

Christ Jesus, the only Mediator between God and man

Text: 1 Timothy 2:3-5 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," (1 Timothy 2:3-6 NKJV)

Supporting text: Deuteronomy 18:9-14 "When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer (fortune-teller), or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you." "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you." (Deuteronomy 18:9-14 NKJV)

Theme: Surrender and submit to Christ, because He is the ONLY Mediator between God and us.

Introduction:

Africa is ridden with people attempting to speak to dead ancestors, but it has not been the custom of Africans alone. Most societies before the wake of Christianity believed that the dead had some influence upon the living. Many people would, even today, say of those who are dead "they are watching over us" meaning that they are in some way protecting us through their prayers. It is also the belief among many people in Africa and other primitive tribes in Papua New Guinea and other undeveloped societies that no one has ever seen God. And because they believe no one has seen God and therefore

unapproachable and distant it would be right to approach him through other means and who better than those who have lived a long life on earth and are dead? In African culture, many believe that people who are old are sacred, and therefore the old people who have died can be used to get favor from God. But the question we want to answer today is: **Do dead people actually hear us when we pray?** Can they in **any** way help us? Do we need them to speak to God on our behalf? Should they give us advice about the future? Do dead people have **any** influence on our lives? Can they in **any** way communicate with us through dreams, sicknesses, animals or any other means for that matter?

Roman Catholics believe that Mary the earthly mother of Jesus Christ prays for Christians and that she functions as a mediator between God and believers in Christ. Millions of Catholics across the world believe that Mary prays for believers. But is this belief true? Can Mary hear us from heaven? Do we actually need her to mediate our prayers? When I worked in a Catholic school in Thailand for a year in 2012, I remember the sign on one of the doors at the entrance of one of the classrooms. It read: "Mary pray for us." It shocked me when I saw that and all the statues of Mary and how the Catholic's bow down before them thinking Mary is helping them in this life!!

1. Man's opinion and human tradition do not have the same authority as the Word of God.

-- A good example of this was the Pharisees in Jesus' day. The Pharisees made laws that were not written in the Bible. They had customs that were not commanded by God, but which they taught as commands of God. Like giving tithes of all they owned. They also believed that a person was not allowed to do good and help people on the Sabbath. They also advised ways not to honor their fathers and mothers and not to care for them when they were old saying that they would rather give that money to God. Jesus condemned these man-made laws of the Pharisees as sin (Matthew 15). We also have

traditions from our forefathers. All cultural traditions, however, are not evil. We must understand that in any culture there are traditions that are good and profitable or neutral and there are traditions and customs that are evil and wrong. And it is our responsibility as disciples of Jesus Christ to differentiate between the two. Playing soccer or paying lobola before a man gets married or eating with your hands and not with spoons and knives and forks are not evil. Each culture has its own unique set of customs and manner of dress. These are not necessarily bad. The question remains: Do our traditions and customs line up with God's word? Does God forbid them?

--2 Timothy 3:16 declares: "All of scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, correction, reproof and instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Peter 1:20,21 also says that the prophets of old wrote down the words of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit and that Scripture is not to be interpreted by private interpretation.

--We need to build our lives on the truth of God's word and not on the words and beliefs and traditions of men. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount he finished by saying: "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24-27 NKJV). If we build our lives on the traditions of man, our houses (lives) will be destroyed, but if we build our lives on the words of God, it will stand. Psalm 119:89 states:"Forever O God your word is settled in heaven." Jesus said that He will judge the world at the second coming by the words He has spoken. That is the reason we must take earnest warning and pay close attention to what God commands us in Scripture and what God forbids.

-- If we believe that the Bible is the word of God, which it is, we should let it have the **final** say in what we say, think, feel and do. The Bible

clearly says that the Scriptures are profitable for correction, reproof, and instruction in righteousness. In other words, in the Bible, we find what is right and good in God's sight and what is wrong and what is sinful. We do not need any other revelation or authority to guide us into the truth and into what is right and good.

-- My question to you today is this: what is your supreme authority in life? What your parents advise or your culture or man's ideas or what the Word of God dictates. Who do you ultimately listen to? Yes, your parents and friends and culture can give you good advice, but it will only be good if it lines up with the word of God, with the commands of Scripture and the character of God!

--Let me give you at least six reasons why we can trust the Word of God. We can trust the Word of God and build our lives upon it because:

1) of the prophecies that have been fulfilled in history (Only God knows the future). No other book in history has had so many prophecies that have been fulfilled in history. More than 2000 prophecies of the Bible have already been fulfilled in history. In other words, God predicted certain things to happen, and it happened exactly like He said it would. The reason God can do this is because God controls the future. He does not simply know what is going to happen. He makes things to occur in the future. More than 300 prophecies have been fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2) The Bible repeatedly claims to be the word of God. We see this over and over in the prophetic books: the prophets spoke on God's behalf saying: "Thus says the Lord...." on hundreds of occasions.

