

RECONCILIATION TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST

Colossians 1:19-23

Paul's main emphasis in writing this epistle is to proclaim the *exaltation* and *preeminence of Christ* in order to *challenge* and *counter* the *heresy* that denied the *deity* and *incarnation* of Jesus as the **Christ**...as **Messiah**...in the **Colossian Church**.

In the first chapter, **Paul** mentions *several unique characteristics* of **Christ** that *qualify Him* to have **supremacy** and **sovereignty**.

The fact that Christ is:

- The image of the invisible God.
- The Firstborn over creation.
- The Creator of the universe.
- Head of the Church.
- The Firstborn from the dead.
- The fullness of God.
- The Reconciler of all things.

No comparable listing of so many *characteristics* of Christ and His *deity* are found in any other passage of scripture. Christ is the *supreme Sovereign* of the universe!

The word **reconcile** is one of the *most significant* and *descriptive terms* in Scripture. It is one of *five key words* used in the New Testament to *describe the richness of salvation* in Christ: **justification**...**redemption** ...**forgiveness**...**reconciliation**...**adoption**.

In **JUSTIFICATION**...the sinner stands before God *guilty* and *condemned*...but is declared *righteous* (**Romans 8:33**).

In **REDEMPTION**...the sinner stands before God as a *slave*...but is granted his *freedom*...*pardoned* (**Romans 6:18-22**).

In **FORGIVENESS**...the sinner stands before God as a *debtor*...but the debt is *paid* and *absolved* (**Ephesians 1:7**).

In **RECONCILIATION**...the sinner stands before God as an *enemy*... but becomes a *friend* (**II Corinthians 5:18-20**).

In **ADOPTION**...the sinner stands before God as a *stranger*...but is made a *son* (**Ephesians 1:5**).

I. THE PLAN OF RECONCILIATION: (vs. 19-20)...

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him (vs. 19)...This is one of the most powerful descriptions of Christ's *deity* in all the New Testament.

Fullness...Gk. *pleroma*, means *completeness*. This is a key word used though out the **Book of Colossians**. It's a **noun** that is used in a wide range of things...including the **fullness of God** (**Ephesians 3:19**)...the **fullness of time** (**Galatians 4:4**)...full of grace (**John 1:16**).

This *full* and *complete* **Deity** is said to **dwell in Christ**.

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”

~Colossians 2:9-10

And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven (vs. 20)...

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

~Romans 5:8

To reconcile...Gk. *katallasso*, means *to change* or *exchange*... specifically it speaks of *a change in a relationship*. It describes people changing from being at *enmity* (*hostility...antagonism...hatred*) with each other to being at *peace*. (ie. between a *husband* and a *wife*...between *God* and *man*...etc.).

In Scripture it refers to God's *reconciling* of *sinners* to Himself...

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

~Romans 5:9-11

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

~II Corinthians 5:17-21

Reconciliation is the *third great achievement* of Jesus’ *sacrificial death* on Calvary...

- **Redemption**...(Romans 3:24; I Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:17). **Redemption** pertains to *sin*. It describes Christ’s *saving work* as an act of *buying back* sinners out of their *bondage to sin* and *Satan* through the payment of a *ransom*.
- **Propitiation**...(Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; I John 4:10). **Propitiation** pertains to *God*. A *sacrifice* that *bears God’s wrath* to the end...and in so doing *changes God’s wrath toward us to favor*.
- **Reconciliation**...(Romans 5:10-11; II Corinthians 5:18-20; Colossians 1:22). **Reconciliation** is for *people*.

Reconciliation is the *removal of enmity* that stands between *people* and *God*. **Reconciliation** is the basis of *restored fellowship* between *people* and *God*.

It’s important to note that *people are reconciled to God (to Himself)* ...not that *God is reconciled to people*. It is *man who has left God* and *needs to be brought back to Him* (the *Prodigal Son*...**Luke 15**).

All things...refers to the *good angels (things in heaven)* and *redeemed people (things on earth)*...and all of *creation*.

Whether things on earth or things in heaven...The **Fall** resulted not only in the *damning and fatal fall of man*, but it also affected the *entire creation*. *Sin destroyed the perfect harmony* between *creatures*, and between *all creation* and the **Creator**. We live on a *cursed earth* in a *cursed world*.

