

God Provides a Mediator

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[0 : 00] Now, it is surprising how often a mediator is required in life. A mediator, as you know, is a go-between. So let's say you've had a big fight with a friend, and you both want to try and make up, become friends again, but it's a bit awkward, you know, another wants to make the first move.

Well, that's when a mediator helps as a go-between between you both. But the one chosen to be that mediator has to be able to represent both sides, right?

They can't play favorites and side one person over the other. And that's why a mediator is an agent. Like, you know, you all know real estate agents.

Who do they represent? The landlord, right? The buyer. Oh, sorry, the seller. They're not interested. Are they in the tenant or the buyer?

No. Another example of a mediator is a translator. Someone who is able to help two parties who would otherwise not be able to understand each other communicate.

[1 : 10] Well, over the last month, we've been studying Leviticus and God's instructions about offerings in detail. These are the things people bring to be in relationship with God.

Burnt offering, fellowship offering, sin offering, each for a different situation, like atoning for sin or to express thanksgiving to God.

But the one thing they had in common is that the people themselves were not allowed to bring these offerings to God. Instead, they brought it to the priest at the tabernacle.

And it's actually the priest that does the handling of the animal or the grain to prepare it correctly to offer to God. The people themselves can't do it.

And that's because there's a gulf between God and humans, which is so great that a mediator is always required. Hence, the priesthood. And just as with the offerings, God now prescribes what's needed.

[2 : 14] First, he chooses who the priests are, Aaron and his sons. But also, he tells them the manner in which they are to be prepared so that the offerings they bring are then acceptable to him.

So we come to the point now in Leviticus where Moses institutes the priesthood. Now, some of these details, if you're with us in our Exodus series, you'll be able to find in chapter 29 and 40 of Exodus.

But whereas the focus in Exodus was on the tabernacle, that's the dwelling place, the furniture, the focus here is on the sacrificial system itself.

If Exodus is about the architecture, Leviticus is about the administration. Thus, a detailed description of the offerings was given to us in chapters 1 to 7 and is now followed by a description of the priesthood.

But first, in chapter 8, in verses 1 to 4, God instructs Moses to gather the people. You see, it was important for the people to witness Aaron and his son's ordination.

[3 : 24] They had to know for sure that these were God's chosen mediators. That as a result, when they then brought their offerings to God, to them, they will be acceptable to God.

So we read in verse 1, And Moses did as the Lord commanded him.

And this phrase, So Moses begins then now by preparing Aaron and his sons.

And again, the other thing to notice is that Aaron and his son, by and large, remain quite passive throughout this process. So here, they are brought to the tabernacle.

They are like the sacrifices. And Moses is the one that is doing stuff, either for them or to them.

First, he washes and clothes Aaron, before then anointing him.

[4 : 42] And you again see that there is a two-step process here, isn't it? First, the washing to make clean, and then the anointing to make holy or consecrated.

So, verse 5, Moses said to the assembly, This is what the Lord has commanded to be done. Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with a robe, and put the ephod on him. He also fastened the ephod with a decorative waistband, which he tied around him. He placed the breast piece on him and put the urim and the thuman in the breast piece. Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head, set the gold plate, the sacred emblem, on the front of it, as the Lord commanded Moses.

Then Moses took the anointing oil, anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar, and all its utensils and the basin with the stand to consecrate them.

He pulled some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. Then he brought Aaron's son forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them, and fastened caps on them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[5 : 55] So if you like, here's a picture of the uniform of both Aaron and the sons. And you can see Aaron's high priestly garments are just a bit more elaborate than his sons.

It's functional in parts like the urim and the thuman, which they put in the breastplate in order for Aaron to discern God's will when the time or the situation demanded it.

But the garments as well are also ceremonial. When you look at them, you can see that Aaron and his sons are being set apart to do a special job for God.

A bit like the soldiers that you see at Buckingham Palace, they put on those ceremonial uniforms, don't they? And when they're dressed like that, you can tell that they're no longer a part of the commoners, were they?