3) The Bible have changed people's lives for many centuries. No other book can be compared with the Bible. Jesus still does miracles in our lives. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). God makes people new creatures. God has delivered people from ancestral worship, sexual sins like pornography, homosexuality, and fornication,

thefts, idolatries, for centuries, giving them new hearts and He will do it many more times again.

4) The historical events or Biblical events have been proven to have happened by archeologists. The location where the Israelites crossed the Dead Sea has been discovered. The site of Mount Sinai that was burned by fire where Moses received the Ten Commandments has been discovered. The location where Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed and where Jericho's walls have supernaturally tumbled over has been discovered etc. In other words, the Bible is based on historic events and facts. It's not a fable or just a story.

5) Scientific facts and accuracy. There are scientific facts recorded in the Bible that have only been discovered in the past four centuries by scientist. Only God could have known those things centuries ago. The facts that that earth hangs in space; that the earth is round; that wind blows in circles; that there are uncountable numbers of stars; that the universe is expanding etc. are all recorded and documented in the Bible. People of long ago didn't believe these: that the earth was round or hangs in space or that there were innumerable stars in the sky, or that the wind blows in circles, etc.

6) The Holy Spirit authenticates the Bible as the word of God, when a person reads it. Christians in past centuries called this the "inner witness of the Holy Spirit." When you read the Bible for yourself, the Holy Spirit witnesses in your mind and spirit that this book is of divine origin and that it is no ordinary book. This witness is not like a voice whispering in your ear, but an inner knowing. For example when you taste honey, how do you know it is sweet? You know by tasting it. How do you know that the sun is shining outside? By opening your eyes in the morning you see light by simply perceiving. The same holds to true of the Bible. When you read it, there is a divine glory that shines which is perceived by the eyes of your heart (Ephesians 1:17-19; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6) and so by spiritually seeing the glory of God in the Bible, the Holy Spirit confirms it as the Word of God.

-- These are some reasons why you should build your life on the word of God and trust in it! So let's get back to our text:

2. There is one God and ONE Mediator between God and man.

-- Our text in 1 Timothy 2:3,4 makes it clear that there is only One God and one Mediator between man and God and that man is Christ Jesus! Our text doesn't say that there are many or even more than one mediator that mediates salvation between us and God. 1 Timothy 2:3,4 is very exclusive. This text of course doesn't say we cannot pray for each other and that we don't in a sense mediate God's love and care to people if we are Christians. Christians are God's representatives on earth and live to reflect God's glory on earth, but that doesn't mean we mediate redemption and salvation!! This text says that there is no other Being in the Universe that Mediates salvation and eternal redemption between man and God.

-----**But why is Jesus Christ the only Mediator?**

-- Firstly, Jesus is the only Mediator between us and God because He is God. Jesus is God who became a man, lived a sinless life, died for our sins and rose from the dead. Sinners cannot help us like God can help us. Romans 3:23 says we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All people stand guilty before God because of their sins (Romans 3:19). We are all liable to divine judgement and because of that fact people cannot save us or protect us from the evil one or from sin or ourselves. We need God to protect and save us. We need a blameless Mediator who has enough power and love and righteousness to plead our case for us. We don't need deficient and sinful mediators!! Our ancestors were deficient, sinners, weak and prone to sin. But God is all-powerful and without any sin!

--Jesus is far superior to our ancestors because He is God who never sinned. Hebrews 4:14-16 says: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, **yet without sin**. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV).

--Jesus makes intercession (prays) for believers in heaven. He **always** prays for those who come to Him. He is our high Priest. Hebrews 7:25-27 says: "Therefore He (Jesus) is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:25-27 NKJV). In the Old Testament priests had to come before God and sacrifice animals to make atonement for the sins of God's people. But that is a thing of the past because Jesus Christ was the final sacrifice who made atonement for all the sins of believers. He appeased and set aside the wrath of God forever by one sacrifice! No animal sacrifice is needed anymore!!

--God's word tells us we can go directly to God the Father through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We do not need to be afraid of God. We don't need another mediator, not Mary the mother of Jesus nor any of our forefathers or any dead saints! In the Old Testament God commanded His people to build the temple. In the temple there were the holy place and the holy of holies. Only once a year the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and only after he sprinkled the ark of the covenant with blood from an animal sacrifice. The holy place and the holy of holies in the temple or tabernacle were divided by a curtain. The holy of holies was the most sacred place in Israel. The Bible says that when Jesus died as our sacrifice the curtain between the holy place and the holy of holies was torn in two in the temple in Jerusalem. The implication is that Jesus made a way, through his sacrifice, for us who believe, to enter the most holy place now by his blood. Hebrews 10:19-22 says: "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the **Holiest** by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from

an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:19-22 NKJV).

