

**Text:** Colossians 1:20

**Title:** Christ Above All, Part 3

**Truth:** Christ is above all because He made reconciliation for sin toward God.

**Date/Location:** August 9, 2015 at FBC

## Introduction

The reconciliation we are talking about is not race reconciliation or the making of human friends out of former human enemies. Christian reconciliation has to do with the relationship of humankind and God. Other reconciliations are far secondary to this one.

Reconciliation is one of several great words of the Christian faith which describe what God has done to change a person from lost to found.

<u>Old You</u>	→	<u>God's Work</u>	→	<u>New You</u>
Stranger	→	Adopt	→	Child of God
Condemned	→	Justify	→	Righteous
Under wrath	→	Propitiate	→	Favor of God
In bondage	→	Redeem	→	Freedom
Guilty	→	Forgive	→	Acquitted
Alienated	→	Spirit Baptize	→	Union with Christ
In darkness	→	Transfer	→	Citizen of Heaven
<b>Enemy</b>	→	<b>Reconcile</b>	→	<b>Friend of God</b>
Dead	→	Regenerate	→	New Life
Old Man	→	Crucify	→	New Man
Unrepentant	→	Gift of repentance	→	Contrite
Unbelieving	→	Gift of faith	→	Believer, Faithful
Unsaved	→	Call	→	Saved

None of this is your work. Without these things, you are not a true Christian in the Biblical sense of that term.

## I. The Subject of Reconciliation: The Fullness of God

- A. As we saw in 1:18-19, the abstract noun “fullness” is effectively the subject of the sentence, “all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him.” This phrase refers to the totality of deity, the divine essence, and “it” was happy to make its permanent dwelling in the second person of the Godhead. God eternally exists as three persons, and the fullness of God is in all three equally and eternally.
- B. This fullness continues to be the effective subject of the sentence, and it was pleased to make reconciliation of all things to God. The entirety of God planned and executed the program of redemption, which included changing the relationship between God and the world from one of just enmity to one in which it can be said that Christ has made reconciliation toward God.
- C. The direction of reconciliation is toward God. God would not, apart from Christ, exist in a reconciled position toward the world. Further, it is not God who

changed, but mankind did the changing from creation to the fall. Nevertheless, even though God remains always the same, the relationship between God and man was broken, and something needed to be done in order to change that from hostility to friendliness.

- D. We have to remember that the subject of this reconciliation action is God, for we are not the ones who act to make reconciliation happen. Furthermore, we do not need to wring our hands and wonder if God could ever be pleased toward us if we attempt to make amends to Him. The Scriptures are clear that He made reconciliation, and that He stands in a reconciled posture toward the world. To ask God to be reconciled or merciful toward you is to overlook the fact that God has *already* made all the provision necessary for any individual's personal salvation, and has thus demonstrated that He has already been merciful and utterly ready for reconciliation. You cry out, "God be merciful to me!" God replies, "I have been merciful already toward you in Christ!"

## II. The Agent of Reconciliation: Christ Alone

The executor of reconciliation is God Himself in Christ.

- A. "Through him" or "by him" occurs twice in the text, emphasizing that the reconciliation was done by **Christ alone**, and no one else. No other part of a polytheistic or pantheistic "fullness" did the job. The Colossians had to be fortified in the truth that it was CHRIST, period. He is above ALL!
- B. Other texts of Scripture confirm this thought. Christ purged our sins (Heb. 1:3). He redeemed us from every lawless deed (Titus 2:14). He offered himself to God (Heb. 9:14) once for all and sat down at God's right hand (Heb. 10:12).

## III. The Definition of Reconciliation: Change of Relationship to Harmony

- A. The word itself means to change hostility for friendly relations or to re-establish a broken relationship. In terms of human solidarity there was a relationship between God and Adam and Eve; it was broken; and it can be re-established with each person today. Individually, we were not born in a good relationship with God, so such a relationship cannot be RE-established.
- B. Here are some examples of reconciliation in Scripture:
1. 1 Samuel 29:4 – The Philistines feared that David would attempt to reconcile himself to his master Saul by killing some of them. That is, David would "please" Saul by doing something positive for him. This is a human level of reconciliation which is only similar to, but not synonymous with the kind of reconciliation we are trying to explain in these notes, because humankind cannot bring about the reconciliation of God by some sacrifice on their part.
  2. Matt 5:23-24 – If you are about to offer a gift to God and realize that your brother has something against you, our Lord commands that you go be reconciled to your brother and then come to offer a gift. Your relationship should be restored to harmony instead of the tense state that it is in.

