

Who Is Your Mediator?

The Two-Class Covenant, and the Verse It Cannot Survive

by Richard Whiting

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I. The Question at the Door

Ask a Jehovah's Witness at your door whether Jesus is his mediator, and he will almost certainly say yes—and be surprised to learn that his organization's official answer is no. In print, and for decades, the Watchtower has taught that Christ's mediatorship operates only toward the “anointed”—the 144,000 who make up spiritual Israel and are parties to the new covenant. The millions of ordinary Witnesses, the “other sheep,” are not in that covenant. They benefit from it at one remove, as associates, the way neighbors benefit from a contract signed by someone else. This essay documents the doctrine from the Society's own publications, tests it against the Scriptures it appeals to, and asks what it costs the person holding the magazines.

II. The Doctrine in the Society's Own Words

The teaching should be heard in its own words. *Insight on the Scriptures*, under “Mediator,” draws the boundary exactly: Christ’s “mediatorship operates solely toward those in the new covenant”—the congregation of spiritual Israel, whose finally sealed number Revelation 7 gives as 144,000. Those not of that number are described as people who pray in Jesus’ name and exercise faith in the ransom, approaching God through Christ as High Priest and Seed of Abraham—beneficiaries of the covenant, not parties to it.¹

The Watchtower of April 1, 1979 said it without hedging: “Likewise, the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ, is not the Mediator between Jehovah God and all mankind. He is the Mediator between his heavenly Father, Jehovah God, and the nation of spiritual Israel, which is limited to only 144,000 members.” The logic rests on the type: Moses mediated the Law covenant for Israel alone; the Greater Moses mediates the new covenant for the new Israel alone. From this single boundary the rest of the two-class system unfolds: only the anointed are born again; only the anointed partake at the Memorial, since the cup is the covenant and the covenant is theirs; and the other sheep receive their blessings through the anointed, as resident foreigners once shared the blessings of Israel’s covenant from outside it.²

III. The Verse Says the Opposite

Now set the doctrine beside the verse every discussion of mediation must face. “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time” (1 Tim. 2:5–6). The sentence is a single breath, and its two halves interpret each other: the relative clause defines the mediator by the “all” he ransomed. The scope of the mediation is the scope of the ransom.

The Watchtower accepts the second half at full width—the ransom is for all, and the other sheep are saved by faith in it; the New World Translation itself reads “a corresponding ransom for all.” But a ransom paid for me by a mediator who does not mediate for me is a sentence Paul did not write and could not have meant. And the context forbids the restriction twice more: prayers are to be made “for all men” (v. 1) because God “desires all men to be saved” (v. 4). To confine the mediator to 144,000, “men” must mean a heavenly subset in verse 5 and the whole human race in verses 1, 4, and 6—four verses apart, in one paragraph, with no signal of a change. The doctrine does not survive its own proof-text read aloud.³

IV. Whose Sins Does the New Covenant Forgive?

Follow the covenant next, because its content decides the question. Jeremiah's promise—which the letter to the Hebrews quotes at length as the very covenant Christ mediates—climaxes in one benefit: “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12; 10:17). Forgiveness of sins is not a side effect of the new covenant. It is the covenant's content, the thing the blood seals.⁴

So the two-class doctrine faces a dilemma with no exit. If the other sheep are outside the covenant, they are outside its promise of forgiveness—and no one's sins are forgiven by association, as though a neighbor's contract could clear my debts. If instead their sins are forgiven through Christ's blood—as the Watchtower rightly teaches—then they are receiving precisely the covenant blessing, through precisely the covenant's blood; and receiving the covenant's defining gift, on the covenant's own terms, through the covenant's own sacrifice, is what being in a covenant means. “Beneficiary” turns out to be a label for people who receive everything the covenant gives while being told they are not in it—a distinction with a name but no content.

V. One Cup, Offered to All

The Lord's own words at the table draw the circle. “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20)—and in Matthew's account the command attached to that cup is “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:27–28). After the resurrection the commission extends the table with the teaching: make disciples of all nations, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20)—the Supper included, as Paul's delivery of it to the whole Corinthian congregation confirms (1 Cor. 11:23–26).⁵

Scripture knows nothing of a class of disciples commanded to attend and forbidden to partake. Yet that is the annual Memorial: the emblems passed hand to hand through millions of believers, tasted by almost none. The scene is examined on its own page of this site, and the 144,000 arithmetic beneath it on another; what this essay adds is the covenant's own grammar. The cup is the covenant. To hand a believer the cup and forbid him to drink is to tell him, liturgically, every year, that the new covenant is not his.⁶

VI. Children, or Friends of the Family?

The New Testament's covenant blessings come as a single garment: born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5), adopted as sons who cry “Abba! Father!” (Rom. 8:15), heirs with Christ, sealed with the Spirit. The two-class system must cut the garment in two—new birth, adoption, and inheritance for the anointed; friendship and association for everyone else.

