

The Theology of the Westminster Standards
WCF 8.5–6 – The Atoning Work of the Mediator

“No chapter in the Confession contains as much pertinent to what is central in Christian confession as does Chapter VIII.” – John Murray

I. Review

- A. “Mediator” Defined: The Son of God having assumed a human nature, Christ fulfills all that is necessary as our representative and substitute to secure reconciliation between God and sinners.
1. **1 Tim 2:5** – “... *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom ...*”

B. The Eternal Appointment of the Mediator

It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man ... ” (WCF 8.1)

C. The Divine Son’s Incarnation as the Mediator

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man’s nature ... So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures ... were inseparably joined together in one person ... (WCF 8.2)

- A. “*The Word was not hedged in by the body, nor did His presence in the body prevent His being present elsewhere as well. When He moved His body He did not cease also to direct the universe by His Mind and might ...*” (Athanasius of Alexandria, 4th century AD)

D. The Holy Spirit Equipping and Calling of the Mediator

The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit ... [that] he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator, and surety ... (WCF 8.3)

E. The Willing Work of the Mediator

This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law ... was crucified, and died, was buried, and ... the third day he arose from the dead ... (WCF 8.4)

- a. **Matt 5:17–18** – “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*”
- b. **Matt 12:6, 42** – “*I tell you, something greater than the temple is here ... and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*”

II. The Atoning Work of the Mediator

The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him. (WCF 8.5)

- A. How did Christ “fully satisfy the Father’s justice”? Why is this important for us? (See Rom 3:26)

“The covenant of grace is nothing other than a covenant of works accomplished in Christ, the fulfillment of which is given to us by grace.” (Geerhardus Vos)

- B. How is your conscience affected by knowing that Christ fully satisfied God’s justice? (See Heb 9:14)
- C. According to WCF 8.5, what else did Christ do besides satisfy God’s justice? How does this challenge you to be a peacemaker among God’s people?

III. The Effectiveness of Christ’s Atonement for All Ages

Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent’s head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; being yesterday and today the same, and forever. (WCF 8.6)

- A. Did Old Testament believers receive the effects of Christ’s redemption? Of so, how?
1. **Gal 3:8–9** – *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”*
 2. What are some of the similarities and differences of having faith in Christ before and after the incarnation of Christ?
 3. How should the knowledge of the efficacy of Christ’s atonement give you peace today?

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb 12:19–22)

“In spite of our daily failings, in spite of the accusations of our enemies, he is there to quieten our consciences, to encourage our prayers, and to accept us and our services. He is our advocate and his very appearance in the presence of God (Heb 9:24)—his scarred body in that perfect place—fully pleads our desperate case. He is able to silence our accuser, for in heaven it is a known fact that ‘there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).’ (Chad Van Dixhoorn)