

Doctrine of Reconciliation

Salvation. What is that? A good question. It requires an answer. That is what Bible doctrine is, answers. “The” answer requires the description of many components, like redemption, propitiation and reconciliation. An easy summary answer is contained in

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Eternal life. That gets into the imputations.

Let’s see if we can make it a little easier. Start with how we became “lost.” It is all about our relationship with God.

In the Garden of Eden, God created man and woman. They had no sin nature. The Devil tempted them. A single act of disobedience caused the whole system to crash, from the Devil’s perspective.

A single act of faith in the Devil caused the spiritual death of Adam and Eve. They were now status quo “lost.” The relationship between God and man had been broken. From the Devil’s perspective, this “lost” status would last forever. God could not save mankind without being judged for their sin. But doing so would violate God’s character. Man could not be judged for his sin. He was all ready in status quo sin. Enter the hypostatic union. From the Devil’s perspective, this was unthinkable. How could God become man? Wholly God and wholly man in one person such that the perfect sinless humanity could be judged by God. And even more, to be resurrected in a new eternal body?

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The solution then was a single act of faith that changed the status of the believer forever. The reverse of what happened in the Garden. God saves man in the same manner that man became “lost.” A single act of faith that has everlasting permanence. God reconciled man to Himself. Wow!

Reconciliation is one of the three important doctrines describing the work of Jesus on the cross:

- 1) Redemption,
- 2) Propitiation and
- 3) Reconciliation.

You might say, “Well, those are “doctrines” and not something I need to know. But, these doctrines are answers to questions about Jesus. Why Jesus? He is the only one that repaired the break in the relationship between man and God. He was the only one who could. The only one.

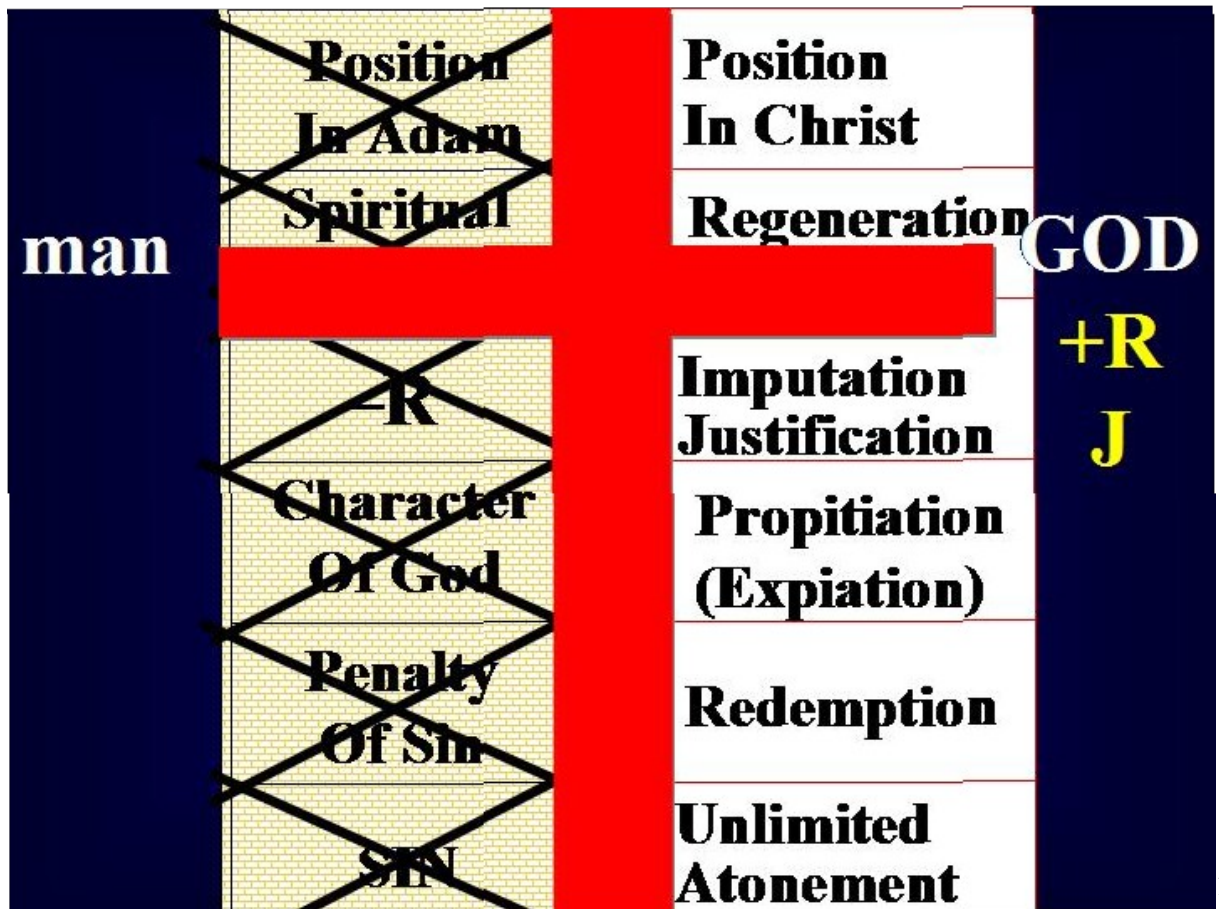
The problem started after creation in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were in fellowship with God. Initially, they did not have a sin nature. After they sinned, the relationship was broken. Sin caused a debt to be created. Man could not pay that debt. He is sinful. Because of that debt, God was not pleased. His righteousness had to separate from man. There existed an “enmity” or hostility between man and God.

