

RECONCILIATION

- I. Biblical references to "reconciliation"
 - A. Old Testament
 1. Judaic concept of ritual-sacrifice (*kopher, kippur*), atonement, was closest old covenant idea.
 2. Legal context viewed alienation primarily as objective separation, inconsistency or incompatibility, and atonement as impersonal exchange.
 - B. New Testament
 1. Greek words *katallasso, katallage, apokatallasso*
 - a. Derived from *kata*=according to; *allasso*=to exchange, alter (from *allos*=another)
 - b. Meaning: to restore understanding between people after hostility, displeasure or disagreement.
 - c. Greek thought did not usually conceive of personal relationship with gods.
 - d. New Testament usage therefore unique usage of Gk. words.
 2. Usages in New Testament

Matt. 5:24 - "first be *reconciled* to your brother"

Acts 7:26 - "he (Moses) tried to *reconcile* them in peace"

Rom. 5:10 - "while we were enemies, we were *reconciled* to God through the death of His Son ...having been *reconciled*, we shall be saved by His life"

Rom. 5:11 - "we have now received the *reconciliation*"

Rom. 11:15 - "if their rejection be the *reconciliation* of the world"

I Cor. 7:11 - "be *reconciled* to her husband"

II Cor. 5:18 - "God, who *reconciled* us to Himself, through Christ, and gave us the ministry of *reconciliation*"

II Cor. 5:19 - "God was in Christ *reconciling* the world to Himself ...committed to us the word of *reconciliation*"

II Cor. 5:20 - "be *reconciled* to God"

Eph. 2:16 - "might *reconcile* them both in one body"

Col. 1:20 - "through Him to *reconcile* all things to Himself"

Col. 1:22 - "He has now *reconciled* you in His fleshly body through death"
 3. English word "reconciliation" from Latin *reconciliare*; *re*=again, *conciliare*=to bring together, to unite
- II. Features of Biblical new covenant "reconciliation"
 - A. Primarily a personal concept, rather than impersonal, forensic concept of reconciling (i.e. violation and penalty)
 - B. Presupposes a broken personal relationship between God and man
 1. separation - Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12
 2. alienation, estrangement - Eph. 2:12; Col. 1:21
 3. isolation, exclusion - Eph. 4:18
 4. hostility, wrath - Rom. 1:18; 5:9; 8:7; Eph. 5:6; Col. 1:21
 5. enmity, enemies - Rom. 5:10; James 4:4
 6. obstacle, barrier
 - C. The subject and object of reconciliation
 1. Primary Biblical explanation posits God as the subject, and man as the object, of reconciliation.
 - a. pagan religion - man was the subject who had to act, work or perform in order to placate, pacify or appease the personal pique of an offended and angry god, in order to be reconciled and brought into his good graces.

- b. Christian message - God took the initiative to act on man's behalf to effect reconciliation - II Cor. 5:18,19; Col. 1:20
 - 2. Secondly, God can be considered as both subject and object of reconciliation.
 - a. Subject, by His taking the initiative to act in Christ
 - b. Object, in the sense that God's just wrath (cf. Rom. 5:9) toward sin, whereby men are enemies (cf. Rom. 5:10), is changed to a reconciled relationship by His initiated action entailing His judgment upon the sacrifice of His Son.
 - (1) The immutable character of God does not change, nor does His implacable opposition to sin, contrary to His character.
 - (2) The *modus operandi* of God can, does and has changed, allowing God to be reconciled with men made righteous in Christ.
- D. The essence of reconciliation
 - 1. The ending of the enmity and estrangement
 - a. Accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross - Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 5:15,21; Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:16
 - (1) Redemptive, expiatory, propitiatory sacrifice
 - (2) Substitutional, vicarious taking of death consequences for men's sin
 - (3) Imputation of our sins to Christ - II Cor. 5:21
 - b. God's justice is satisfied; God's wrath is removed
 - 2. The effecting of a personal relationship and spiritual union of God with receptive mankind.
 - a. Imputation of Christ's righteousness - Rom. 5:19; II Cor. 5:21
 - b. Loving fellowship ensues
- E. Reconciliation must be received, accepted by faith - Rom. 5:1,2; II Cor. 5:20
- F. Reconciliation is closely related and associated with these concepts:
 - 1. "peace with God" - Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20
 - 2. "access to God" - Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Col. 1:22
 - 3. "fellowship with God" - I Jn. 1:3
 - 4. "justification" - Rom. 5:19; II Cor. 5:19,21
 - 5. "adoption" - Rom. 8:15; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5
 - 6. "restoration" - Acts 3:21
 - 7. spiritual exchange - Acts 26:18
 - 8. spiritual union - I Cor. 6:17
 - 9. indwelling of Holy Spirit - Rom. 5:5
 - 10. identity as "new creature" - II Cor. 5:17
 - 11. saving life of Christ - Rom. 5:10
 - 12. joy - Rom. 5:11
 - 13. times of refreshing - Acts 3:19
 - 14. love - Rom. 5:5; II Cor. 5:14
- G. Proclamation of reconciliation
 - 1. "word of reconciliation" is the gospel - II Cor. 5:19
 - 2. "ministry of reconciliation" is evangelism - II Cor. 5:18
 - 3. "be reconciled to God" is the invitation - II Cor. 5:20
- H. Reconciliation will be worked out in human relationships as the Reconciler lives in the Christian.
 - 1. husband and wife relationships - I Cor. 7:10
 - 2. brothers, neighbors, litigants - Matt. 5:24
 - 3. racial reconciliation and integration - Eph. 2:16
- I. Is there a yet unfulfilled cosmic reconciliation? - Col. 1:20; Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:18-23; I Cor. 15:24-28