

The Present Work of Christ; What It Is

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches about the present work of Jesus Christ in Glory, emphasizing His role as the Mediator between God and man, the upholder of all things, and the Head of the Church. Jesus, as the Man in Glory, controls the universe and the heavenly hosts, including the unseen spirits and angels, who serve His providential dealings with His people on earth. His work as the Mediator and Advocate is fully revealed in the Bible, where He intercedes for His people, knows them personally, and restores them when they sin, ensuring their salvation and sanctification.

Description

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Transcript

the-present-work-of-christ-what-it-is.pdf" txtUrl: "/pdf-text/text/a/arno-clemens-gaebelein---the-present-work-of-christ-what-it-is.txt" thumbnailUrl: "" hasTranscript: true oneLinerSummary: "The present work of Christ refers to His ongoing activities in heaven as the Mediator, Priest, and Advocate for believers, providing comfort, guidance, and restoration." sermonType: "teaching" topics: - name: "Christology" slug: "christology" - name: "Mediation" slug: "mediation" bibleRefs: - text: "Psalm 19:1" bookId: "PSA" chapter: "19" verse: "1" outline: - heading: "The Man in Glory" - heading: "The Lord Knoweth His Own" - heading: "The Present Work of Christ" - heading: "The Priesthood of Christ" - heading: "The Advocacy of Christ" - heading: "The Work of Christ for the Church" - heading: "Head of the church" - heading: "Guidance and direction of the church" - heading: "Supply of gifts to the church" faq: - q: "What is the present work of Christ?" a: "The present work of Christ refers to His ongoing activities in heaven as the Mediator, Priest, and Advocate for believers." - q: "How does Christ know His own?" a: "Christ knows His own personally and intimately, and He is aware of their circumstances, trials, and temptations." - q: "What is the significance of Christ's intercession?" a: "Christ's intercession is a vital part of His present work, as He makes propitiation for the sins of the people and intercedes for believers in their struggles and temptations." - q: "How does Christ's advocacy work?" a: "Christ's advocacy involves restoration of believers, rebuke of Satan's accusations, and uninterrupted

work as Priest and Advocate." - q: "What is the relationship between Christ and the church?" a: "Christ is the Head of the church, guiding and directing it, and supplying it with gifts." quotes: - "The Lord knoweth them that are His." - "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." - "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." applicationPoints: - "Christ's intercession is a vital part of His present work, and we can trust in His ability to help us in our struggles and temptations." - "Christ's advocacy involves restoration of believers, rebuke of Satan's accusations, and uninterrupted work as Priest and Advocate." - "As believers, we are part of Christ's body, the church, and He guides and directs us, supplying us with gifts to fulfill our roles." keywords: - "Present work of Christ" - "Mediator" - "Priest" - "Advocate" - "Intercession" - "Propitiation" - "Restoration" - "Rebuke of Satan" - "Church" - "Head of the church" - "Guidance and direction" - "Gifts" ---

As Man in Glory, crowned with glory and honor, He is occupied in a present work. He is in the presence of God as the Heir of all things. He is the upholder of all and all things consist by Him. This great universe, with its innumerable stars and suns, is under His control; it belongs to Him. How man ever since the fall attempts to penetrate the mysterious depths of the universe! Scientists with their glasses scan the heavens and try to regain the knowledge of creation, which was lost by the fall of man. Their discoveries astonish us. How marvellous the heavens are! How they declare the glory of God and the firmament His handiwork! Often too has the search of fallen man into the depths of the universe demonstrated the truth of God given by revelation in His Word. And yet the great questions we ask of astronomers concerning this great universe are answered with "we do not know." Some day in the twinkling of an eye we shall know more about this great universe than all the knowledge gained by fallen man. But this universe rests in the hands of the Man in Glory. He is the great central sun around which all revolves. We do not know if there is any work to be done in connection with the great bodies which we see in the great space about us. We do not know what changes go on there. But we do know that all is in His hands. All is under His control.

We must also think of the angels, the heavenly hosts. He has been made, after His passion, "so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:4). What may go on in this great world above, the world of unseen spirits, who can tell? But they are all under His control. How He sends them forth and uses them in His providential dealings with His people on earth, and how He restrains through these unseen agencies the wrath of the enemy and the evil work of demons, we do not know fully. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). This and much else, though not fully revealed, and hidden from us, belongs also to His present work. We mention this that we might have a higher estimate of our Lord and realize anew what a mighty and wonderful Lord we have.

But there is a present work of our Lord in Glory, which is fully revealed in His Word.

In the first place, He is the Mediator between God and man and being preached as such to the world, He exercises His office as the Mediator throughout this present age (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Besides this Mediatorship, He has a service which concerns those for whom He died and who, by personal faith have accepted Him as their Saviour.

The Lord Knoweth His Own.

