

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS
“The Evidence of Reconciliation”
Colossians 1:23

Seeing the Whole

1. The text for this study suggests that human endeavor is necessary for reconciliation to be genuine. If the text were taken in isolation, that might indeed be the conclusion of the matter.

2. However, a host of Scriptures affirm unequivocally the eternality of a genuine reconciliation between God and man. Consider: John 3:16; 5:24; 10:28; Ro. 8:38, 39; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 1:6.

3. Despite these bold affirmations of the Bible, many persist to believe that faithfulness is an ingredient to the terms of salvation; that backsliding ultimately leads to hell; that God forgives past sins, but not future sins; that experience teaches the fallacy of eternal security.

4. What does the text teach about this issue? Plenty! Proofs of a genuine reconciliation are patently recorded. Look at them with carefulness:-

1. PERSEVERANCE = Proof #1

a. Related to a condition

The conditional clause is a first class one in Greek. It is determined as fulfilled. The translation could be: “seeing that ye continue” or “it being a fact that ye continue.” A small Greek particle is used to express “at least,” hence, “it at least” The verb is a compound expressing “stay at or with.” Hence, while the sentence is expressed as a condition, it is actually a proof of the reality of v. 21, 22.

b. Related to a conviction

Some take the words “in the faith” to be the same as “your faith” making it a matter of personal faith. The use of the definite article rather indicates that a body of truth is involved. A consciousness of the sufferings of Christ and that a believer has been set down to be “holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in His sight” -- this is the faith. If the facts of the previous two verses (21, 22) are consciously understood, assimilated, heart expressions, they form the proof of reality! The is affirms the was.

2. PERFORMANCE = Proof #2

a. Externally

The perfect passive participle “grounded” denotes having been “fixed” in the right foundation. There is a support here which is firm and sure. There is not a scintilla of question regarding the right foundation (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11; 15:58; Eph. 2:20).

b. Internally

The word “settled” is an old adjective derived from the word “seat” (only here, 1 Cor. 7:37; 15:58 in N.T.). The idea is that the believer is seated in a chair. Therein, he has

inward strength, steadfastness (cf. 1 Pet. 5:10).

NOTE: The force of these two ideas (grounded/settled) clearly mark out non abortive relations with God. The epidermal confessions of the faith are questionable. Performance is a proof of reality, both externally and internally.

3. EXPERIENCE = Proof #3

This really covers similar ground to proof #2, but observe the emphasis.

a. No shifting

The present tense passive participle is a hapax legomenon (occurs one time in N.T.). There is no changing of location or moving away from one’s commitment. There is no ebb and flow evidenced. What a statement!

b. No rejecting

The “hope” which belongs to the “Gospel” is never lost. There is “hope” in the Gospel and there is “hope” of the Gospel (meeting the Lord in the air -- rapture). The importance of “grounding” and “settling” are evident in this matter.

c. No denying

The aorist form of the verb “heard” points to the actual fact that the Colossians “heard” Epaphras (1:7). Hearing is more than acknowledging sound waves. Rather, it concerns obedience, response.

d. No questioning

“Preached” is an aorist passive participle. The outreach of the Gospel “to every creature which is under heaven” is not a hyperbole. The zeal of the early Christians (62 A.D.) is too often under.....estimated.
The Gospel was preached everywhere.

NOTE: The experience of the Colossians with the Gospel is a proof of a real reconciliation. The Gospel and the Colossians was a factual matter. This could not be denied. The past issued in positive action.

Completing the Text

The emphatic personal pronoun “I” signifies that Paul “was made” (Greek: became) a minister (Greek: deacon) of the Gospel. This ties up all the loose ends to indicate that the facts of vv. 21, 22 are, in fact, a reality as detailed in our text (v. 23). There is no buffoonery to reconciliation. If it is a reality, then proof to this effect will necessarily be there (cf. James 2:14-26). How does all this stack up with you personally? Make sure you are “in the faith.” Accept this text as a call to self-examination. See to it. Be clear and distinct in your convictions.