

11 January 2015

It is God that reconciles (Pt 1 Reconciliation)

Introduction:

This is the first study on the word “reconciliation” in the Holy Scriptures.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. God required animal sacrifice to make reconciliation for the sins of Israel, and
2. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and
3. God reconciles through Christ Jesus those who **believe** Him.

Occurrences of the word “reconciliation” and it’s meaning.

* There are five occurrences of the word “reconcile”, seven occurrences of “reconciled”, eight of “reconciliation”, and three of “reconciling”.

Meaning from the Hebrew.

* The two Hebrew words that are translated, “make reconciliation” are also translated; to cleanse, to bear the loss, to purge, and to purify self, to appease, to make an atonement, to forgive, to be merciful, to pacify, to pardon, to put off, and to reconcile.

Meaning from the Greek.

* The two Greek words that are translated to “reconcile” and “reconciled” are not translated into any other English words. The Greek word translated “reconciliation” is also translated “reconciling” and “atonement”. The Greek word translated to “make reconciliation” is also translated “to be merciful”.

Meaning summary.

* Reconciliation in the Scriptures means; to cleanse, to purge, to make atonement, to forgive, to be merciful, and to pardon.

Our three points in more detail.

1. God required animal sacrifice to make reconciliation for the sins of Israel.

Supporting verses

* Lev.16: 15 “Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering that [is] for the people, and bring his blood within the veil.” c.p Eze.45: 15 “And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel...to make reconciliation for them.”

Context and meaning of our verses.

* The law given to Moses is recorded in the first five books of the Bible and is reiterated throughout the Old Testament. Included in the law is provision for atonement when the people sin against God.

* The book of Leviticus details what atonement God required for different transgressions of the law, and in Ezekiel we see such animal sacrifices were to make reconciliation.

Other scriptural support

* Lev.6: 30, 8: 15 & 2Chr.29: 24, Eze.45: 17, and Eze.45: 20,

Application of verse for today.

* God does the reconciling, not man, and He does so by blood (Heb.9: 28), not fire.

Illustration.

* A Roman Catholic (RC) that believes their church’s teachings on Purgatory would say that “Purgatory helps us hope in perfection even when **we** cannot completely achieve it in this life.”

Learning from our Illustration.

* In one way the RC is correct, man can do **nothing** to achieve “perfection” in this life. So why does the RC say “**we** can’t completely achieve it” even in the face of other scriptures that attest, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Lk.18: 27)?

* Answer; He doesn't believe that it is God's role to provide the sacrifice to make reconciliation, to purge our sin, but rather he believes that the flames of Purgatory do the purging or reconciling.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* The law however, "can never with those sacrifices...make the comer there unto perfect" (Heb.10: 1), "but the bringing in of a better hope did" (Heb.7: 19).

* Let us remember that man's reconciliation to God is **never** man's work, but the work of the Lord God Almighty. In the Old Testament law we have "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb.10: 1), where God required animal sacrifice to make reconciliation for the sins of Israel.

2. God reconciled the world to Himself by the blood of Christ.

Supporting Verse.

Col.1: 20 "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven."

Other scriptural support.

* 2Cor.5: 12 "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Our verses from Colossians and Corinthians are written by Paul to the Gentile church. The verse from Colossians says, "reconcile all things unto himself" and 2Cor.5: 12 says "reconciling the world unto himself".

* So God's reconciliation in Christ is sufficient for all men. There was enough blood shed, and the blood was sufficient quality so that it could clean every filthy, sinful soul that ever lived.

Scriptural examples.

Jn1: 9 says "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Application of our verse for today.

* Any sinner today, regardless of their iniquity, regardless of the life they have led, can be reconciled to God through the blood of Christ.

Illustration

* I remember at Bible college when the lecturer said that "Christ died for the sins of the world and therefore, all the world will be saved". He was making his point from the gospel of John "That was the true light which lighteth every man that commeth into the world" (1: 9).