On the cross, Jesus was judged for all the sins of mankind: past, present and future. This paid the debt owed. That is called redemption. The debt has been paid. It was paid for ALL humanity. But not all humanity was saved as a result of that judgment. Only those who trust in Jesus and His work on the cross.

As a result of the debt being paid on the cross by Jesus, God is pleased or “propitiated.” That leads to reconciliation. The relationship is repaired. But again, that only benefits those that trust in Jesus as their savior.

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Let us go back to the Garden after the sin of Adam. This leads us to the concept of the “barrier” between God and man. It is that barrier that Jesus had to address on the cross.



Let us deal with the concept of reconciliation before we entertain the doctrine.

Reconciliation deals with a relationship.

Paul uses this word to describe a reconciliation between a husband and wife.

1 <https://www.deanbible.org/file-downloads?folder=Visuals%252FIllustrations>

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1 Corinthians 7:10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

1 Corinthians 7:11 (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

In this case, there needs to be a change in attitude between husband and wife. Let's try to put this in some kind of illustration that you will understand.

There is a husband who is very much aware of his 20th wedding anniversary coming up. He knows that his wife really wants a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air automobile. Her grandfather had one when she was little. So the man finds one in poor condition. Two or three nights a week after work he spends a couple of hours restoring it in secret. He doesn't tell his wife. He wants to surprise her. In the mean time, the wife suspects her husband of infidelity. So one night she accuses him of infidelity and says she is going to leave him. He then takes her to the shop where he is doing the restoration. He says, "All you need to do is just trust me." The husband, in a sense, reconciled the woman to himself. He changed her attitude to one of trust from one of distrust.

In this case here in Romans, it is the relationship between God and man. But God is perfect. He does not change. He does not need to change. It is man that needs to be changed. That happens at the point of salvation. It is not something that we do. It is something that is done to us at the point of our faith in Jesus. Let's look at the Greek word which deals with "change."

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The Greek word used in Romans chapter 5 is *katallasso*. It is made up of *kata* + *allasso*. That is “*kata*” plus the word for change. The “*allasso*” means to change. That is important to understand. Reconciliation requires change in one or both parties. In the case of being reconciled to God, humans have to change. But humans cannot themselves make the needed changes. God is perfect and does not change. Jesus did the work on the cross. He was judged for all sin. We appropriate the changes needed by faith. Remember we receive over 33 things at the point of salvation. Those changes make us acceptable to God. We are reconciled.

If you remember from last week, we saw that Jesus is fully God and fully man. As a man He had to pass the test that Adam failed. Essentially, it was a faith test. Who are you going to believe and trust? Adam trusted the Devil. As a result the relationship between man and God was broken.