They're not just ordinary citizens at that point. They're not quite royalty, but not just the common people either, are they? They've been set aside, haven't they, to do a job.

[6 : 56] And that's the same with the priests. But the thing is, they're only to wear these garments when they're on their job, when they're doing their work at the Tabernacle.

So, no dressing up for fancy dress party. Not allowed. It's not like Aaron, you know, one day he's on his morning walk and he feels like it. He puts on his turban and goes walking around in it.

No, he's not allowed to do that. They're only meant for when they're doing the job because that's when they're being set apart to do the work. Now, the other thing to notice is that the anointing of oil isn't just on the priests and their garments, but also, did you notice, on the tabernacle and everything in it.

And that's to join the priests with the tabernacle, to show that they were working together in unison as part of this work of drawing the people near to God through the sacrificial system.

Now, none of this means that Aaron and his sons were somehow, because they were set apart, by nature holier than the rest of the people. Because in the next step, we see that Moses still had to make atonement for them.

[8 : 08] Remember, back in verse 1, we saw how along with Aaron and his sons, a bull was brought as well as a sin offering and two rams. One, the first ram, was for the burnt offering, to make atonement as well.

So now, here we read that the sin and the burnt offering are being offered to account for Aaron and his son's sin. So, verse 14 on the next slide. He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his son laid their hands on its head.

Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his fingers, he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He pulled out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar, so he consecrated it to make atonement for it.

Moses also took all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar. But the bull, with his hide and his flesh and his intestines, he burned outside the camp, as the Lord commanded Moses.

Now, all of this, if you go back to the sin offering in chapter 4, you'll see that that's exactly what the Lord had commanded. Likewise, the burnt offering in chapter 1, again here, that's exactly what Moses does.

[9 : 21] He presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Then Moses slaughtered the ram and splashed the blood against the sides of the altar. He cut the ram into pieces and burned the head, the pieces, and the fat.

He washed the internal organs and the legs with water and burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering, presented to the Lord as the Lord commanded Moses.

And if you recall, the burnt offering, that's the one that's wholly burnt, isn't it? Nothing is left to be eaten. But with the second ram, things are a bit different, because this is the ordination offering, which is only applicable to Aaron.

So I'm going to read from verse 22, and then we'll come back again and look at some of the details. So Moses then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.

And Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of his blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses also brought Aaron's son forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet.

[10:36] Then he splashed blood against the side of the altar. After that, he took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat, fat, everything fat, around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, both kidneys, and their fat, and the right thigh.

And from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the Lord, he took one thick lobe, one thick lobe with olive oil mixed in, and one thin lobe, and he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh.

He put all of these in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and they waved them before the Lord as a wave offering. Pretty heavy, I think, but anyway. Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the Lord.

Moses also took the breast, which was his share of the ordination ram, and waved it before the Lord as a wave offering, as the Lord commanded Moses. Now, Aaron here at this point isn't ordained as yet, so there's really no priest.

So Moses is the one here that acts in place of the priest. And if you recall, in the fellowship offering, the one that offers the sacrifice gets to keep a portion of the meat.

[11:51] And so in this case, Moses gets to keep the breast. But unlike the normal fellowship offering, here, there is also blood that is used to dab on Aaron's right ear, lobe, thumb, and toe.

Now, it's right because, sorry for those of you who are left-handed, that's considered the favored side. All right? But it mirrors the sin offering because, if you recall back in the sin offering, the blood was put on the tips of the horns, the extremities of the altar, as it were, and that was to signify that the whole altar was then purified and consecrated.

So same here, the ear lobes, the thumb, and the toe is meant to be the extremities of the body, and that signified that the whole body, Aaron himself, all of him, was now purified and consecrated.

This time, however, it's not just Aaron, but his sons as well. All of them are purified for the job. And then in verse 20, blood and oil are used again together now to complete the consecration.

So Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar, sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments, so he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.

