nation of Israel, under the Old Covenant, we have several examples of those who acted as mediators between the people and God.
    - a. The greatest would be Moses:
      - (1) It was he who stood on the mountain and received and communicated the covenant with God and Israel.
      - (2) It was he who interceded for the nation when they had broken the covenant and were on the precipice of utter destruction.

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- b. But the most common mediator were the priests.
    - (1) Explain their tasks.
    - (2) Explain the Day of Atonement and the High Priest.
  - c. But none of these could be a perfect mediator. Example is the High Priest—could represent the people, but not truly bring them to God.
3. All of this, the bible says, was a picture of something greater—Hebrews 8:1-6 (don't get caught up in the details).
- a. The text says He has obtained a more excellent ministry. He is the mediator of a better covenant which was established on better promises.
  - b. In chapter 9 of Hebrews and verse 15 it says He is the mediator of a new covenant.
  - c. In chapter 12 verse 24, again the mediator of the new covenant.
  - d. So He is the one who takes God and man, restores peace and friendship, brings a new and better covenant into being and opens a true, full relationship between God and man.
  - e. He's taken His stand between the offended God and the offending sinner and He has mediated to bring them together.
4. Our passage says that there is but one mediator.
- a. One God.
  - b. But he does not leave us in the dark, to stumble and strive in vain to find Him.
  - c. He gives us Jesus. And He says that Jesus is the only way to Him.
    - (1) Jesus said it bluntly, John 14:6 “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”
    - (2) Peter speaks before the religious leaders of Jerusalem and says it this way regarding Jesus, Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”

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5. And it is here, as our mediator, that we must see Jesus the **man**.
- B. His humanity.
1. This is the key doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
  2. It is permanent.
    - a. His humanity did not end at his death. He did not shake of the vestiges of humanity at His resurrection.
    - b. He is forevermore God, in human flesh. He continues to stand in intercession as a man on behalf of mankind.
      - (1) John 20:26-28 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"
      - (2) Acts 1:9-11 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."
        - (a) When Jesus was raised from the dead, it was not without His body.
        - (b) It was changed to be sure, but it was still the same person, the same man.
        - (c) And this man ascended into heaven. And in His appointed time, He will return in the same way, as a man.

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- (3) Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.
    - (a) This body we have shall be transformed. It is not lost, but changed.
    - (b) It is what is known as a glorified body, the same, yet different, better, without sin.
- C. His work.
1. A ransom for all—notice the broadness of this statement, for it is important.
  2. Paul says, pray for all, because God is the God of all, and Jesus is the ransom for all.
  3. This speaks of a key aspect of the work of Jesus Christ.
    - a. First of all, it speaks of substitute—*huper* all.
      - (1) He did what we could never do.
      - (2) Reminds me of the first sin, Adam and Eve try to deal with their sin through leaves, God then gives them a substitute.
    - b. Behind all of this is the huge and complex doctrine of atonement that we cannot go into today.
    - c. Suffice it to say that when Jesus Christ offered himself as our substitute many things were accomplished and many doctrines connected to His death were attached to one another.
    - d. Example, Romans 3:24-25 being **justified** as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through **faith**. This was to demonstrate His **righteousness**, because in the **forbearance** of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

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- e. But when we speak of Christ being our ransom we are speaking of one key aspect of the atonement, the triumph over Satan and his works.
  - (1) Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
  - (2) That is where the struggle is, but it is not a losing battle, it is, if you will, a skirmish with a conquered foe.
- f. Think back to the Garden again. What was the promise that God gave Adam and Eve, and all of us?
  - (1) Not that sin would be forgiven, or eternal life.
  - (2) Rather, the first beam of hope that fell upon our father Adam in his time of shame was that the tempter would one day be destroyed.
  - (3) Then, think about the Old Testament in a broad way. Listen to a Patrick Schreiner describe it,

First Adam messed it all up. Then Lamech boasted in his wickedness. Then came righteous Noah, but his sons made fun of his drunk naked body. Then God had to split up the languages because when people get together evil is the outcome. Then came Abraham, who was far from perfect. He lied about his wife, and tried to produce the blessing through Hagar. Then the Israelites broke the covenant right after it had been made by worshiping a golden calf. Then the Israelites did not trust God to go into the promised land. Then they did not conquer everyone as they were told. Then they were corrupted by the surrounding nations and started worshiping false gods. Then Saul trusted in himself.

Then David came and sought after God but had some major slip ups. Then after David the nation was split. Some of the kings of Judah were good, most of Israel were bad. Then God sent them into exile. Then the prophets preached for the people to repent. [then silence for 400 years]

Then Jesus came and he did God's will perfectly.

- (4) We read in John where Jesus is fast approaching the day of his death—John 12:27-32.



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- (5) Note the world-wide significance of what He was about to do.
  - (6) And in all of this, He reflects in vs 31 of the triumph that He is about to have over our archenemy.
  - (7) Hear Paul on this triumph over Satan in Colossians 2:13-15  
And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
  - (8) We are very numb to the power of Satan in this world.
    - (a) Sin and death. They happen so much that it is just the way things are.
    - (b) But hear how the writer of Hebrews sees all of this death—Hebrews 2:14-15.
- D. Here then is where we see our man, Jesus Christ who is the one mediator who can bring us to God.
- 1. He is the one who has conquered our great enemy.
  - 2. We are now simply waiting in expectant hope for that day he returns and finishes the job in totality.
  - 3. But until that time, we are to be bringing the gospel of salvation to those who do not know.

## **IV. Conclusion.**

- A. All that we have considered today is established because of Paul's primary point in vss 1-2, that we are to be praying for all people that they might come to know God the Father through Jesus.
- B. We pray for those in authority that we might have peace so that the gospel can easily go forth.
- C. It is right and proper and it is in keeping with the will of God.

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- D. And lastly, who else will save these people? There is one God and when you pray for the salvation of people throughout the world you reflect that truth.
1. Go throughout the world and you will see temples of every type, religions abounding and deities in every place. There are millions upon millions of deities and idols and gods all over the world designed by men.
  2. But the Scripture here says otherwise. Hear 1 Corinthians 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.
  3. There is only one God, no other exists that will save you from His judgment, no other to hide behind.
  4. Yet God desires your soul and salvation, He has given His Son as the way of salvation.

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## Small Group Questions

- How have you perhaps accepted the solitariness of God intellectually, but not experientially? What are ways a failure to believe this affects missions and evangelism?
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