Jesus went to the cross to repair that relationship. But like the fall, the reconciliation doesn't happen except through faith. By faith Adam fell. By faith we are brought back into fellowship. By faith.

Let me say this a bit differently. The Devil tempted the woman. At that point she did not have a sin nature. He questioned what God had told her and Adam.

In the movie Ghostbusters, the phrase was “who ya gonna call?” In Christianity, the phrase is “who ya gonna trust?”

We are changed at the point of faith. The big issues are sin, life and righteousness. Sin was judged at the cross. But life and righteousness are imputed at the point of faith in Jesus Christ. Those are changes that happened to each of us at the point of faith. Those changes are needed for reconciliation.

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Now, let us go through some points on reconciliation. These are taken from Herman Mattox notes on Ephesians lesson 84² with some editing.

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1. Three pertinent doctrines

Redemption	— <u>sin-ward</u> side of the cross
Reconciliation	— <u>man-ward</u> side of the cross
Propitiation	— <u>God-ward</u> side of the work of Christ on the cross

II. The word Reconciled means that we are moved from being enemies of God to being friends of God. By removing the barrier of sin, God established the way of peace between God and man. God is propitiated—satisfied, by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Man is Reconciled by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Man is the offender, God was the one offended and God, not man, provided for man to be reconciled.

Think about this: You hurt someone—you offended someone, and they, not you, provided everything necessary for there to be reconciliation between them and you.

A wife commits infidelity, and it is the husband who provides the way of reconciliation. We learn a great deal about the husband, and his desire for this marriage. Well, this is a picture of our being Reconciled with God. He does everything necessary to be reconciled with Him.

III. Here in Ephesians 2:16, the *aorist active subjunctive* is used to express that something is uncertain and often of a wish, or desire or

² https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Ephesians/notes/2022-06-19Sunday_Morning.pdf which is an expansion/reformat of Colossians lesson 26.

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even a hope. The *aorist* tense expresses something as completely taken care of at the cross. The *active* voice is interesting theologically: while it is Jesus who does the work of Reconciliation, it is God the Father who actually reconciles man to Himself by the cross-work of Jesus Christ not Jesus or man. The human way of doing things is that the one who does wrong or hurts another, it is generally up to that person to do something to bring about Reconciliation. But there is nothing we can do. So God Himself brings about Reconciliation. It is His Son who does the work on the cross and the Father Himself reconciles mankind.

In the *aorist*: reconciled to God by the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross.

The *infinitive* is used to denote *purpose*. It is the purpose of God in Christ going to the cross to reconcile man to Himself. It is amazing how many believers want to rebuild this barrier—so they can tear it down by something they do! That is, it can be broken by some sin they may do, and then they do something to re-establish or reconcile to God by something they do: Confess, Repent, Sorrow, Going off and sitting in a corner.

Well, God has provided reconciliation...

- IV. The Greek word, to reconcile is a compound word and means to change, exchange or reconcile. To transfer from one state to another, to a new state which is completely different. Reconcile is a term used for the work of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby He removes the barrier between God and man so that man is brought into spiritual harmony and fellowship with God.

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Vincent: “the verb means primarily to exchange, and hence to change the relation of hostile parties into a relation of peace; to reconcile.”

- V. Reconciliation is the removal of the barrier between man and God, so that God can impute His Perfect Righteousness to man and Justify everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.
- VI. It is God who initiates this reconciliation in the person and work of His Son on the cross. Man is reconciled to God, not God to man!
- VII. Man is reconciled, God is propitiated and both these things happen at the cross.
- VIII. Jesus Christ is the Agent of *Reconciliation* and He is the Agent of *Propitiation* and He is the Agent of *Redemption*.
- IX. The *Mechanics* of Reconciliation is the Removal of the Barrier, establishing peace between God and man.