[13:10] So that's, as it were, the whole consecration process. And then to my mind, this is when the fun begins, because Aaron and his sons get to have a sit-down meal, a sign of fellowship with God.

Now remember God's meal was the fat. Remember all the fat that was burned and the food offering? That's been burnt off. That was God's meal, as it were. Moses, he gets to keep the breast. But Aaron and his sons, they can keep everything else, right? And so for the first time we see here that Aaron is no longer passive. He gets to cook.

Moses then said to Aaron and his sons, cook the meat at the entrance to the tent of the meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I was commanded.

Aaron and his sons are to eat it. So it sounds to me like a bit of a barbecue, maybe. Maybe a lamb souvlaki. You get the lamb, put the bread in there, roll it up or whatever.

[14:12] So it's pretty fun, pretty good, yeah. But if, you know, we had chicken chips after this, but lamb supplies. But the thing is that if anything was left over, and this was quite a big piece of meat, then they're told to burn up the rest of the meat and the bread.

So unfortunately, no takeaway. Can't take back and share with their wives at home, you know, or the family members. Everything has to be eaten at the tent, right?

In fact, for this ordination offering, they're not even allowed to leave and go home for seven days. And if you go back to Exodus 29, you'll read all the full details of what happens over the seven days.

But here in verse 33, it summarizes as follows. Do not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days. What has been done today was commanded by the Lord to make atonement for you. You must stay at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and do what the Lord requires, so you will not die.

[15:21] For that is what I have been commanded. So Aaron and his sons did everything the Lord commanded through Moses. Now Exodus, if you read chapter 29, will tell you that what they were meant to do and what they had to do was to offer a sin offering each day and then a burnt offering of lamb, one in the morning and one at night.

And they were to do this for seven days in a row. And here they say, Moses says, that if they leave the tent any time, they will die.

That's pretty dire consequences, isn't it? You know, if you accidentally just forget and, oh, I need to step out for some fresh air or something, you're dead. So the question is, why such dire consequences?

Why was God so strict about this? Well, some have wondered whether the seven days ties in with creation to show that here was a new thing being inaugurated. But I think with the length of time, what it would have reinforced was the extent of their sin and the gulf between them and the holiness that was demanded of the role.

Such utter holiness was required that it took seven days to fully atone and purify for that role. You see, the role required of them was to actually serve as God's representatives, isn't it?

[16:52] They were, as it were, God, you know, deputizing for God as they were receiving the people's offerings for God.

Further, by not going home for seven days, it clearly showed how they are being set apart to do this job. Even to the point of separation from their family and perhaps their wives and having physical intimacy with them for a full seven days.

All of this, I think, gave them time to really just develop the right mindset to get it in their heads just how important this role of mediator, of being God's mediator was.

But by the time the seven days ended, well, they were ready for their commissioning. And so if you look at chapter 9, this is what that is all about.

We don't have time to go through it all line by line, but what happens here, I think, is intended to be proof that what has been done was acceptable to God, that the Lord will show this by appearing to them.

[18:01] So just look quickly at the first few verses, verse 1 of chapter 9. On the eighth day, Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. He said to Aaron, Take a bull calf for your sin offering and a ram for your burnt offering, both without defect, and present them before the Lord.

And say to the Israelites, Take a male goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb, both a year and without defect, for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering, to sacrifice before the Lord.

Together with a grain offering mixed with olive oil. For today, the Lord will appear to you. That's the key phrase at the end, isn't it? You do all this, and today, the Lord will appear to you.

Now, notice, every offering is performed, isn't it? Sins, burnt, fellowship, grain, you name it, Aaron has to do this. And whereas back in chapter 8 and verse 5, if you look, Moses did what the Lord has commanded to be done, here in verse 6, Moses says to Aaron, This is what the Lord has commanded you.

You to do. Can you see the difference? Aaron, now, he's the high priest. And so, for the rest of this chapter, you will read that he's the one that actually performs all the duties of the priest.