Christ’s *sacrificial death* on the *cross* achieved **reconciliation** for *man*. Ultimately God will establish the **New Heaven** and the **New Earth** restoring *creation*. Through Christ, God made provision for the *world* (**John 3:16**).

II. THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION: (vs. 21)

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds (vs. 21)...

Reconciliation is necessary because people are **alienated** (*cut off...estranged...separated*) from God.

“Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ...strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

~Ephesians 2:12-13

“Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.”

~Ephesians 4:18

Before conversion, the **Colossians** (as are *all unbelievers*) were *enemies (hostile)* to God in their *minds* and *hearts*...as well as in their *behavior (evil deeds)*.

Sin begins in the *heart* (**Matthew 5:27-28**) and then *manifest itself* in one’s *actions* and *behavior* (**Galatians 5:19**).

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

~John 3:19-20

III. THE MEANS OF RECONCILIATION: (vs. 20b, 22a)

These *two verses* sum up the *specific means* whereby Christ *effected/achieved* our reconciliation with God.

Having made peace through the blood of His cross (vs. 20b)...His **atonement**.

This means to cause God’s *enemies to become, by faith*, His *friends* and His *children* (**Ephesians 2:11-19**).

“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

~Hebrews 9:22

Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death (vs. 22a)...

“By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

~Hebrews 10:10

In order to *redeem* mankind...Christ Himself must be *truly human*... thus Christ's real *physical body* and *death* were necessary for man's *salvation* (**John 1:29**...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!)

Salvation is *free*...but it isn't *cheap*. *Salvation* is a *gift* and *costs us nothing*...but it *cost God everything*. It cost God *His Son* and it cost Jesus *His life*. The wages of sin is *death*...and *eternal separation from God*. God's gift is *eternal life*...*eternal union of the soul with God* (**Romans 6:23**). Jesus actually *became sin* on our behalf and *took sin's penalty* for everyone who has ever lived or will ever live to *Calvary* with Him. Jesus was separated from God the Father (**Matthew 27: 46**) so that we do not have to be. This is the heart of the *atonement*.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF RECONCILIATION: (vs. 22b)

God's ultimate goal in *reconciliation* is to present His elect *holy* and *pure* before Him.

In order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach (vs. 22b)...

Holy...Gk. *hagios*, means *to be separated from sin and set apart to God*.

Christians are *without blemish* and *without fault* when they are in Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.”

~Ephesians 1:3-5

“...Prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world”

~Philippians 2:15

Blameless...Gk. *amomos*, means *without blemish*. It speaks of *sacrificial animals*. It's used to refer to Christ as the *spotless Lamb of God*. In reference to believers it gives us *blameless character*.

Beyond reproach...Gk. *anegkletos*, goes beyond **blameless**...it means not only that we are *without blemish*, but also that *no one can bring a charge against us*.

By the merits of Jesus Christ, believers are *free from every accusation* that the enemy accuses them of. **In Christ the accused are unaccused**...and **the condemned are freed**. No charge can stick against those whom Christ has **reconciled**.

V. THE RESULT OF RECONCILIATION: (vs. 23)

If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister (vs. 23)...

Reconciliation in Christ comes only by an *abiding faith*. The Bible repeatedly testifies that those who are *truly reconciled* will *continue in the faith*. The **Colossians** had a *solid faith*...**firmly established and steadfast**...*grounded* like a building on a *strong foundation*. **Paul didn't doubt** that they would *continue* even though *heresy* was challenging them.

In fact, **Paul** spoke of **the hope**...*that confident and anxious expectation*...which **the gospel of reconciliation** provided, not only to them but also the whole world...**the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven**.

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.”

~Romans 1:8

LESSON WE CAN LEARN:

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

~II Corinthians 5:17-21

- **Reconciliation transforms us...we are a new creature in Christ.**
Positionally we have a *new birth*...a *new beginning*. That’s why Paul in each of his Epistles separated them into *two sections*. *Positionally* who one is in Christ...and then *practically*...how you are to act.
- **Every believer has been given the ministry of proclaiming the message of reconciliation.** Be faithful.
- **As a child of God...we are sent forth as His ambassador into a fallen and lost world bearing unbelievable good news.** *Live* it. *Function* as an ambassador. *Represent* the One who has sent you. **Never underestimate the power of the Gospel.**