But Jesus made the new birth the door of the kingdom for anyone who would even see it (John 3:3). John's Gospel gives "power to become children of God" to "all who received him, who believed in his name" (John 1:12)—a warrant exactly as wide as faith. And Paul tells entire congregations, without sorting them: "in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith" (Gal. 3:26). Nothing in the text rations sonship to a heavenly class. The rationing comes from the system, and the system exists to serve the two-destiny arithmetic, not the other way around.⁷

VII. The Courtyard Rebuilt

Step back and the shape of the whole becomes visible. A priestly class within; a crowd without; access to God at one remove, through human intermediaries who alone stand in the covenant—this is not a new arrangement. It is the architecture of the old covenant, the very structure the letter to the Hebrews announces has ended: by one offering Christ opened "the new and living way," and the exhortation that follows is addressed to all the brethren together—"let us draw near" (Heb. 10:19–22). The dividing wall is down (Eph. 2:14–18). A doctrine that rebuilds it inside the congregation—one Christian in a thousand within the covenant, the rest in the courtyard—has not enlarged the hope of salvation. It has reversed the direction of the gospel.⁸

And it concentrates something else besides grace. If the anointed are the covenant class, the channel through whom the others' blessings flow, then the Governing Body—presented as the representative of that class—holds not only doctrinal authority but soteriological position: the ordinary Witness's standing with God runs through the organization as surely as his instruction does. The authority claims examined elsewhere on this site are the administrative face of the doctrine examined here; the two-class covenant is what makes the arrangement feel not merely organizational but necessary. Remove the restriction on the Mediator, and the channel loses its tollgate.⁹

VIII. Whose Covenant Is in That Cup?

A closing word to the Witness reader, who is owed directness. Nothing in this essay mocked your hope of paradise or doubted your sincerity. The question is narrower and more personal than any argued so far on this site: when your Lord lifted the cup and said "this is the new covenant in my blood," was he speaking of a covenant that includes you, or one you may only watch? Your own organization has answered: you are not in it, and he is not your mediator. Paul answers otherwise—one mediator, between God and men, a ransom for all, prayers for all, salvation desired for all. The Catholic Church, whatever else divides her from you, says to every baptized believer what those verses say: one mediator, for you; one covenant, sealed for you; one cup, and it is yours. Carry one

question to your next Memorial, and answer it with the Bible open on your knee: whose covenant is in that cup?

Endnotes

1. *Insight on the Scriptures* (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1988), vol. 2, “Mediator”; the sealed number from Revelation 7:4–8. On the Watchtower Online Library. Scripture quotations in this essay are from the Revised Standard Version.
2. *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1979, p. 31 (“Questions From Readers”); cf. November 15, 1979. On Memorial partaking and the two hopes, *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* (2005), ch. 8 and Appendix.
3. 1 Timothy 2:1–6.
4. Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 8:6–13; 10:16–18.
5. Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:27–28; 28:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.
6. See the essays accompanying “Memorial or Eucharist?” and “One Flock or Two?” on this site.
7. John 3:3–5; Romans 8:14–17; John 1:12; Galatians 3:26–29.
8. Hebrews 10:19–22; Ephesians 2:14–18.
9. The authority claims are examined in the essay accompanying “By What Authority?” on this site.

For Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church, on “And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord”—the one Lord and mediator of all. Free online at https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_one/section_two/chapter_two/article_2.html.

One Flock or Two?—the 144,000 and the “other sheep.” Free online at https://richwhiting.com/warp/one_flock/one_flock.php.

Memorial or Eucharist?—the yearly scene of the passed cup. Free online at <https://richwhiting.com/warp/memorial/memorial.php>.

By What Authority?—the anointed class’s claim to be the channel. Free online at <https://richwhiting.com/warp/authority/authority.php>.

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“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.” — 1 Timothy 2:5–6

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.*

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A Note on Authority

This essay represents the author’s articulation of *the Catholic response to the Watchtower’s two-class covenant and restricted mediatorship*, drawing on Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Church Fathers, and the major theological tradition. It is offered as a personal defense, not as an official statement of the Church’s teaching. Where this defense is fortunate enough to align with the magisterial teaching of the Church, the credit belongs to the tradition that formed it. Where it falls short, the responsibility is the author’s alone.