--What a privilege we have now as people to enter the presence of God through Jesus Christ! We do not need to sacrifice goats and animals to appease God, and we do not need another person to mediate on our behalf as the high priests did in the Old Testament. The curtain has been torn in two, we now have free access to the throne of God and the presence of God, through the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ!

-- Another reason Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man is because He has all the attributes of God. He is omnipresent and omniscient. He is God. He knows what we think, all the time, before we think or pray. And He is everywhere present. Our forefathers, or our pastors, or elders or dead saints do not have the attributes of God: omniscience and omnipresence. They are therefore deficient, inadequate and inferior. Even if they are in heaven, they are not God!!

3. God condemns praying through other mediators to Him.

--Nowhere is it taught in God's word that we should or are allowed to pray through another person to God, dead or alive, other than Jesus. That doesn't mean off-course we cannot ask people to pray for us!! We should, but only if they are genuine Christians. James 5:16 says: “Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.” There is a place to pray for one another as believers in Christ. The Bible makes that very clear. However, there is no command in scripture that allows us to use other mediators to mediate salvation, other than Jesus Christ to go to God. It is the practice of the Roman Catholics that we should pray through Mary, the mother of Jesus, or through a dead saint or a living priest. But nowhere in the Bible will you find praying to Mary or a dead saint being taught as a requirement for your salvation. It is human traditions to do these. In fact, these practices are forbidden by the word of God.

--In African culture, we find the same things. Many people visit sangomas and witchdoctors because these are the practices and

customs among Africans. When many Africans get sick or when they can't find a husband or a wife or when their child gets sick or someone else they know, they go and see a sangoma (inyanga) or herbalist or a witchdoctor to give them "luck" or good fortune. Or before they marry they pray for the blessing of the dead forefathers. My friends, we don't see these things in Scripture! It is not commanded. In fact, it is forbidden! My question is why do some Christians do these things? Who tells them to do these things? Do they get them from the word of God?

-- Even amongst Europeans we get fortunetellers and witches. Going to a fortuneteller or a palm-reader is the same as going to a sangoma. Every society wants people to predict the future for them. Or they read the signs of the stars and think they have a message for them. But why do people go to these people? Is God not powerful enough to help them? Is He not sovereign and in control of everything in the heavens and on the earth? These things are detestable in God's sight.

--God condemns praying to the dead, because they cannot help us and they cannot hear us. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 Jesus tells us that the dead has no more connection with the living. Jesus said there is a great gulf fixed between them, the dead in heaven and in hell and us (the living) so that those who are dead cannot cross over to the living. Those who are dead have no influence on the living, because they are either in heaven with God or in hell bearing the punishment of God. Hebrews 9:27 declares: "man is appointed to die once and then the judgment." After death there is judgment and that is it.

--God condemns the practice of going to witchdoctors, casting spells, going to sangomas, practicing sorcery and praying to the dead. In **Deuteronomy 18:10** God commanded the people of Israel: "**There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer (fortune-teller) or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the**

Lord your God drives them out from before you." God's judgment was on the people in Israel because they practiced these things. In fact, people who do these things are opening themselves to demonic influence. Sangomas and witchdoctors are many times demon-possessed. So what do these words in Deuteronomy 18:10,11 actually mean? Let's explain them one for one.

--"***making your son or daughter pass through the fire***" – this was the practice of the heathen nations who did not know God. They sacrificed their own babies to idols to appease them and win favor from them.

--"***One who practices witchcraft***" Oxford Dictionary: practicing of magic. Or trying to put a curse on someone. You cannot practice magic without the assistance from evil spirits.

-- "***a soothsayer***" "***fortunetellers***" Oxford Dictionary: a prophet. This means a person who tries to predict future events using the Name of God. How many of these people do we not find in our churches today? Some pastors have become "modern day soothsayers" trying to predict future events in other people's lives in the Name of God!! We don't need soothsayers or fortunetellers! We need prophets of God who speak **forth** the word of God! We don't need "prophetic fortunetellers!" We have the word of God! It is sufficient. We should proclaim and declare and expound it!

--"***one who interprets omens***" an omen: "an event regarded as a prophetic sign." This is what a soothsayer does. He tries to interpret events like a thunderstorm or a death in your family and using his own thoughts to say "God says"!! It is evil!

--"***a sorcerer***" a magician; a person who claims or is believed to have magic powers; a witch, a wizard, a warlock, a shaman, a medicine man.

-- "***one who conjures spells***" slight of hand spells. A person who makes tricks to impress other people and to put curses on people.

