

RECONCILIATION

Introduction: The word reconciliation means to change. Man's alienation from God is changed by the death of Christ so that He is able to be saved. It is like a bridge between sinful man and God. Not only are different forms of the word, "reconcile," used to describe this but also the word, "peace," is used to describe this concept. Reconciliation is to be understood 3 ways in scripture:

1. Provisional reconciliation

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:19 - God in or by Christ reconciled the world to Himself. This provision extended to not counting people's sins against them. This did not save everyone but it did make everyone savable. It is like building a bridge between a holy God and every human being. It does not insure that everyone will cross that bridge but that it is available to be crossed if the person responds in faith.
- b. Colossians 1:20,21 - Christ's bloodshed death provided reconciliation for everything on the earth and in heaven. The word "peace" is also used to communicate this concept. It was necessary because we were enemies in our minds by our evil behavior. It extended to everything on earth because the entire creation on earth was under God's curse Genesis 3:14-19; Romans 8:20-23). Things in heaven required a provision for reconciliation as well because of the sin of Satan and his angels (Job 15:15; 25:5) and that provision was Christ and His bloodshed death (Hebrews 9:22-24). The complete restoration of the heavens and the earth will be at the end of Christ's 1000 year kingdom (Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13) where there will no longer be any curse (Revelation 22:3).
- c. Romans 5:10 - This speaks of Christ's death as the provision for our reconciliation.

2. Personal reconciliation

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:18 - When we trust Christ for salvation, we are said to be reconciled to God (see also Romans 5:1). Using our bridge illustration, this aspect of reconciliation differs from provisional reconciliation. In provisional reconciliation God makes a bridge from Himself to every human. In personal reconciliation this speaks of the responsibility on the part of human to cross that bridge by placing their trust in Christ. As a result, we have a ministry and message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18,19) to give to the unsaved.
- b. Romans 5:10,11 - Because we have received reconciliation by faith in Christ (John 1:12) we will be saved from sin's presence by Christ's resurrection life. Again the word "peace" also is used to explain this aspect of reconciliation.

- c. Colossians 1:22,23 - Our present reconciliation by faith in Christ assures us that in the future, we will be presented to God as holy, without blemish, and free from accusation. While we are living the evidence that we have received Christ's reconciliation will be to continue to trust Him for salvation and not be moved away from our expectation regarding the future.
- d. Ephesians 2:14-17 - Personal reconciliation also involved the fact that the Old Testament law is abolished by Christ's death on the cross and that Jewish and Gentile believers are part of the same body on an equal basis with one another. Again the term "peace" is used to describe this concept.

3. Practical reconciliation

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:20 - Paul urges His readers, who are believers, to be reconciled to God. They have not lost their salvation but have lost their fellowship with God. The word "peace" also describes this concept (Colossians 3:15). It is one thing to be saved and have peace with God as in Romans 5:1 and it is another thing to let this peace rule in our hearts to which we were called in one body as in Colossians 3:15.
- b. Matthew 5:23,24 - God makes it clear that He expects believers to be reconciled with one another before approaching Him with any offering or service. The word "peace" is used to describe this concept in being reconciled or at peace with believers (Romans 14:16-19) or unbelievers (Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18).