"The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). What a blessed thought of comfort and cheer it is, which should forever banish fear and unbelief! The Lord, the One seated there in the Holiest, knows us

personally. He knew us before we ever were in existence. He saw us before the foundation of the world. He knew all our vileness and the depths of degradation. He knew us as we wandered in our sins. His loving eyes followed us then. He sought us in His love and brought us to Himself. He gave us His life and dwells in us. Each believing sinner, saved by grace, is one Spirit with the Lord. "I know my sheep." He calleth each by name, like a Shepherd calleth his own sheep. Again He said "I know them." What a comfort it should be to our hearts, that He knows each of us by name. He knows our circumstances, trials, difficulties and temptations. He knows our conflicts and our tears. "He knoweth the way that I take."

It is very precious! In the 32 Psalm we find the comforting word for one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, "I will guide thee with mine eye." ... That eye up yonder, that eye which measures the depths of the universe, which follows every planet, that eye which neither sleeps nor slumbers, that all-seeing eye rests upon us. He is occupied with each. The millions of His people who have lived and died, who passed through life and are now at home with Him, were each individually the objects of His care. His loving eye was upon the multitudes of martyrs. He knew and watched that poor tortured saint, who was cast with broken bones into a dungeon to starve to death. His power and love rested upon those who were burned or cast before the wild animals. For each He served and worked. And so He does still. Oh, the preciousness that each believer is under the loving care of the Man in Glory, the object of His love. Let us turn to a few Scriptures which reveal this fact.

Living For Us.

In Romans 5:10 we read: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

What life is meant by which we are saved? Some have applied it to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ before His death on the cross, as if that righteous life, that perfect life, had any saving power in it for us. Hence the teaching that the righteousness of His life is imputed unto us. This is wrong. The life, of which this verse speaks, is the life which He lives now in the Presence of God. When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. And now being reconciled, much more are we saved by His life. By His life there, because He is there, we are saved and kept down here.

Another passage in Romans may be linked with this. Romans 8:34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The risen Christ is at the right hand of God and maketh intercession for us. However, not in the Epistle to the Romans is this present work of Christ as the intercessor of His redeemed people revealed, but in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we read in the ninth chapter, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb.9:24).

And again in chapter 7:24,25: "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 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."

But notice all this is not spoken of those who are unsaved and live in sin. The unsaved who are not yet Christ's, have no share in all this. For the unsaved world the Lord is not the intercessor. He declared this truth first of all in His high-priestly prayer, when He said, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world" (John

17:9).

This was also foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The High Priest in His garments of Beauty and Glory had upon his shoulders two onyx stones, and upon his breast a breastplate with twelve stones. Upon both the onyx stones upon the shoulder and the twelve stones on the breastplate there were names engraven. But these were not the names of the Egyptians, the Jebusites, the Amorites or the Hittites, but the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Our high priest in the highest heaven carries His own upon His shoulders, which typify His power and upon His bosom He carrieth them; the bosom tells us of His love. We are the objects of the power and the love of Him who appears in the presence of God for us. The fact that the names of the Israelites were engraven upon these precious stones also has a meaning. If they had been written there, they might be blotted out. They were engraven and could never be erased. It tells out the blessed truth of our security.

His Priesthood.

Two other passages in Hebrews reveal some of the blessed details of the present priestly work of the Lord in our behalf. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:17,18). "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:14-16).

The first passage tells of the propitiation He made for the sins of the people. He suffered, being tempted, and this is the basis of His intercessory service. The passage from the fourth chapter tells us how He was fitted while on earth for this great office work. While down here He was tempted in all points as we are, apart from sin. From sin within He could never be tempted for no sin was in Him. He has gone through the trials, the difficulties and sufferings a man, who depends on God is subject to while in this world, with the exception of sin. He has known while on earth every possible difficulty. Now He can be the merciful and faithful high priest and as such enter into all our sorrows and trials. He sympathizes with us in all our conflicts and difficulties down here. However, He does not intercede for the flesh -- He has no sympathy with sin. By His gracious and unbroken intercession in the sanctuary, He upholds us individually in the path down here. He gives strength to endure. If it were not for that intercession, we all would fall by the way. How often God's people fear troubles and difficulties, losses and bereavements, which might possibly come. What, if this favored child should be taken from me, how could I stand it? Or, if I should lose her whom I love? Or my health should fail? Perhaps my business and income stops, how could I ever stand it? Often that which we fear comes upon us. That loved one is taken and is put into a grave. Health fails and the income stops; instead of plenty there is want. But with the trial, with the loss, there comes such a strength to bear it all, and more than that, real joy and songs of praise. It is because the great High Priest lives and intercedes. He knows all about it and in the tenderness of His love and the might of His power, He takes us in His loving arms whenever trials and troubles come upon us. At all times under all circumstances He is our representative before God and thinks of us.