-- "***a medium***" – a modern day sangoma. They attempt to speak to the dead. They speak in fact to demons. They attempt to get favor from God through them, or they attempt to avert the anger of the ancestors or God or try to avert sickness from a family member.

-- "***a spiritist***" A modern day witchdoctor. A spiritist actually attempts to speak to demons.

-- ***"one who calls up the dead."*** People trying to communicate with the dead.

-- The question remains: is it possible to speak to the dead? With whom are the mediums speaking? My answer is: They speak to familiar spirits. That is demons who disguise themselves as people and deceive people to have control over them.

Leviticus 19:31 says: **'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.'** (Leviticus 19:31 NKJV)

Leviticus 20:6 says: **"And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people** (Leviticus 20:6 NKJV). When King Saul in the Old Testament went to a medium to help him 1 Samuel 28:3, judgment came upon Saul, because he consulted a medium and disobeyed God.

--God drove the people out from the land of Canaan because they practiced these things and for the same reason God made Judah and Israel to be led into captivity into the Assyrian and Babylonian empires centuries after. It is an abomination to try to make contact with the dead or to use a medium to do it on your behalf. God's judgment came upon those nations who attempted to make contact with demons, or the dead and God's judgment will come upon you if you attempt to make contact with the dead or use a sangoma or medium to do it on your behalf.

--People who pray to dead forefathers open themselves up to the curse and judgment of God (1 Samuel 28:3-10).

-- You may say to me, but where in the New Testament does it say that you may not speak to dead people or ask for their help. In Galatians 5:19, 20 witchcraft is mentioned as a work of the flesh and no one who practices it shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Sorcery is forbidden in the book of Revelation. Those who practice sorcery shall not enter heaven (Revelation 21:8).

--But the Old Testament laws that forbid these things still apply to us as it is part of Gods moral law. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the

ceremonial and sacrificial laws of God, but he didn't come to set aside the moral law of God, even though He fulfilled it by His blameless life. We are still to have no other gods before us and to honor our father and mother and not speak to the dead etc. !!

-- To attempt to speak to the dead and get their protection and help and favor is to commit idolatry. God is strong enough, powerful enough and sufficient enough to help, protect and forgive you of all your sins and to give you eternal peace. God is omnipresent! He hears the cry of those in need! Jesus conquered Satan and all evil spirits when He died and rose from the dead. He is forever victorious over his enemies! To go to other sources for protection from evil and sin and misfortune is to say to God, "You are not enough. I need another "god". It is a serious sin!

4.Surrender and submit to Jesus Christ because He is the only Mediator between God and us.

--God wants you to believe in the truth. That is what our text, 1 Timothy 3:4 declares. Gods will of command is that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth!

--The truth is: ancestral worship and praying to the dead is idolatry. It is putting man in the place of God. Human beings cannot and have not the same power and wisdom as God. Salvation and eternal security and safety belongs to God alone. We should go to Him for guidance, salvation, protection, peace and forgiveness! When people die, they will be either in heaven or hell for all eternity. The truth is the dead has no contact with the living. They are either in hell or heaven and unable to make contact with us. They are not responsible for what will happen to us. Every person is responsible for his own life on earth.

--The truth is: God wants us to be saved from our fear of sin and our fear of evil spirits. 1 Timothy 2:4

--God's desire is that we confess all our sins to Him, repent from them and believe in Him today. Isaiah 55:6,7 commands: **"Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let**

him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." We have all sinned and are in desperate need of God's forgiveness. Whether you trusted in your ancestors, whether your trust is in money or in your own abilities, we all need God's help, protection, and intercession. We need Jesus Christ to plead our cause before God.

--We need the only High Priest and Mediator there is, who is all-powerful, everywhere present, all-knowing, all-sufficient and all-glorious to mediate our salvation: Jesus Christ

-- Jesus stated: you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." John 8:32 and "When the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed" John 8:38

Jesus Christ is God	Other mediators are human or demonic
Jesus Christ is all-powerful	-- other mediators' power are limited
Jesus Christ is all-knowing	-- other mediators' knowledge is limited
Jesus Christ is omnipresent	other mediators are present in one place
Jesus Christ is Savior	--- other mediators are sinful (they need the Savior)

Jesus Christ is all-sufficient	-- other mediators are deficient
Jesus Christ is infinite	--- Other mediators are finite (limited)
Jesus Christ is Judge	--- Other mediators will be judged by Jesus
Jesus Christ is pure and holy	-Other mediators are sinful and impure
Jesus Christ is infinitely glorious	---- Other mediators are human

There is no contest between Christ and other so-called mediators, mediators who presume to help, protect, advise and provide

Flee therefore to Christ Jesus and be forever saved!!