

1 Timothy 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Analysis

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Paul grounds God's universal saving will in two foundational truths. First, "there is one God" (heis theos, εἷς θεός)—monotheism, the bedrock of biblical theology (Deuteronomy 6:4). The numerical "one" emphasizes exclusivity: only one true God exists. This God is Creator of all, Lord of all, and desires the salvation of all because all belong to Him by right of creation.

Second, there is "one mediator between God and men" (heis mesitēs theou kai anthrōpōn, εἷς μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων). A mediator (mesitēs, μεσίτης) is a go-between who reconciles estranged parties, facilitating relationship between them. Sin has created enmity between God and humanity; reconciliation requires mediation. Christ alone fills this role—no other mediator exists or is needed. He uniquely qualifies because He is both fully divine and fully human.

The phrase "the man Christ Jesus" (anthrōpos Christos Iēsous, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς) emphasizes Christ's humanity, essential for His mediatorial work. To represent humanity before God, He must share our nature. To substitute for sinners, He must be human (Hebrews 2:14-17). Yet His humanity doesn't exhaust His identity—He is simultaneously fully God (John 1:1, 14), uniquely positioned to mediate between divine and human, bridging the infinite gap sin created.

Historical Context

The confession of one God distinguished biblical monotheism from pagan polytheism that populated the spiritual realm with countless deities. Greek, Roman, and Eastern religions featured pantheons of gods with various functions—gods of war, harvest, love, etc. Judaism's radical monotheism (and Christianity's continuation of it) insisted on one Creator God who alone deserves worship. This was countercultural in the ancient world and often brought persecution.

The concept of mediator had Old Testament precedent: Moses mediated between God and Israel at Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:5), and the Levitical priesthood mediated through sacrifices. However, these mediators were temporary, limited, and anticipatory. Christ is the final, perfect, permanent mediator who accomplishes what shadows merely symbolized. His once-for-all sacrifice and ongoing intercession (Hebrews 7:25) perfectly reconcile God and humanity.

In Timothy's context, the affirmation of one mediator challenged any teaching suggesting multiple intermediaries between God and people—whether angels, human teachers, or hierarchical priesthood. The false teachers in Ephesus may have promoted speculative systems involving angelic or spiritual intermediaries. Paul insists: Christ alone mediates; no other intermediary is necessary or legitimate.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you graciously but firmly maintain Christ's exclusive mediatorial role in pluralistic contexts?
2. What practical difference does Christ's humanity make in how you relate to Him and approach God through Him?
3. In what ways does your ministry reflect incarnational presence and identification with others rather than mere proclamation?

Interlinear Text

εἷς γὰρ θεοῦ εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἄνθρωπος
one For God one and mediator God and men
G1520 G1063 G2316 G1520 G2532 G3316 G2316 G2532 G444

ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς
men Christ Jesus
G444 G5547 G2424

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 3:20 (References God): Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Hebrews 9:15 (Parallel theme): And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

1 Corinthians 8:6 (References Jesus): But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (References God): Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Hebrews 7:25 (References God): Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 12:24 (References Jesus): And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Isaiah 44:6 (References God): Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

John 1:14 (Parallel theme): And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Romans 10:12 (Parallel theme): For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

John 17:3 (References Jesus): And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.