And so it is with our temptations and our warfare with the wicked spirits. The enemy we have is most powerful and intelligent. He knows how to spread his nets. His wiles are most subtle. If Satan had his way

he would overthrow and destroy completely the people of God on earth. If it depended on our strength, we would soon fall. But He knows. His eyes watch the enemy as they watch us. Peter's case illustrates this perfectly. He saw the old serpent as he moved on his way towards Peter. He knew the cunning plan Satan had conceived to ensnare Peter. In Judas he had entered and taken complete possession of the disciple, who was never born again. He planned to fell Peter completely and rush him afterwards into despair. But Satan did not reckon with Peter's Lord. Before the plan could ever be carried out, the Lord had prayed for Peter that his faith may not fail. And though Peter denied the Lord and fell, the Lord's gracious intercession kept him through it all. And this is still the case with us. He prays for us before that foe can ever approach us and thus we can be victorious in the conflict and should we stumble and fall, as it is so often the case, then He is the great shepherd "who restoreth my soul." How much we owe to this blessed, precious present work of our Lord in Glory no one knows. What blessed revelation there will come to us when we shall know as we are known, when we look back over our lives and behold what the intercession of the Lord Jesus accomplished for us and all the Saints of God! We have a great high priest who is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.

Another phase of His priestly present work is recorded in Heb. 13:15. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." He presents our spiritual sacrifices to God. Our worship, our praise and our prayers we address to God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, are all imperfect, but as they are presented to God by Him, they are acceptable unto God and delight the heart of God for that reason.

His Advocacy.

But there is a second aspect of His work in Glory in the presence of God for His people. He is our advocate with the Father. Some Christians think that the Priesthood and Advocacy of Christ are one and the same. They are not. His advocacy is that which restores us. In the first Epistle of John we read of this phase of His present work. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1).

In the preceding chapter our wonderful privilege as the children of God is made known. We are to be in fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Fellowship with the Father is when we delight ourselves in His blessed Son, who is His delight, when we share the Father's own thoughts about Him. The Son knoweth the Father and He has revealed Him and brought us into His own relationship with the Father. Fellowship with His Son is to enjoy this relationship with the Father. The condition for the enjoyment of this privilege in reality, fellowship with the Father and with His Son is, that we walk in the light as He is in the light. These blessed things were written that we sin not. Sin cannot rob us of our salvation, but it mars the enjoyment of that fellowship. The standard is that we sin not, and if we live in constant enjoyment of that blessed fellowship into which grace has brought us, we do not sin. But how often this is not the case. We fall into sin. Then the blessed revelation is given: "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." How grateful we ought to be that it does not say: If any man repent. The Lord's intercession as advocate is independent of our repentance or of our asking Him to do this for us. It is the exercise of grace in His own loving heart toward us to restore our souls, to put us back into the place where we can enjoy His fellowship. The moment the believer sins on earth, He acts as the Advocate above. The Holy Spirit then likewise acts in that He applies the Word to convict and cleanse. The cleansing is by the water, the Word, and not a second time by the blood. Then follows confession from our side and the restoration is effected. Also notice that it does not say "we have an Advocate with God," but "with the Father." It is a family matter, and the Father is a Father who can do

nothing but love those whom He has brought to Himself through His Son. The conception that the Father is angry with His sinning child on earth, and that the Son of God by His pleadings inclines the heart of God to be merciful, is an unscriptural one.

Another reason why He acts thus as Advocate is Satan, the accuser of the brethren. He still has access into the presence of God. The day will come when He is cast out of heaven, but that day will not come until the church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:9-10).

Because Satan accuses God's people before God day and night, the Advocate is there to rebuke him. Every attack by accusation of the sinning children of God, the Lord Jesus Christ meets with the fact that He made propitiation; He died for their sins.

He Shall not Fail nor be Discouraged.

And this work of Himself as our Priest, the merciful and faithful High Priest and our Advocate goes on up yonder uninterruptedly. In Isaiah we find a word which speaks of Him, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." Well may we apply this to His present work as Priest and Advocate of His own. As Priest He will never fail.

He will never fail in being about His own, in keeping them and sustaining them, in sending them help from the sanctuary in time of need. As Advocate He will not be discouraged. The same old failures in our lives, which humble us and break us down, but He continues in this service in behalf of His poor sinning people. Some Christians do not believe in the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, that a child of God in possession of eternal life can never be lost. They think it depends on their walk and service. If one of His own could ever be lost again, if even the weakest, the most imperfect could be snatched out of His hands, His present work would be a failure as well as His finished work on the cross. But read the great high priestly prayer He left for us in John 17. There He prays the Father, who heareth Him always, that His own may be kept.

His Work for the Church.

Another aspect of His present work is what He does for His church. We can but briefly indicate what this means.

He is in glory the Head of the church. The church is His body, the fullness of Him, that filleth all in all.

Every believing sinner is a member in that body. The risen Lord Himself adds new members to that body. He puts each member into the body as it pleases Him. Each member is guided and directed by Himself. He supplies this body with gifts.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto

the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

Thus He builds up from the Glory His own body. Some day that body will be complete. Then we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That will be when we see Him as He is. Then His present work in behalf of His own, His coheirs, will be finished. Brought home from this wilderness to the Father's house -- safe home -- there will be no need any longer for His power and love to sustain us. No more tears will then be shed, no more wounds of pain and sorrow to be soothed, no more help is needed for the time of need; all that is passed. Nor does He then need to exercise His office as Advocate, for we are delivered forever from the presence of sin and sanctified wholly body, soul and spirit. Sinning is then an impossibility. What a happy, glorious day that will be!

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