[19:17] He's the one that's able to now represent God and also mediate for the people. And it culminates in verse 22. You go to that at the end.

Aaron lifted his hands towards the people. And blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. Moses and Aaron then went into

the tent of meeting.

When they came out, they blessed the people. And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar.

And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell face down. So, what we have is blast off, isn't it? Launch success.

It works. They had done as the Lord has commanded and the Lord has given them the tick of approval. Henceforth, the people can have confidence that when they bring their offerings to the priests, it will be acceptable to the Lord.

[20 : 22] Their sins will be forgiven. God is with them. Now, notice that this was only done once. That actually, you know, the consuming of the burnt offering, that wasn't the fire that was doing it.

It was the presence of the Lord coming out and consuming. So, it only happened once, but it was evidence and a witness by the Lord that what was being done, what had been done, was acceptable and pleasing to Him.

It was confirmation that it's all been set up right and when you bring offerings to me, it will be accepted and your sins will be forgiven. That's the purpose of it.

And, you know, if you think about it, that's a real contrast, isn't it, to the other nations because the nations around them, they were also offering sacrifices, weren't they, at high places or whatever. They were offering to the moon and the sun and idols, who knows who else, sometimes even human sacrifices. But you know what? None of these other nations had any assurance, did they, that what they did actually made any difference?

[21 : 30] Nothing they did guaranteed that it worked. Not so for the Israelites. Israelites. They had God's own witness that this works.

And as for us as Christians, we actually even have greater certainty because as we move from the Old Testament to the New, we have a superior mediator to Aaron.

And we all know who he is, Jesus. And I'll come back to it. But God in Christ also gave us a public tick of approval that Jesus is a pleasing and acceptable mediator for us.

But I want us to be clear. What hasn't changed is that we still need a mediator. Right? Sometimes we wrongly view God as, you know, this benign, cuddly father figure in heaven.

You know, that all we need to do is just say, I love you, God, and just jump up on his lap and everything will be fine. But that's not the God of the Bible. Yes, he's loving in that he does all of this to provide for his people in Leviticus to come near to him.

[22 : 41] But he does it without becoming less holy. And that's why we still need a mediator. Don't ever be fooled into thinking that somehow we're good enough now to be able to try and attempt this all by ourselves without a mediator.

We can't. It doesn't work. But now, instead of having Aaron and his sons who really are just as sinful as us, God has provided a perfect mediator.

And whereas, Aaron had to offer the blood of animals day after day, morning and night, Jesus offers his own blood once for all on the cross.

And, you know, if you turn to Hebrews chapter 8 and 9, don't do it now, but do it in your own time, the writer of Hebrews spells this out clearly, explicitly. So this is not my theory.

This is straight from Hebrews chapter 8 and 9. Thus, Paul says, as well, in our other readings, 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 6, for there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.

[23 : 57] And so, if you read the Gospels, actually, Jesus' appointment as mediator is actually being alluded to. What he did during his life was also publicly witnessed by God, a given public attestation that he was this mediator.

So if you remember, he was baptized, wasn't he? Washed and then anointed by the Holy Spirit.

And all of that occurs not in secret, is it? But in public, in full view of all the people.

Everyone heard the voice from heaven, isn't it? This is my son in whom I am well pleased. Likewise, his death and resurrection were all public spectacles, witnessed.

So that there are witnesses who wrote it down to testify of God's approval of what he's done that we can read now in the Gospels. And if you recall, Matthew even said that on the moment of Jesus' death, what happens?

The curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom, wasn't it? That was God's public witness, wasn't it? That what Jesus has done was pleasing and acceptable to him.

[25 : 16] Now this curtain is not like a small little curtain in your own room like a little tissue. This was a big curtain, right? The rip. You know, every priest that was there on that day, you can tell, they can see exactly what God had done.

It doesn't happen by accident, does it? So, that means when we read God's word and we put our trust in Jesus, we can be confident that we've come to a mediator that God has accepted.