3. Acts 7:26 recalls when Moses tried to reconcile two Israelites who were fighting because one had wronged the other.
  4. Romans 5:10-11 teaches that Christians are fully reconciled to God by the death of Christ and are no longer enemies.
  5. Romans 11:15 – God’s rejection of Israel brought reconciliation to the world.
  6. 1 Cor. 7:10-11 – According to New Testament church-era teaching, a woman should not depart from her husband, but if she does, she is to remain unmarried or be **reconciled** to her husband. Evidently her leaving is due to some hostility between her and her husband, and that hostility should be repaired or she should not remarry. The same teaching applies to husbands.
  7. 2 Cor. 5:18-20 uses reconcile five times, emphasizing that Christians have been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ and have been given a ministry whereby they must share the imperative of reconciliation to the world. God was reconciling the world to Himself, imputing their sins to Christ instead of to them! This is the message we have for people—Christ died for our sins. You don’t have to take those sins yourself and die eternally for them! Why would you want to anyway?!
  8. Ephesians 2:15-16 - Jews and Gentiles are made one in Christ because He reconciled them into one body, killing the enmity that separated them.
- C. Explanatory phrase “having made peace through the blood of the cross.” This is not a separate idea, but is a way of expanding upon the idea of reconciliation. Christ took an enemy situation and “made peace” through His blood. His work satisfied God the Father that righteous punishment was meted out for the sins of the world so that God does not now look at the world in a negative way.

#### IV. The Object of Reconciliation: All Things

- A. The text says “all things” were affected by this reconciliation, and then it explains by saying “whether things on earth or things in heaven.” That covers everything from bottom to top, from our earthly home through the atmosphere and space up to heaven itself. This sounds like Ephesians 1:10 when it speaks of all things being gathered together. This reconciliation has to do with “the universe.” It cannot be sustained that it deals only with sinners who exercise faith, for “all things” is plainly “all things” in verse 16 (2x) and verse 17 (2x).
- B. It is fairly easy to understand the need for reconciliation of things on earth. We might *want* to think that people are good, but Biblical revelation and contemporary facts are too clear to argue against (Romans 3:9-18). Sin has defiled every human being and estranged us from God from birth (Psalm 58:3). It has caused the sub-human creation to groan as it awaits release from the consequences of human rebellion (Romans 8:19-22). Natural evil and man-made evil abound, all ultimately tracing back to the sin of Adam and Satan.

- C. Why do things in *heaven* need to be reconciled? In some way, the defilement of sin has reached every part of the universe and even the heavens. The angelic beings fell from their place of holiness in heaven. Everything that touches defilement is defiled (Haggai 2:13 for instance). God and His immediately surrounding presence, guarded as He is by a phalanx of angelic protectors of God’s holiness (Isaiah 6:2-3), remains perfectly holy. All else needs a cleansing from the defilement of sin.
- D. We know that not all people are going to be saved, neither in this life nor in the life to come. That is, “universalism” is false. So what gives with this idea of “all things” being reconciled? How do we explain that not all things are saved, but all things are reconciled?
1. The objective side of reconciliation. God is reconciled. I believe it is accurate to say that all provision has been made for all sinners that they can be reconciled on the basis of Christ. God waits with open arms for all because of what Jesus did. I also believe that the work of Christ has permitted God to postpone judgment on the earth because He is reconciled, even if some time intervenes between creation, the cross-work of Christ, and the completion of all things.
  2. There is also a subjective or individual side of reconciliation. Believers are reconciled. Unbelievers are not. God’s being reconciled objectively does not mean the relationship for any particular sinner with God is restored automatically—because God requires a person to turn from sin and trust Christ to personally receive the blessing of reconciliation.
  3. There is also a future side to reconciliation. All things will be reconciled. This includes even unbelievers. In some sense, God will be satisfied even with a Hell full of sinners. These eternal unbelievers will acknowledge Christ as Lord (Philippians 2:10-11) and will recognize their place under God, but will never be saved and never turn from their sinful, autonomous ways.
  4. Excepting the lake of fire and its inhabitants, there will be a time in the future in which ALL things are indeed reconciled to God—the world and its people will be pure, clean, saved, unblemished, and in perfect harmony with God.

## Conclusion

Reconciliation is relational—this is why we emphasize a personal relationship to God instead of a merely cultural or intellectual connection. Reconciliation is toward God. It is accomplished by God. It can be accepted through faith in Christ. It is universally available. Christians are commanded to propagate the message of reconciliation. Not only has God made Himself known, He has removed all barriers to a relationship with Him through the death of Christ. There is absolutely **no excuse** to not enter into a friendly relationship with God through repenting faith in Jesus Christ.