

SERMON TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD

AT TOPEKA, KANSAS ON MARCH 7, 2021

## CHRIST IS THE SURETY OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE

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“Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire.” (2 Samuel 23:1-7).

So, I am determined to talk about 2 Samuel 23:5: “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.” In that connection I want to talk about the suretyship of Christ in this everlasting covenant of grace. (But before I do I want to tell you one of my favorite stories about “the sons of Belial,” or worthless fellows.)

One way in which Christ has acted the part of a Mediator between God and his elect, is by engaging on their behalf, to do and suffer whatever the law and justice of God required, to make satisfaction for their sins. The Greek word for "surety" εγγυος, (phonetically: en goo os) is used but once throughout the whole New Testament, at Hebrews 7:22, and there of Christ; where he is said to be made, or become, "the Surety of a better testament," or covenant. And the word is derived either from εγγυος, "near," because a surety draws nigh to one on the behalf of another, and lays himself under obligation to him for that other; thus Christ drew nigh to his Father, and became a Surety to him for them; hence those words, "I will cause him to draw near,

and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?" Jeremiah 30:21.

Rather, you may prefer, it is derived from *χουον*, which signifies the "hand;" because when one becomes a Surety, he either puts something into the hand of another for security, or more likely puts his hand into the hand of another, or strikes hands with him; a rite much used in suretyship, and is often put for it, and used as synonymous. See, for example Job 17:3: "Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?" For another see Proverbs 6:1: "My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger." See also Proverbs 17:18 and Proverbs 22:26.

The Hebrew word for a "surety," in the Old Testament, *ברע*, is found in such places as Genesis 43:9: "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." The same word in other Old Testament verses has the signification of "mixing," because, as in suretyship persons are so mixed among themselves, and joined together, that the one is thereby bound to the other. See for example: Ezra 9:2: "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have *mingled* themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass."

Christ, as a Surety, drew nigh to his Father on the behalf of the elect, struck hands with him, and gave him firm security for them, and put himself in their place and stead, and engaged to perform everything for them that should be required of him on their behalf. God bless that "mixing."

In considering this matter, in examining in what sense Christ is the Surety of the everlasting covenant of grace, it is important to note that he is not the Surety for his Father, to his elect people, guaranteeing that the promises made by the Father in covenant shall be fulfilled. Although the promises were made to Christ, and are Yea and Amen in him; and many of them, such as respect him, were fulfilled in him, and by him, as the minister of the circumcision (2 Corinthians 1:20; Romans 15:8). Yet, such is the faithfulness of God that has promised (1 Peter 4:19), that there needs no surety for him; his faithfulness is sufficient (Psalm 36:5; Psalm 119:90; Lamentations 3:23), which he will not suffer to fail (Psalm 89:33: "Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail"). He is God, that

cannot lie (Titus 1:2), nor deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13); there is no danger of his breaking his word, and not fulfilling his promise (Psalm 77:8), which may be depended on, and strongly confided in. If his word was not enough, he has joined his oath to it; so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation, in believing the fulfilment of every promise made. (Hebrews 6:18: “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”) Though Christ is equal with his Father, and has all the perfections of Deity in him, yet he is not greater than he; and he cannot give a greater security, than the word and oath of God, or that will lay a firmer foundation for confidence in the promises of God.

Christ is not surety in the sense that we use it in the law today. For example, if you intend to lend money or resources to another, and you are not sure that they can pay, you will often ask for a co-signer or surety. In most serious criminal cases, the Judge releases the accused from jail on the condition that they obtain a “professional surety” to guarantee their appearance at trial; failing which that surety must pay thousands of dollars to the Court, the amount depending on the history of their appearances in court as ordered and their risk to society (including the severity of the accusations against you). Thereby such a surety is jointly engaged with a debtor, for the payment of a debt; or is so bound for another, as that other remains under obligation. The surety says I will pay the debt if the true debtor cannot or does not pay. Thereby the creditor has greater security that the debt will be paid, but the debtor is still obligated to pay the debt. In Kansas, those agreements to become obligated for the debts of another in the event the true debtor cannot pay, must be in writing because the surety gets nothing (or a very small percentage as a “premium” in the case of a professional surety) for his promise to pay or his payment of the debt in the event the actual debtor fails in payment. The debt is not removed from the person who has a surety. He is under obligation to pay it, if able; and it is first to be demanded of him, or should his surety desert his suretyship, and not make satisfaction. And, if the surety ends up paying, all professional sureties have an agreement to, and will aggressively collect what they had to pay on your behalf (and universally this is secured by them on the front end of the transaction, by getting ample security from co-signers on behalf of the debtor to cover their risk). But now none of these things are to be supposed in Christ’s suretyship.

Christ is not a mere accessory to the obligation of his people for payment of their debts; he and they are not engaged in one joint bond for payment; he has taken their whole debt upon himself, as the apostle Paul did in the case of Onesimus (The Book of Philemon in the New Testament of the Bible); and our Lord Jesus Christ has paid it off, and entirely discharged it alone.

