
COLOSSIANS: CHRIST PREEMINENT

Session 5 | Colossians 1:20-24 | Dr. Randy White

Reconciliation by Christ | Colossians 1:20-21

- Verse 19 –
 - The New Testament presents reconciliation as a complete and completed work of Christ by the Cross.
 - On several occasions it is noted that **all things** have been reconciled. See 2 Cor 5:17 for an example.
 - While some (especially within Calvinism) are reluctant to take **all things** to mean **all things** in v. 20, they must recognize that to reject the completeness of the term in v. 20 requires a rejection of a completeness of the exact term in vv. 16 and 17.
 - This view requires that we theologically separate reconciliation from salvation.
 - Reconciliation is used of **things**, including inanimate things which cannot be saved.
 - For humanity, Christ has provided the “balance adjustment entry” so that salvation is possible for those who would receive it, by grace through faith.
 - Reconciliation is accomplished **by Him** and only available through Him. Without Him, we never become recipients of this reconciliation.
 - Reconciliation is something that God does, but not something that happens to God.
- Verse 21 –
 - This is an elaboration on the **all things** of v. 20. This verse makes it personal. The thought continues in v. 22.
 - You were **sometime alienated** - The word means "at any time ever" in the past, present, or future. Here, clearly this is a reference to the past. See Colossians 3:7.
 - **In your mind by wicked works** - That is, your understanding or thinking is alienated from God by means of your evil works.
 - See Ephesians 4:18, where "τη διανοια" [*ta dianoia*] is translated as "the understanding," which in that verse is darkened and "alienated from the life of God."
 - The root cause of the alienation is the wicked works which have affected the spiritual understanding.
 - **Yet now he hath reconciled** - The Greek ἀποκαταλλάσσω [*apokatallaso*] literally means "from totally another."
 - That is, to be reconciled is to be wholly moved from one position to another position.
 - Note that this thought is incomplete without verse 22.

The Accomplishments of Reconciliation | Colossians 1:22-23

- All things have been **reconciled in the body of his flesh through death** (21b-22)
 - This is an essential part of the message of reconciliation.
 - If we leave out the death of Jesus Christ, we have preached love, repentance, faith, hope, optimism, or any of a list of self-help messages, but we have not preached the Gospel.
- The goal of reconciliation:
 - Since it is said that God, in the death of Jesus, has reconciled "all things" (v. 20), it must be noted that all things have not received the outcome of the reason for the reconciliation:
 - to be presented holy, unblameable and unproveable.

- This only comes when an individual accepts salvation by grace through faith.
 - That which is accomplished:
 - **Holy** - ἅγιος [hagios] - holy, the word, when used with a definite article, is often translated "saints," though doing so has brought confusion into the church.
 - **Unblameable** - παρίστημι [paristami] - Literally, "alongside a standing." That is, those who are saved are no longer on sinking sand.
 - **Unreproveable** - ἀνέγκλητος [anekletos] - The negation (thus the Greek "a") and egkaleo, meaning to "bring a charge or condemnation." Therefore, there is no condemnation that can be brought against those who are reconciled and redeemed.
- The Big IF – v. 23
 - In the Greek, an "if" with an indicative noun is a definite ("since"), an "if" with a subjunctive noun is a potential.
 - Verse 23 contains an indicative noun.
 - 1 Cor. 15:17 is a good example of the "since" form of "if."
 - Note, however, that this is not an assumption on Paul's part of the continuance of the Colossians.
 - Rather, it is an assumption upon the completed work of Christ.
 - Young's Literal says, "If ye continue in the faith, BEING grounded and settled."
 - The emphasis is on the fact that they are **grounded and settled** because they are in Christ, not in their own strength.
 - A literal translation could be, "Having been and remaining founded and firm and being not moved away from the hope, ye continue in the faith to the point at which God will present you holy..."
 - Notice that "founded" is a perfect passive participle (something that took place in the past and remains to today) and "not moved away" is a present participle, something that is currently happening.
 - These verses describe a past, present, and future.
 - Past: Having been and remaining grounded and settled
 - Present: Being not moved
 - Future: God presents you holy, unblameable, unreproveable.

The Sufferings of Paul | Colossians 1:23-24

- The Gospel to every creature (v. 23) - Literally: to all the creation under heaven.
- The sufferings that **fill up that which is behind** (v. 24)
 - Paul's position is -
 - That his sufferings are used for the church in a way that the sufferings of Christ were not.
 - That his sufferings in the flesh were part of God's continued work, accomplishing that which the afflictions of Christ could not accomplish (because they were not designed to do so).
 - Many times believers associate benefits of the sufferings of Christ which are not reality. T
 - The afflictions of Jesus Christ do not currently provide freedom from want, sorrow, shame, etc. Paul suffered in his flesh to provide that which the suffering of Christ in the flesh could not provide, namely, the proclamation of the Gospel of grace.