Ephesians 2:14 For He Himself (Jesus Christ) is our peace, (with God) who made both groups (Jew and Gentile) into one (body of Christ) and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, (cause of hatred, hostility) which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself (Jesus Christ on the cross). He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

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Ephesians 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it (the cross) having put to death the enmity

Now before we leave this point, note in verse 15— one of the causes of hatred, enmity between man and God is the Law! This is going to help us correctly understand:

Colossians 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, (this is the Law) which was hostile to us; (since we were born Spiritually dead with an Inherited Sin Nature [ISN]) and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

This is a powerful phrase, especially to those who desire to make us live by the Law!!! It was nailed to the cross of Christ! This is why we must understand that Reconciliation is the removal of the barrier between God and man. God is on one side of this barrier, and man is on the other side. This barrier is not simple to grasp, for it is made up of several things that separates man from God. It is made up of all Personal Sins, man's Un-Righteousness, and God's perfect Righteousness and the Law that separates us from God.

And so the problem is How Is the Barrier Going to be Removed?

That is the doctrine of Reconciliation. As you fully grasp this you will give thanks to God all the time for the person and work of His Son on the Cross, and you will understand why God will save anyone who will believe in His Son!

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X. The cross is the point of Reconciliation.

Colossians 1:20 and through Him (Jesus Christ) to reconcile all things to Himself, (God the Father) having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

The barrier is removed during the three hours Christ was judged for the sins of the world. The last three hours on the cross, when the entire area was covered in darkness.

XI. The death of Jesus Christ is the instrument of Reconciliation and the intermediate cause of Reconciliation.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Every unbeliever is regarded as the *enemy of God!*

You and I were enemies of God, but through Christ we became friends of God, in Christ.

XII. Our purpose on earth, after Salvation, is the ministry of Reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself

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through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

1. It is God who reconciles mankind to Himself.
2. He reconciles us through or by the person and work of Jesus Christ.
3. Then He, God the Father, gave us the ministry of reconciliation—that is, it is our ministry, and our privilege to tell others how they also are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Again, this answers the questions often asked:

Why Jesus Christ?

Who is Jesus Christ ?

2 Corinthians 5:19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them,

But putting them all on Jesus Christ: He was smitten, stricken and afflicted (Isaiah 53) *and He (God the Father) has committed to us the word of reconciliation.* Here is the greatest blessing you will have in your life!

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; (this is our message) we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (by Faith only in Jesus Christ only.)

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2 Corinthians 5:21 He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, (His soul crushed on the cross) so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

By Faith in Jesus Christ, God imputes His own Perfect Righteousness into everyone who believes in Jesus Christ and then Justifies them to Eternal Life with Jesus Christ.

XIII. Faith is the appropriation of Reconciliation. Faith in His Son is the response God is looking for in Reconciliation.

XIV. Reconciliation is taught in the Old Testament in the Levitical offerings in the Peace offerings: Leviticus 3: 7:37-38; 8:15

XV. Let us close with a look at the removal of various aspects of the Barrier between man and God.

1. Sin—Personal sins. And there are two doctrines that describe the removal of this barrier:

First is Unlimited Atonement: 1 Timothy 2:6; 4:10; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and 19; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2.

Second is *Redemption*: John 8:31-36; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14.

So under the Doctrine of Reconciliation two doctrines are involved: *The Doctrine of redemption and The Doctrine of Unlimited Atonement*.

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2. Penalty of Sin—This part of the barrier is removed by Expiation. Colossians 2:14; Psalm 22:1-6; The Penalty of sin is paid for by the cross-work of Jesus Christ.
3. The Problem of our Physical Birth—Separates us from God. This is removed by Regeneration. John 1:1-18; 1 Peter 1:23; Titus 2:5.
4. The Problem of God's Perfect Righteousness—This is removed by Propitiation. Romans 3:22-26 and 1 John 2:1-2 and Imputation of +R (Perfect Righteousness) Romans 6:17-21; 4:4-6 and 9-10.
5. The Problem of the Law—Removed by the cross work of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:14.

Colossians 1:20 and (along with making Him preeminent; God the Father) through Him (Jesus Christ) to reconcile all things (created by Him) to Himself, (God the Father; why was God reconciled by Jesus Christ) having made peace through the blood of His (Jesus Christ) cross.

This is probably the least correctly understood phrase in all of the Bible. One must fully understand the Old Testament sacrifices and New Testament Greek. But the point is our peace through His Spiritual death on the cross.