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Nor was any such condition made in his suretyship engagements for his people, that they should pay if they were able; for God the Father, to whom Christ became a Surety, knew, and he himself, the Surety, knew full well, when this suretyship was entered into, that they (his elect people) were not able to pay, and never would be. In fact, that it was impossible for them, in their circumstances, ever to pay. For having failed in their obedience to God, all after acts of obedience, though ever so perfect, could not make amends, or satisfy for that disobedience, since to those God has a prior right (e.g., Luke 17:10); and their failure in obedience, brings upon them a debt of punishment, which is everlasting, and *ad infinitum*; and, if left on them, would be ever paying, and never paid. *Ad infinitum*: without end or limit. Luke 7:40-42: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" Matthew 18:24-25: "And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." Matthew 5:26: "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Nor is such a supposition to be made, that Christ might desert his suretyship, or withdraw himself from it. Though Christ was not obliged to become a Surety, he voluntarily engaged in this work, and cheerfully took it on him; yet when he had undertaken it, he could not relinquish it, without being guilty of disobedience to his Father, and of unfaithfulness to his own engagements. From the instant he became a Surety for his people, he became a Servant to his Father, and he called and reckoned him as such; "Thou art my servant, O Israel;" "behold my servant whom I uphold" (Isaiah 49:3, "Israel" as the head and representative of the whole of the Israel of God; Isaiah 42:1). He laid his commands upon him, both to obey his law, and lay down

his life for his people, both which he undertook to do, and did perform; or otherwise he could not have had the character of God's righteous Servant, nor would have been faithful to him that appointed him, nor to himself. See Isaiah 53:10-11: "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Hebrews 3:1-2: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house."

Nor is it to be supposed, that Christ might not fulfil his suretyship engagements, or not make satisfaction; since if he did not, it must be either for lack of will, or lack of power. We know that is not of his will, since the persons he became a surety for, he bore the strongest affection to. These were the sons of men, in whom was all his delight from everlasting (Proverbs 8:31); and such his love to them, that nothing whatever could separate from it (Romans 8:35-39). Nor could it be for want of power, since, as a divine Person, he is the mighty God (Psalm 50:1; Isaiah 9:6; Habakkuk 1:12); as Mediator, has all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18); as man, was made strong by the Lord for this work (Genesis 49:24), and had a power, as such, to lay down his life, and take it up again (John 10:18). And should he have deserted his suretyship, and not have made the promised and expected satisfaction (payment), the purposes of God, respecting the salvation of the elect by Christ, must have been frustrated, and made null and void; the council of peace held concerning it would have been without effect; the covenant of grace abolished; the salvation of God's people not obtained, and the glory of God, of his grace, mercy, truth, and faithfulness lost. Christ himself must have been deprived of his mediatorial glory. Any and all of these scenarios too shocking to be admitted or to entertain such notions of even the possibility pursuant to the simplest knowledge of the Bible as Christ has revealed himself therein.

Christ is in such sense truly a Surety; one that promises out and out, absolutely engages to pay another's debt; takes another's obligation, and transfers it to himself, and by this act dissolves the former obligation, and enters into a new one. So that the

obligation no longer lies on the principal debtor, but he is set free, and the Surety is under the obligation, as if he were the principal debtor, or the guilty person.

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Christ, by his suretyship, has taken the whole debt of his people upon himself, and made himself solely responsible for it; he has dissolved thereby their obligation to payment or punishment, having taken it on himself; so that they were by it entirely set free from the very instant he became their Surety. For from that point forward, God the Father looked for payment of his debt, and expected satisfaction from Christ, and let the sinners go free, for whom he engaged; he was gracious, and said, "deliver" them "from going down to the pit; I have found a Ransom," Job 33:24. Just as when the apostle Paul became a surety for Onesimus; supposing him accepted as such by Philemon, Onesimus was set free; the apostle taking the whole debt and wrong upon himself, and promising to repay and make satisfaction, and which he wrote and signed with his own hand. (The Book of Philemon in the New Testament of the Bible). Yet, this is no mere human from whom we have for our help.

Psalm 89:19: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." Gill says: "[T]his "mighty" One is the Messiah, the mighty God, the mighty Man, the mighty Mediator and Redeemer; who was mighty to save to the uttermost, and was every way fit for and equal to the work of a Redeemer; for which reason the Lord "laid help" upon him, not for himself; for this is not to be understood of help promised or given him as man and Mediator: this is after spoken of, #Ps 89:21, but for others; and so the Targum adds, "for my people": laying it on him is no other than ordering or enjoining him, to which he agreed, to help his people out of that miserable condition they were fallen into, through Adam's transgression, and their own sins, out of which they could not help themselves: the work assigned to Christ, and devolved on him in council and covenant, was to help them out of this estate by price and power; and to help them on in their way to heaven, through all difficulties, trials, and temptations; and to help them to heaven itself, and introduce them there: and being thus laid upon him, according to his Father's will and purpose, and with his own consent, it was found in him, and exercised by him, #Ho 13:9 ["O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help"]."

