

Colossians 1:20-23
Reconciliation

1

Introduction

Paul defends Christ's sufficiency to reconcile men to God by discussing four aspects of reconciliation: the **plan** of reconciliation, the **means** of reconciliation, the **aim** of reconciliation, and the **evidence** of reconciliation.

2

Colossians 1:20-23

And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

3

The Means of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:20b; 22a

having made peace through the blood of His cross... He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death

These two phrases sum up the specific means whereby Christ purchased our reconciliation with God. Paul says first that **Christ made peace between God and man through the blood of His cross**. Blood speaks metaphorically of His atonement. It connects Christ's death with the Old Testament sacrificial system (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18–19). All the sacrifices under the Old Covenant pointed ahead to the violent, blood-shedding death the final sacrificial Lamb would suffer.

4

The Means of Reconciliation

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It should be stated that no man took Jesus' life. He was not a helpless victim, but willingly offered up His life to God.

John 10:17–18

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

Jesus chose the moment of His death: “When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit” (John 19:30).

5

The Means of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:20b; 22a

having made peace through the blood of His cross... He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death

Christ died not only as a sacrifice, but also as our substitute. He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death. In Romans 8:3, Paul tells us that God sent “His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.” He took the place of sinners, dying a substitutionary death that paid the full penalty for the sin of all who believe. This death satisfied God’s wrath. Once again Paul hammers away at the false teaching of the Colossian heretics that Christ was a mere spirit being. On the contrary, Paul insists, He died as a man for men. Were that not true, there could be no reconciliation for any person.

6

The Aim of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:22b

to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

God's ultimate goal in reconciliation is to present those who accept His gift of salvation holy and pure before Him.

The word **Holy** means to be **separated from sin and set apart to God**. It has to do with the believer's relationship with Him. As a result of a faith union with Jesus Christ, God sees Christians as holy as His Son. God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (**Eph. 1:4**). "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (**2 Cor. 5:21**).

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The Aim of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:22b

to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

Blameless means **without blemish**. It was used in the Septuagint to speak of sacrificial animals (Num. 6:14). It is used in the New Testament to refer to Christ as the spotless Lamb of God (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19). In reference to ourselves, **reconciliation gives us a blameless character**. All our sin was nailed to the cross and we stand blameless before Him.

8

The Aim of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:22b

to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

The term “**above reproach**” goes beyond blameless. It means not only that we are without blemish, but also that **no one can bring a charge against us** (cf. Rom. 8:33). Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), cannot make a charge stick against those whom Christ has reconciled.

9

The Aim of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:22b

to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

Christ’s reconciliation makes believers holy, blameless, and beyond reproach **in His sight**. God **sees us now as we will be** in heaven when we are glorified. He views us clothed with the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

10

The Evidence of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:23

if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

One of the most sobering truths in the Bible is that **not all who profess to be Christians are in fact saved**. Our Lord warned, “Many will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness”” (Matt. 7:22–23).

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The Evidence of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:23

if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

People give evidence of being truly reconciled when they **continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast**.

In John 8:31, “Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’ ” Speaking of apostates, the apostle John writes in 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.”

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The Evidence of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:23

if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

After hearing some difficult and challenging teaching from Him, many of Jesus' so-called disciples "withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore" (John 6:66). By so doing, they gave evidence that they had never truly been His disciples. **Perseverance is the hallmark of the true saint.**

13

The Evidence of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:23

if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Lest there be any confusion about what they were to continue in, Paul specifies the content of their faith as **the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.** The Colossians are to hold fast to the apostolic gospel they had heard; the gospel that had been proclaimed throughout the world; the gospel of which Paul was a minister, commissioned to preach. Those who, like the Colossian false teachers, preach any other gospel stand cursed before God (Gal. 1:8).

14

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if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Listen as Paul stresses the importance of reconciliation. There are five powerful truths about reconciliation in these verses.

2 Corinthians 5:17–21

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

15

The Evidence of Reconciliation

Colossians 1:23

if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Five truths about reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:17–21.

1. **Reconciliation transforms believers:** "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (v. 17).
2. **It appeases God's wrath:** "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (v. 21).
3. **It comes through Christ:** "All these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ" (v. 18).
4. **It is available to all who believe:** "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (v. 19).
5. **Every believer has been given the ministry of proclaiming the message of reconciliation:** God "gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (v. 18), and "He has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (v. 19).

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So What ...

God sends His people as witnesses into a lost and fallen world. People everywhere are lost and cut off from God by their sin. But God has provided the means of reconciliation through the death of His Son. Our mission is to plead with people to receive that reconciliation, before it is too late. Paul's attitude, expressed in verse 20, should mark every Christian: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."