

TO BE SIN FOR US

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16 – 21



~ The Word of God uses many different ways to describe salvation: atonement, substitution, redemption and propitiation are just a few of them. Well, our Spiritual Safari is going to examine another rich word in this leg of our expedition that is used in the Bible; and, although it seems similar, it does not mean salvation — and that word is *'reconciliation.'* We're still moving rather quickly through this section of Scripture because, if we don't, we could easily get bogged down and stay here for a thousand more reports.

In our last report, we saw Adam created on a very high plane of existence; but Adam deliberately disobeyed God, and that led to the fall of all mankind. That fall was to a place of death and man has been begetting sons and daughters there ever since. Today, the Lord Jesus Christ has come and gone into and out of this world – the place of death. However, those who will trust Him are taken up past the high place where Adam was originally created — and right on into the Heavens.

For the child of God, this revises our interpretation of the human family. Reconciliation is the *ONLY* principle which will enable us to overcome racism, prejudice, and social distortions; problems that are so common in this lost world of death. I do not know the man in Africa as a black man; nor do I see the man in Asia as yellow – and to them, I am not a white man. Likewise, rich and poor are utterly the same in a social-standing context. See, black, white, yellow, rich, poor, male and female are *ALL* on one plane of being: they're all *SINNERS*. That's what Paul means when he says, "*... we henceforth know no man after the flesh.*" ~

¹⁶ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

~ Remember James rebuked those he wrote to when he said, “... *when a rich man comes into your assembly you give him a good place but make the poor man sit alone in the back.*” Well, that’s the wrong way to treat other people – period. The reason it’s wrong is because God says it’s wrong. God sees every one of us exactly the same – as *SINNERS*. The line between Jew and Gentile has even been erased. The only solution any of us have to our problems in this life is the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to this earth when He was born in Bethlehem; and He walked by the Sea of Galilee — and down the streets of Jerusalem. Then, He was crucified at Golgotha, buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and rose again the third day. Then, He appeared to those who were His Own — before ascending back into Heaven. Well, we don’t know Him as the Man of Galilee – no longer after the flesh, that is. You can crowd into Bethlehem at Christmas time or Jerusalem at Easter — but you aren’t going to find Jesus in either place. I’m not too sure what those people are looking for – but I do know they aren’t sincerely looking for Christ Jesus. Right now, as I type and as you read, the Lord Jesus Christ is in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father. Today, He is the glorified Christ. See, we’re not making identification with the One Who walked down here on earth two thousand plus years ago; we identify with Him in glory — His glory — and for that reason we should take our place with Him in death down here! ~

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

~ Verse seventeen is quoted ad infinitum in testimony meetings as they tell about their conversion and how they no longer do this or that. They usually consider themselves a fulfillment of this verse because they no longer indulge in some bad habit. Well, that’s just not quite it; see, if you and I are a new creation in Christ Jesus, the “... *old things that are passed away*” is our identification with Adam. We’re no longer identified with this worldly system; we’re now identified with Christ — having been baptized into the body of believers, and we now belong to Him. That brings us to a new relationship with Christ.

Further, we can be assured of these truths because the Lord Jesus Himself said, *"... verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."* So, the real question is: do you trust the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you *REALLY* believe Him? Are you *SURE*? If you can *HONESTLY* say yes to those three questions, then you have eternal life. That means you are a new creation that stands in Christ; accepted of Him. Now, I hope you have a physical experience; and I am almost sure you will — but the basis for laying hold of these precepts is *NOT* by experience — it is by *FAITH* in what God has to say.

I realize we are in a place of real and present danger of temptation in this world; and, quite frankly, we will fail from time to time in many, many ways. However, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has redeemed us, never fails. Those facts give to us the *"ministry of reconciliation."* God is faithful, even when we aren't. That ministry is God's call to lost men and women everywhere. Anyone can come to Christ with all their sins, problems, difficulties, and burdens, and He will reconcile that person to Himself. That is quite a remarkable ministry of truth; and very important to understand the place that it occupies....

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;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

~ *"Reconciled"* and *"reconciliation"* are used five times in three verses; but it does *NOT* mean salvation in any way. This six-syllable word means *"to change completely."* A complete metamorphosis. That means inside out, inverted, outside in — and if any man be in Christ, then he is a new creation! God can only reconcile us to Himself through Jesus Christ; and He has given

us a ministry whereby we can perform that for His glory. It is an honor and a privilege.

We do need to note that God is never said to be reconciled – *WE* are reconciled to Him — because God never changes; we must. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. God reconciles us to Himself; that is, the world has been reconciled to God. Naturally, we look at the world and we see it carrying on in its sinful way; every man has turned to his own way is what the Bible says. So, how has God changed the world? – Through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 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.* ²¹ *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled* ²² *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:* ²³ *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister ~*

So, things in earth and in Heaven are reconciled – but *NOT* things in hell. That puts the world in a different position; because Christ died for our sins. A Holy God doesn't just reach down and save a sinful people; He has to do something about the sinful condition. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. God told Adam that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that would be the day Adam died. Well, Adam died that very day, spiritually speaking, and nine hundred years later, he died physically. Neither should have happened. When man is born, he is totally and completely alienated and separated from God. We can only thank Him that He has stretched out His arms to us in this lost world. The worst sinner in the world can come to Christ at any time *IF* that man is ready to repent and accept Christ as his Savior.

Further, God has only ever had one way of saving sinners – through a sacrifice. God has turned towards us; we don't have to do anything to win His heart over. God isn't some sort of spiritual policemen waiting around

the corner to taze you and hog-tie you. God isn't angry with us – He loves us! Jesus told the woman caught in adultery to simply “... *go and sin no more.*” The only one in that crowd that could have thrown a stone is the One Who forgave her. That's how reconciliation works. God didn't shut His eyes to the sins of that woman; He *DIED* for her sins – Jesus reconciled her to Himself.

God makes us ambassadors of His reconciliation. The definition of “*ambassador*” is “the minister of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government; a sovereign official representative of his own government.” That is our ministry of reconciliation unto Christ in the world. We're in a foreign land; and Peter says we're pilgrims and strangers down here. Paul says, “... *our citizenship is in Heaven.*” When an ambassador is present in a foreign government, it means the two have a friendly relationship.

God is still friendly with this world, but one day He is going to call His ambassadors home in the rapture – and then judgment will begin. When man originally sinned, he didn't hold this office of ambassador, either. We can only be made ambassadors through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only thing God is asking of man is for man to turn to Him. Christ bore all our sins on the cross. There's no getting even, no punishment or anything like that. We don't have to shed tears to soften God's heart. We live in a great day to be able to say, “... *be ye reconciled to God!*” ~

²¹ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ~

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