When Christ became a Surety for his people, their sins were no longer imputed to them, but were imputed to Christ, were placed to his account, and he became

responsible for them. It was not, at the time of his sufferings and death, that God laid on him first the iniquities of his people, and they were imputed and reckoned to him, and he accounted them as his own, by which it appears, that obligation to payment of debts, or punishment, did not lie upon the principal debtor, or guilty person, but upon Christ, who became their Surety. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Isaiah 53:6: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Psalm 40:12: “For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.” Psalm 69:5: “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

The Old Testament saints were really freed from guilt, condemnation, and death, before the actual payment was made by Christ their Surety. They expressed that they had as full an application of the pardon of their sins, and as clear a view of their interest in Christ’s righteousness, as their justifying righteousness before God, as any of the New Testament saints ever had. The one was saved by the grace of Christ as the other; yes, they were received into heaven, and actually glorified, before the suretyship engagements of Christ were fulfilled. So that it is plain, that the obligation to payment and punishment lay not on those for whom Christ became a Surety, but was transferred from them to him at the council of peace when the agreement was entered into between the triune God; unless this absurdity can be admitted, that such an obligation lay on glorified saints, till the actual payment was made by Christ, and they in a state of “limbo” all the while. Get thee behind me, Mr. Catholic! (Luke 4:8). Isaiah 43:25: “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Isaiah 45:24-25: “Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” Acts 15:11: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” Hebrews 11:13-16: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers

and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

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It is certain that the Old Testament saints had knowledge of the suretyship engagements of Christ, and prayed and pleaded for the application of the benefits of them to them, and which they enjoyed. See, e.g., Job 19:25: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.” Psalm 119:122: “Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.” Isaiah 38:14: “Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.” “Undertake” is the same Hebrew word as “Surety.” Such was the dignity of Christ’s person, and his known faithfulness to his engagements, and the eternity of them, that with God these acts by Christ as promised in the covenant of grace were always present with him, and in full view, as if actually already performed. Before and after made no difference in the sight of God, with whom a thousand years are as one day (2 Peter 3:8), and eternity itself as but a moment (Isaiah 57:15). And now, from this suretyship of Christ arise both the imputation of sin to Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness to his people; this is the ground and foundation of both, and on which the priestly office of Christ stands, and in virtue of which it is exercised. 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Hebrews 7:20-22: “And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

There is a twofold debt paid by Christ, as the Surety of his people. The one is a debt of obedience to the law of God; this he engaged to do, when he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will"; “thy law is within my heart:” and accordingly he was made under the law, and yielded perfect obedience to it, by which his people are made righteous. The other is a debt of punishment, incurred through failure of obedience in them; the curse of the law he has endured, the penalty of it, death. By paying both these debts, the whole righteousness of the law is fulfilled in his people, considered in him their



Head and Surety. Isaiah 42:21: "The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." The lessons of this verse is at least one separate sermon all to its self.

Another thing which Christ as a Surety for his people engaged in was to bring all the elect safe to glory. This may be illustrated by Judah's suretyship for Benjamin; thus expressed to his father, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever," Genesis 43:9. And thus Christ became a Surety to his divine Father, for his beloved Benjamin, the chosen of God, and precious. Christ asked them of his Father, and they were given into his hands, to be preserved by him, that none of them might be lost (John 10:27-30); he agreed that they should be required of his hand, every one of them, and pass under the hand of him that "tellet them" (Psalm 147:4), and their whole number appear complete, and none missing (John 17:12). And this will be the case, when he shall say, "Lo, I, and the children which God hath given me," Hebrews 2:13. Christ engaged to "bring" his people to his Father; this was the work proposed to him, and which he agreed to do; "to bring Jacob again to him, and to restore the preserved of Israel." Isaiah 49:5-6: "And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

His work is to recover the lost sheep (Jeremiah 50:6; Matthew 10:6 and 15:24), to ransom them out of the hands of him that was stronger than they (Jeremiah 31:11); to redeem them from all iniquity (Titus 2:14), and from the law (Galatian 4:5), its curse (Galatians 3:13) and condemnation (Romans 8:1), and save them with an everlasting salvation (Isaiah 45:17), and bring them safe to his Father in heaven (John 14:1-3; Jude 1:24; Revelation 5:11-13). And because he laid himself under obligation to do all this; therefore he says, "them also I must bring," into his fold here, and into heaven and glory hereafter, John 10:16, and "set" them "before" his Father. This he did at his death, when all the elect were gathered together in one Head, even in him, to present them in the body of his flesh, through death, holy, unblameable, and unproveable in the sight of God (Colossians 1:22). And as he now does in heaven,

advocating, where he appears in the presence of God for them (Hebrews 9:24), and they are set down in heavenly places in him (Ephesians 1:3, 1:20 and 2:6), as their Head and Surety. And he will finish at the last day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24), the mediatorial kingdom, the kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9), complete and perfect (Colossians 4:12), as he received them; and having first presented them to himself, as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27), and he will present them faultless before the presence of his Father's glory, with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24). And he will be so far from bearing any blame, having so fully discharged his suretyship engagements, that he will appear without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9:28); even without sin imputed, without the wrong done by his people put on his account; all being fully answered for according to this everlasting covenant of grace, "which is ordered in all things, and sure." (2 Samuel 23:5)

Revelation 22:20-21: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

I love you. Amen.