

## *Reconciled to God*

To reconcile is something common to every day life. The word means "to be adjusted to a specific standard, to bring back into harmony." Many people employ this idea in reconciling their bank statement monthly. This process simply involves adjusting one's balance in a check book to a bank statement. Others use this principle in adjusting a watch, or a clock that has lost time. This simply involves setting the timepiece to a revealed standard.

In God's word, the Bible, reference is made to one's being "reconciled to God" (Romans 5:10). Reconciliation is the opposite of alienation, or estrangement. Mankind, by reason of sin, and a sinful nature, is out of balance. Thus, he is "alienated" (Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21). In that condition he needs to be "reconciled to God." God is never said to be reconciled to man. It is man who is out of balance, out of harmony, and does not conform to God's standard. Romans 5 uses several words that give us a picture of fallen man as follows: "...without strength ...ungodly ...sinners ...wrath ...enemies ..." (Romans 5:6,8,9,10). The words "ungodly" and "sinners" show that man does not conform to God's standard of holiness. The word "enemies" indicates that the sin nature was not passive, or placid, but was expressed in overt acts of rebellion against God. Thus, fallen man became an object of judgement, or "wrath." The words "without strength" simply, but lucidly, reveal that fallen man is completely incapable of raising himself to conform to God's perfection. In order for mankind to be "reconciled to God," there must be a revealed standard. That standard is not one another, but God Himself in all of His holiness and perfection (Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:8; 15:4). That standard was manifested in Jesus Christ who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). He is the Revealer of God (John 1:18), for He "was God" (John 1:1,2). Only God can bring you to God. The distance between God and the most exalted creature is infinite. Jesus Christ can bring you no nearer to God than He himself is. If your Saviour is not very God, you have no Saviour at all. Jesus Christ is God (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6,7; Matthew 1:21,23; John 1:1-2; 8:58,59; 10:33; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8,10). And He said, "...if ye believe not that I am (see Exodus 3:13-14; John 8:58) ... ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Christ is the standard of God revealed to mankind. He is the Revealer of God (John 1:18; 14:9), and the revealer of the glory of God (John 1:14).

No wonder Paul declared, "For all have sinned and come short (not of one another, but) of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It is not a matter of how you measure up, or compare to other people. The standard is God himself. That standard never changes. Suppose you were trying to set a timepiece, and you looked at five other clocks in your home, but they all showed different times. Confusion would result. This was exactly what existed during the Book of Judges when Israel departed from the law of Moses, an expression of God's holiness, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). God is the standard, and He said, "I change not" (Malachi 3:6). According to that standard all mankind is out of balance, and needs to be "reconciled to God." God has not, and will not lower His standard in order that mankind might measure up. Instead He has raised mankind up to meet that standard in Jesus Christ.

God, because of what He is, cannot arbitrarily reconcile fallen mankind to Himself. There must be a righteous basis that enables God to be merciful to sinners. Paul wrote, "And not only so, but

we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," or reconciliation (Romans 5:11). Thus, "reconciliation" depends on Christ, but more specifically upon "the death" of Christ. Therefore Paul wrote, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10). Hence, "now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).

God decreed that death would be paid for sin (Genesis 2:16,17). God showed through the centuries that only a specific sacrifice, meeting certain qualifications, would serve as the basis of mankind's acceptance before a holy God (Leviticus 22:19-24). In time, Christ came to offer Himself on behalf of separated sinners. He was, and is, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He was, and is, "without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18,19), and therefore is qualified to take the sinner's place in death. His death completely satisfied the demands of justice and gave God a foundation upon which to reconcile sinners.

To know that you are a sinner is one thing. But knowing how to be "reconciled to God" is quite another. Trust nothing, or no one, except the one who said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). How are you reconciled? See the Son and believe on Him (John 3:18, 36; 6:40). All who believe are "reconciled to God," and brought back into harmony. The question was asked one time only, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The answer is too clear to be misunderstood, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," verse 31. The "do" of verse 30 is to "believe." This believing is a synonym for faith (John 20:27), and is contrasted to works (Romans 4:5).

Christ, in death, paid the penalty of sin. Accept Him and what he did for you and be saved today.

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