That when we put our trust in him, our sins will be forgiven. That's the assurance and confidence we can have that God has provided for us.

Secondly, as well, although God had to make do with Aaron, just another man and his sons, with the new covenant, God chose to send his own son.

He chose to send his heavenly son from heaven to humble himself to become a mere human for us. And he did it so that Jesus then could be our mediator.

[26 : 28] And that was needed because as I said before, what's a mediator? A mediator has to be able to represent both sides, isn't it? So Jesus can't be our mediator unless he's human.

And he can't be our God's mediator unless he's God. And so in Jesus we have both, God and man, the perfect mediator, the only one that can represent God and humanity.

Last week we sang the song, didn't we? I think I've got it on the slide. Once for all we sang, the first verse said, our God he bridged the great divide to offer us eternal life, sending hope within a man.

Oh his love, it never fails, his love, it never ends. And so this is Christianity's exclusive claim. And I know it's not very popular nowadays, but the Bible's message is very clear.

There is only one mediator between God and man, and it's the man Jesus Christ. No one else can bridge this great divide because only Jesus is sinless and perfect.

[27 : 42] Only he is a man and God who's come from the Father. So please, let us remember that, that there is no other way, that we only have access to God through his Son.

See, when we pray, I know that sometimes we pray in a hurry and then we just say amen at the end, but no, actually, I want to encourage you to pray in Jesus' name, amen. Why? Because when you pray, you're not coming to God by yourself, you're only coming to God through Jesus as your mediator.

He's the one who's paved the way so that we can have confidence that when we pray, God will listen to us. The other thing I think I want to end with, and it's at the bottom of your outline, is to just give you a, I guess this is a secondary point application, but a reflection of what it means for Christians to be the priesthood of all believers.

And that's a really high and holy calling, isn't it? Because through Jesus, we are also given a role of mediating.

between the world and God. After all, we're called ambassadors of God, aren't we? And that's a mediatory role. We are Christ's witnesses. We are his representatives.

[29 : 04] When we pray, we pray for the world, don't we? And if you think about it, if we don't pray for the world, the world without a knowledge of Jesus, they actually can't pray to God, can they, for themselves?

We have to do it on their behalf until they come to faith in Jesus. So I hope you're beginning to see a pattern here. First of all, in chapters 1 to 7, remember with the sacrifices, we know that Jesus is the big atoning sacrifice, right?

He's the one whose work is all-sufficient. We cannot take that away from him. But as Christians, Paul also says in Romans that we are to be living sacrifices.

So we can. We have that role being a sacrifice, not the atoning sacrifice, but living sacrifice, offering our lives holy to God, pleasing to him.

And so likewise here, Jesus is the only great high priest, capital H, capital P. None of us can be that kind of high priest, or even that kind of priest.

[30 : 08] We are not a mediator between God and man. And yet, in our small way, God calls us in Christ to be a kingdom of peace. that is, we can be witnesses to the world on God's behalf.

We can intercede for them to God. Later on, you might also see this, that Jesus, I'll give you a third example, Jesus is the ultimate temple, capital T temple, and yet, if you read in Ephesians, in Christ, we're also God's temple, in whom the spirit dwells.

Can you see that pattern? that Jesus is always the big whatever, sacrifice, priest, temple, but in Christ, as Christians, as the church, we're called to play a part, to share in Christ's work. And that's such a privilege, isn't it? Such a joy, that he invites us to be his ambassadors, that God is making his appeal to the world through us. And so, even as we give thanks to God for Jesus as our great high priest, let's also live up to that calling of being the priesthood together, of being the priesthood of all believers.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your son Jesus, who is our mediator. Thank you that through him we have access to you by his blood. Help us to be fully confident in this and to come to you with joy and assurance each day of our lives.

[31 : 42] Give us the strength to be Christ's witnesses, sharing the great news of his role as our only great high priest. In his name we pray. Amen.

Amen.■■ heb because Wilburn will bring you into the pattern.

In his e' hands Nickel■■■ajo