* His reasoning was, because the light of Christ lighteth every man in the world, then God who was in Christ on the cross, reconciled the whole world.

* After this introduction the lecturer moved on to tell of his experience of worshipping with other religions. Hence, on reflection it appears he was preparing our hearts to receive **his** "private interpretation" that God sent his Son to die, to shed his blood for all men, and so all men will go to heaven. The lecturer got one part correct, it is God's **only** begotten Son that purges a man's sin and reconciles him to God.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Christ's death on the cross was sufficient to reconcile the whole world unto God! It is God who does the reconciling, not man, it is God that does the purging of sin, not the fires of Purgatory, not Buddha, not Allah, and not the Old Testament god Baal.

Challenge & or encouragement

* God did not make peace with sinful man by them drinking wine that turns into the blood of Christ, God does not expect man to sacrifice again his Son on the altar every Sunday at worship, so that we can receive His cleaning, His reconciliation, or His peace. Because His cleansing blood is perfect (Heb.10: 14).

* Be ye not deceived, by any man-made religion that has a man reconciled to God by drinking wine and pretending it is changed into the blood of Christ. Because God reconciled the world to Himself by the blood of Christ that was shed at Calvary.

3. God reconciles through Christ Jesus those who **believe** Him.

Supporting Verse.

2Cor.5: 18 “And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* If you think the last point allowed for universalism (belief that all will be saved), then it was only because we did not expound upon our verse in Colossians. But this point builds on our previous point, and says; God reconciles through Christ Jesus those who believe Him.

* Each verse from 1 to 16 either includes the word “we” or “us”, and verse 17 says “If any man be in Christ”, and in our context we see that verse 18 reverts back to using “us”. Hence, Paul is speaking about a saved man in the body of Christ.

* Back to verse 17 – “he is a new creature: all things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Verse 18 continues “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.”

* Therefore, when verse 18 says “who hath reconciled **us**” it is referring to those who **are** Christian, those in the body of Christ.

Scriptural examples.

Acts 16: 31 (generally removed from modern-day versions of Holy Scriptures) and Rom.10: 9.

Application of our verse for today.

* Our verse does not say, that God has reconciled only those elected by God at the beginning of time, but those who **choose** to **believe** God, it is only they that He saved, redeems, reconciles, and saves from the pit of hell (Jn.3: 36)

Illustration.

* Would the dark lord in Star Wars make anyone his disciple? No!

* The only reason Anakin Skywalker became the dark lord’s apprentice was because he trusted he could save his wife from dying in child birth. In the same movie series, the only reason Obi-Wan Kenobi become Qui-Gon Jinn’s apprentice was because he believed him, and he trusted him.

Learning from our Illustration.

* A man serves his master because he chooses to do so, whether that master is Satan, the dark lord in the movies, or the Lord Jesus Christ.

* In the time of Israel Joshua said to the people, choose this day whom ye will serve (Josh.24: 15).

* God sent His Son into the world that **all** might be saved. But salvation in Christ is only achieved when a person believes God, then Christ’s one-off blood sacrifice is attributed to their account. If a person rejects Christ’s sacrifice then they pay the debt to God for their sin in hell for eternity, but that is **their** choice.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Next time you are talking with a Muslim, ask him “how does Allah make reconciliation for your sin?”

Or a Hindu “how does your 350,000 gods make reconciliation for your sin?” And remember that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Heb.10: 18).

* Let us teach our children, speak with our neighbours, our family and friends, and share the gospel of Christ crucified, which is good news for **all** the world to hear, that proclaims God’s salvation to sinners by believing in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

* Let us remember that God Almighty makes reconciliation, He purges a believer’s sin, through the blood that Christ shed on Calvary. God, reconciles those who believe Him through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Summary of our three points.

1. God required animal sacrifice to make reconciliation for the sins of Israel, and
2. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and
3. God reconciles through Christ Jesus those who **believe** Him.